

Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism

Interpreting the Transformation
of the Heart

Kyle B. Wells

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Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism

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By

Kyle B. Wells



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about gift, grace, and agency in Paul, and of how he always spoke with great interest and excitement about *my* views! More than any of these things, Prof. Barclay provided me with a model of grace in practice. Even when his comments were critical, I always knew he was *for* me. He gave camaraderie and respect to one of little qualification, a gift I found to be truly empowering throughout this journey.

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Introduction

1.1 Paul, Grace, and Agency

Not a few of the differences in the Christian tradition can be traced back to radically divergent interpretations of the apostle Paul. One of the most pivotal factors that determines differences concerns how to navigate Paul's complex discourse on grace and agency.¹ Many read in Paul an absolute contrast between divine and human agency. If salvation is of grace (divine action) then it cannot be of works (human action, cf. Rom 4:4; 11:6). For these interpreters, the Pauline view of sin rules out any illusion that humans contribute to their redemption. Others notice everywhere in Paul emotive pleas for and even anxiety over the perseverance of his congregations, coupled with an assumption that humans are genuinely responsible agents whose actions hold real consequence. If this antinomy were not baffling enough, matters are further complicated when both premises appear entangled in the same context (e.g., Phil 2:12–13; 1 Cor 15:9–10; Gal 5:13–6:10). For communities trying to make sense of the apostle, some form of synthesis seems inevitable.

A recent interchange between two seasoned Paulinists poignantly illustrates how critical scholarship is no less immune from these conundrums. In his review of *Paul and the Stoics*, J.L. Martyn criticises T. Engberg-Pederson for smuggling modern notions of autonomy back into Paul and assuming that Paul's God has abdicated 'the realm of deeds' to humanity, whereby humans are able to seek to establish 'a social pattern of reasoned and altruistic self-governance'.² In contrast, Martyn hears Paul insisting that 'there is for human beings no autonomy, but only enslavement to Sin and the obedience to God that is incited by God's liberating word'.³ Engberg-Pedersen retorts that when Martyn imputes to Paul a competitive (and modern) concept of divine and human agency, he stands guilty of the anachronism he deplores.⁴ For his

1 Udo Schnelle, *The Human Condition: Anthropology in the Teachings of Jesus, Paul, and John* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 77: 'The question of human free will represents a central problem of Pauline theology and anthropology'.

2 J. Louis Martyn, 'De-apocalypticizing Paul: An Essay Focused on Paul and the Stoics by Troels Engberg-Pedersen', *JSNT* 86 (2002), here at 102.

3 Martyn, 'De-apocalypticizing Paul', 88. Among other places where Martyn spells this out, see his *Galatians*, Anchor Bible (London: Doubleday, 1997), 479–84.

4 Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Response to Martyn', *JSNT* 86 (2002), 103–114. On the term 'competitive', see below.

part, Engberg-Pedersen denies that his own emphases on human agency in interpreting Paul discard God's active role, being that Paul's statements assume an ancient context that did not strongly differentiate between divine and human agencies. In a subsequent piece, Engberg-Pedersen maintains that divine and human agency are not fundamentally or radically opposed in Paul; nor is Paul's aim 'to contrast the two types of agency in any of the ways in which this has been done in later thought'.⁵

Martyn and Engberg-Pedersen fall more or less on either side of the divide that has persisted for some time, neither of which seems to do full justice to the apostle. If Engberg-Pedersen downplays the grace/works antithesis in a way that appears to surrender 'the good news of God's powerful invasion to the impotence of a merely human decision to have faith' or to an offer which 'merely presents human beings with a new chance to be obedient',⁶ then Martyn's emphasis on power threatens to render humans as pawns in the battle between God and other supernatural forces, and even to undermine Pauline conviction about anthropological corruption, responsibility, and renewal.⁷ Beneath this dispute lies a web of dilemmas arising from Paul's own pen. To state the problem sharply: If in Paul there is a fundamental contrast between divine and human agency, what do we make of statements in which the two agencies seem to stand together in harmonious rather than antagonistic relation? Conversely, if Paul does not conceive of divine and human agency on competitive terms, what becomes of the Pauline antithesis?⁸

Conversations involving questions about grace and agency are not limited to this debate. The last generation of scholarship has witnessed (1) an

5 Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Self-Sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 127, see also 139.

6 See Martyn's critique of certain trends in Pauline scholarship in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 219–220n23.

7 See, e.g., his discussion of Romans 7: Sin takes the self captive in such a way that it is 'no longer the agent of its own actions' ('De-apocalypticizing Paul', 93–97, here at 95). For a nuanced discussion of the tension Martyn's seemingly Docetic tendencies create, see Susan Grove Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 16–18, 59. Note Martyn's own reflex to what he believes is a denial of human agency in L. Baeck (*Theological Issues*, 62–65).

8 So Eastman, *Paul's Mother Tongue*, 17–18: 'The question therefore remains whether it is necessary to maintain a complete separation between divine and human activity in order to maintain the centrality of God's gracious initiative in the gospel, or whether such a separation is softened by Paul's assurance of union with Christ'.

explosion of studies on Paul and the Law,⁹ (2) a reconsideration of the importance of judgement according to works,¹⁰ and (3) a significant contention interpreting *πίστις* as faithfulness.¹¹ These developments have fostered a renewed interest in the themes of participation¹² and obedience,¹³ and for many they have rendered historic assertions about *sola gratia* suspect.¹⁴

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- 9 For some of the most important works, see E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Augsburg Press, 1983); Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984); Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987); James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990); Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993).
- 10 See Donfried's seminal essay, 'Justification and Last Judgement in Paul', republished in *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 253–92 with additional reflection. See the more recent studies by Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Chris VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006). For a helpful survey and bibliography, see Dane Ortlund, 'Justified by Faith, Judged According to Works: Another Look at a Pauline Paradox', *JETS* 52 (2009), 323–39.
- 11 See the game-changing work of Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983). On possible implications for human agency, see Don B. Garlington, *The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context*, *WUNT* 38 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 199–203; and, from a different angle, see Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*, *JSNTSup* 274 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 185–202.
- 12 For various forays into Paul's participatory theme, see E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: S.C.M., 1977); Morna Dorothy Hooker, 'Paul and "Covenantal Nomism"', in *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 155–64; Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Udo Schnelle, 'Transformation und Partizipation als Grundgedanken paulinischer Theologie', *NTS* 47 (2001), 58–75. See also Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).
- 13 See John M.G. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988).
- 14 See, e.g., Räisänen, *Paul*, 186n117; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 346. Compare his earlier *Paul*,

Directly or indirectly, all these topics gained momentum from E.P. Sanders's monumental *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.¹⁵ Contrary to previous opinion, Sanders argued that Judaism was not a religion where humans achieve a standing before God; Judaism was better characterised by 'covenantal nomism'—a grace-based religion founded on divine mercy in election.¹⁶ Sanders's thesis irreversibly shifted the scholarly consensus about Judaism and re-ignited comparison with Paul.¹⁷ And yet, while one would have expected his conclusions to stimulate deeper reflection on grace and agency, for the most part these themes have either been taken for granted or entirely ignored. Assuming that in both Paul and Judaism God saves by grace but nonetheless requires obedience (obedience as the response to grace),¹⁸ many now deny that Paul quarrels with contemporaries over such matters: Paul was not opposed to the grace-works dynamic in covenantal nomism, only to an ethnocentric covenantal nomism, or to one that rejected Christ.¹⁹ These factors birthed a 'new

Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 112, 148.

15 Sanders, *Paul*.

16 Sanders, *Paul*, xi, 33, 38, 75, 420.

17 The literature is now expansive. Two invaluable summaries of the major contributions to the debate up through 2004 are Stephen Westerholm, 'The "New Perspective" at Twenty-Five', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D.A. Carson, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 1–38 and James D.G. Dunn, 'The New Perspective: Whence, What and Whither?', in *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1–38.

18 So Sanders, *Paul*, 513, 517–18, 543; Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 265; N.T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 479; Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, JSNTSup 45 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 133–134, 198, 294. So also Räisänen, *Paul*, 177–85, but he notes a different 'emphasis' (186) and believes Paul misconstrued the nature of Israel's Law (162–164). For A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*, Library of Pauline Studies (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), it is Paul's distinctly Christian presuppositions that render otherwise nonlegalistic Jews legalistic by default.

19 James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 372–75; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 240; Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 264–265, 268; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11*, JSNTSup 57 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 218–19; however, see his Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville:

perspective,²⁰ which has subsequently muffled traditions championing the apostle as the herald of grace.²¹

If in principle divine and human agency could correlate in a number of ways within the covenantal nomist framework, the question of how they do has received sparse attention.²² Does being within the covenant simply extend forgiveness, or does it also sufficiently equip one for obedience? If the latter, what kind of empowerment does the covenant provide and how does it communicate this capacity to its members?²³ New perspective proponents assume Jewish conceptions about grace and works parallel agency dynamics in Paul more or less exactly. So, for instance, James D.G. Dunn claims that in covenantal nomism ‘good works are the consequence and outworking of divine

Abingdon Press, 1998), 140, 180–181. While Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 240–41, is more cautious, Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 136, 142, goes further, believing that Paul’s only problem with Jews is that they did not expect God’s provision of Jesus *for* Gentiles; similar is Stowers, *A Rereading*, 129, 190.

- 20 A term attributable to James D.G. Dunn’s Mansion Memorial Lecture in 1982, recently republished in a collection of his essays on the theme. (‘The New Perspective on Paul’, in *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, WUNT [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 89–110).
- 21 Noted recently in John M.G. Barclay, ‘Introduction’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 2–3.
- 22 Westerholm has analysed the terminology of grace used in Sanders’ own depiction of Judaism, and compared it with a traditional Lutheran reading of Paul in *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The ‘Lutheran’ Paul and his Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).
- 23 Though the various contributions in D.A. Carson, et al., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, 1, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) represent a whole-scale reanalysis of the Jewish literature, it sets itself the specific task of asking whether or not ‘covenantal nomism’ serves as the overarching pattern found there (5). Such dependence on Sanders’s categories means that deeper questions about the integration of divine and human agency in obedience remain unanswered. At the conclusion, Carson is still left asking: ‘Is all this obedience or law-keeping . . . enabled by and empowered by God’s help? Or is it sometimes cast as the human contribution to the entire scheme’ (545)?

grace . . . *the fruit and not the root of salvation*'.²⁴ Or take Morna D. Hooker, who notes how 'God's saving grace *evokes* man's answering obedience'.²⁵

Others have questioned this assumption, arguing that Paul rejects the 'synergism' of Judaism for a 'monergistic' understanding of salvation.²⁶ Unfortunately, many of these studies offer no substantial engagement with the Jewish literature,²⁷ and those that do tend to focus on different questions.²⁸ A further problem is that often contrasts between Pauline 'monergism' and Jewish 'synergism' come at the expense of Paul's endorsements of obedience and *divergent* Jewish testimonies about grace.²⁹ The state of affairs is such that Kent L. Yinger could repeat a contention he made a decade ago, namely that critics

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- 24 James D.G. Dunn, 'The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith', in *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 193, my emphasis. Note that here Dunn is comparing covenantal nomism with Reformation/Protestant orthodoxy. On this point, see Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 341–51, who rightly criticises how on the one hand there is an implicit bias of Protestant definitions of 'grace' in such discussions, and on the other, perhaps paradoxically, that the descriptions of grace seeking to make Jews out to be good Protestants are unrecognisable to most steeped in a particularly Lutheran or Reformed Tradition! See also Mark A. Seifrid, 'Blind Alleys in the Controversy Over the Paul of History', *TynBul* 45 (1994), 74, 92; P.S. Alexander, 'Review of Jesus and Judaism', *JJS* 37 (1986), 105.
- 25 Hooker, 'Covenantal Nomism', 157, my emphasis. Räisänen, *Paul*, 178–179, 184, and Kent L. Yinger, 'The Continuing Quest for Jewish Legalism', *BBR* 19 (2009), 388, share this assumption.
- 26 See, e.g., Robert H. Gundry, 'Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul', *Bib* 66 (1985); Charles H. Talbert, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists', *CBQ* 63 (2001); Donald A. Hagner, 'Paul and Judaism: The Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity: Issues in the Current Debate', *BBR* 3 (1993), 122; Timo Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Soteriology*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 54–60; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 83–84; Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 255.
- 27 Though Laato's monograph, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), addresses the question of anthropological pessimism directly, the English addition devotes fewer than 9 pages to the Jewish literature and is overly simplistic, both in terms of the categories used and in failing to consider what diversity might exist within Judaism. Westerholm gives more attention to the Jewish literature on this subject in 'Paul's Anthropological "Pessimism" in its Jewish Context', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 71–98.
- 28 See, e.g., Gathercole, *Boasting*, 223–224, 264; Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment*, 289; Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters*, ConBNT 26 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995).
- 29 Note the critique of Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 70–72, 80.

had not 'succeeded in demonstrating that the grace-works axis in Judaism generally is any more synergistic or meritorious than in Paul'.³⁰

If it has not been demonstrated that there were differences between Paul and his Jewish contemporaries over agency dynamics, neither has it been shown that all ancient Jews integrated grace and works in precisely the same way. Assuming this gap in scholarship, Dunn has more recently asked: Is Pauline obedience 'as synergistic in its own way as Judaism's covenantal nomism? Or are we to understand that for Paul there was a crucial difference between Jewish obedience and Christian obedience'?³¹ But the answer to this question lies beyond the recognition that grace and works coexist to an examination of precisely how they coexist,³² and how they coexist for *each respective author*.³³ It was Sanders himself who described the Pauline pattern of religion as 'participationist eschatology'.³⁴ If Paul rejected covenantal nomism because it was not Christianity, either because it lacked Christ or because of eschatological developments, how might the eschatological grace of God in Jesus Christ have reshaped his *particular* beliefs about human agency?³⁵ But in answering this question categories like 'synergism' and 'monergism', 'getting in' and 'staying in',

30 This claim was initially made in *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment*, 4. For a recent reaffirmation, see Yinger, 'Continuing Quest', esp. at 391–392.

31 Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 71–72, see also 55. He goes on to ask: What difference does the Spirit make (74–80)? From his reply, it is difficult to tell (cf. 78, 86, 88).

32 John M.G. Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency in Christ', in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. Fabian E. Udoh, et al. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 386.

33 Though Yinger rightly critiques Laato for his 'black-and-white contrast between Jewish optimism... and Pauline pessimism' and suggests that the 'relation between human freedom, sin, and divine grace' is probably more complex than Laato allows ('Continuing Quest', 386), he consistently presents a simplified presentation himself. So, e.g., 'Jewish texts do not envision human obedience to God's commands as an independent exercise of human freedom.... [H]uman obedience is ultimately tracable to the outworking of divine grace' (390). Do *all* Jewish texts envision obedience as an outworking of grace and do they all envision grace being worked out in obedience *in precisely the same way*?

34 Sanders, *Paul*, 549.

35 Compare Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 257: 'In part, it is a minimizing of the dynamics of the eschatological situation which accounts for the persistence of the customary doctrine of a works-righteousness interpretation of first century Judaism'. For Garlington, the in-breaking of the eschaton in the Christ-event accounts for Paul's disputes with his contemporaries over antiquated nationalistic laws. He fails to consider how the eschatological situation might also carry implications for Paul's understanding of divine and human agency. Compare Frank Thielman, *Paul & The Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 245.

'conditional' and 'unconditional' appear at the same time unhelpfully abstract as over-generalisations and hopelessly reductionistic in their simplicity.³⁶

The new perspective has thus pinpointed the need for reappraising the topics of grace and agency in Paul and other Second Temple Jews.³⁷ Old models that describe Judaism as bereft of grace defy the evidence; those assuming a monolithic definition of grace make little sense of the particularities of the ancient world. And in both cases very particular definitions of 'grace' are often unreflectively biased. At the same time one senses that Christology, eschatology, and agency remain insufficiently incorporated into current discussions about Paul's own assimilation of grace and works.³⁸ The time is ripe to consider this well-worn topic afresh.

This challenge was recently taken up by a group of scholars who claim that agency issues are 'neither stale nor uninteresting'.³⁹ The studies in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* demonstrate that new approaches and questions yield improved answers. While on its own admission not every question could be resolved within the scope of the essays, the studies indicate that Second Temple views were both complex and diverse.⁴⁰ Supporting this is a recent thesis by Jason Maston. Without defending Josephus' representation of Judaism in detail (*J.W.* 2.119–166; *Ant.* 13.171–173; 18.11–25), Maston substantiates that a diversity of opinions existed on the relationship between divine and human agency. By contrasting Sirach and the *Hodayot*,

36 Preston Sprinkle, 'The Afterlife in Romans: Understanding Paul's Glory Motif in Light of the Apocalypse of Moses and 2 Baruch', in *Lebendige Hoffnungewiger Tod?!: Jenseitsvorstellungen im Hellenismus, Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Michael Labahn and Manfred Lang (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 5, rightly asks what is actually meant by a term like 'synergism'. Yinger ('Continuing Quest', 387–88) helpfully presses beyond asking whether or not something is conditional to scrutinising in what sense it is conditional.

37 So Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 88: 'The tensions here have been long debated, but the present controversy over the new perspective shows that the debate has still a long way to run'.

38 For a recent foray into the theme, however, see Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency'. Brad Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, Studies in Biblical Literature II (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), highlights the importance of grace and its implications for human dependence, but more could be done to specify exactly what this means, and how it might relate to other Jewish perspectives.

39 John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, eds. *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, LNTS 335 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), here at p. 2.

40 Barclay, 'Introduction', 8.

he is able to situate Paul *within* a lively Jewish debate.⁴¹ In many ways these works represent a new beginning and not the end of discussion on a topic that still has ‘a long way to run’.⁴² By investigating the precise relationship between grace, human transformation, and obedience in Paul against the backdrop of other Jewish perspectives, I aim to move the debate another step beyond old and new perspective paradigms.

1.2 Method of Investigation

1.2.1 *Hermeneutics of Agency*

Any move forward in discussions regarding Paul and Judaism requires a fitting comparative methodology.⁴³ This study starts with Carol Newsom’s suggestion that ‘[t]he image of culture as conversation is heuristically valuable for thinking about Second Temple Judaism’.⁴⁴ She believes ‘one can treat the diverse cultural phenomena of Second Temple Judaism as a protracted discussion of the question, “What really constitutes Israel”?’⁴⁵ To ask this question, so fundamental to Jewish identity, is to ask simultaneously: ‘What is the nature of our relationship to God?’ But that question itself raises issues about the dynamic between gift and response, grace and agency.

For any Israelite, the answers given to these types of questions must be reasoned on the basis of the heritage entrusted to them.⁴⁶ Paul was no exception. It was Richard Hays who forcefully drew our attention to the fact that Paul’s letters often constitute ‘an intertextual conversation between Paul and the voice of Scripture’.⁴⁷ Hays demonstrated that the texts Paul calls *γραφαίς ἀγίας* (Rom 1:2) and the events he calls *εὐαγγέλιον* worked in dynamic interdependence

41 Jason Maston, *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: a Comparative Study* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 176. Maston addresses the topic of the role of obedience in Paul, but more precision could be used in understanding exactly how Paul and his contemporaries relate divine and human agency *in* the obedience of the human agent (120–121, 170–174, 177–179).

42 Dunn, ‘Whence, What and Whither?’, 88.

43 Barclay, ‘Introduction’, 2.

44 Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 4.

45 Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 4.

46 Francis Watson, *Paul and The Hermeneutics of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1.

47 Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 37. See also the discussion by Peter Stuhlmacher, ‘Theologische Probleme des Römerbriefpräskripts’, *EvT* 27 (1967), 377–78.

to refashion the apostle's world of thought. One would thus expect that Paul's multiplex ideas about grace and agency cannot be wholly detached from the ancestral texts he read.

In his innovative work *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, Francis Watson exploits intertextuality as a method for comparing Paul with other Jews. Since Paul was not unique in having to reconcile his views with the scriptural texts, Watson demonstrates how one can set Paul's reading of texts alongside additional readings to engender critical dialogue, particularly over issues of divine and human agency.⁴⁸ This approach holds three immediate advantages. First, the comparison between Paul and other Jews is on their own, or better, their ancestral writings' terms. Second, the context of the Jewish literature is not easily ignored, since to understand different readings properly one must understand how those readings function in their respective settings. Finally, the diversity of Jewish viewpoints need not be downplayed: we can now situate Paul's reading alongside other divergent interpretations without assuming that he is *sui generis* in every respect.

While this methodology allows access to the distinctiveness of various Jewish positions, in theory giving each author a seat at the proverbial table rather than a vote for the party platform called 'Second Temple Judaism', my immediate purpose is to illuminate Paul. Consequently, this investigation explores early Jewish readings of ancestral texts in order to clarify the points at which Paul's hermeneutic and views about grace and agency are both similar and unique. In each case an initial study of how an author interacts with his tradition is supplemented by an examination of broader but related motifs about grace, transformation, and agency. In addition to bringing to light Paul's distinctive contribution, an examination of the Jewish literature will expand our models for thinking through how ancients could structure divine and human agency, thus better enabling us to interpret Paul's perplexing discourse. Finally, by relating Paul's own scriptural interpretation to his wider theology, we will be able to see if Paul has simply co-opted the Jewish texts for rhetorical advantage, or whether the texts play a more fundamental role in informing the grace-agency dynamic we find throughout his letters.

48 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, argues that Paul reads in his scriptural heritage a twofold witness: one asserting the hermeneutical priority of Law (e.g., Lev 18:5) and the other proclaiming the hermeneutical priority of God's promised initiative which generates worldwide faith (e.g., Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4; see, e.g., 39, 76, 198–201, 218–219, 277).

1.2.2 *The Question of Scripture*

The fluidity, diversity, transmission, development, and various uses of Jewish texts during this period has raised significant questions about how authoritative religious writings were viewed by Second Temple Jews.⁴⁹ Since most Jews did not consider the canonisation process to have been completed by the end of first century B.C.E., the application of terms like ‘Bible’ and ‘Scripture’ to this period is undoubtedly anachronistic.⁵⁰ Such a recognition, however, does not deny the authority that certain individual texts and bodies of texts carried for these Jews (Rom 3:21; Lk 24:44; 4 Ezra 14:23–48; 2 Macc 15:9; Sir Prologue, 4 Macc 18:22; Josephus, *A.J.* 9.281; *C. Ap.* 1.37–43). As García Martínez notes, ‘this authority appears in the way [the texts] are used, quoted, interpreted or rewritten in other compositions’.⁵¹ Complexities arise, however, when one asks: Why were texts considered authoritative? Were there thought to be different degrees of authority between various texts? What traditions outside of what we now call the Hebrew Bible were considered authoritative and how were they thought to relate to the ‘biblical’ works?

As important as these questions are, answering them is not intrinsic to the argument of this book. It is the shared recognition that a given ancient text was considered authoritative by Paul and his respective contemporaries that makes comparison possible. The term ‘Scripture’ is valuable in referring to this common heritage. Furthermore, without a better alternative, the designations ‘biblical’ and ‘Hebrew Bible’ have practical use in referring to a later collection of texts. Thus throughout this work I continue to use these designations. Yet by referring to Paul and his contemporaries’ common ancestral heritage as Scripture and by using the designation ‘Hebrew Bible’ I do not assume that all Jews would answer the questions above in exactly the same way, much less do I wish to impute later canonical concepts back into the Second Temple mindset.

49 On the question of Scripture and authority during this period, see Mladen Popovic, ed. *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, JSJSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Karin Finsterbusch and Armin Lange, *What is Bible* (Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012).

50 Florentino García Martínez, ‘Rethinking the Bible’, in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popovic (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 20, notes how ‘Sixty years of research into the Scrolls have proved without any doubt that our idea of “the Bible” is a complete anachronism for that period’ because though the process of canon formation was at an ‘advanced stage, it had yet to be crystallised’.

51 García Martínez, ‘Rethinking the Bible’, 22.

1.2.3 *Field of Analysis*

If comparisons could be made between Pauline and Jewish readings of a number of texts, certain texts are more apropos, offering themselves as arenas on which the battle for particular subjects could be fought.⁵² T.J. Deidun notes how in what has come to be known as the Hebrew Bible ‘only three texts speak of an interior intervention of God in the depth of man’s personality for a directly ethical purpose’: Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 31:31–34, and Ezekiel 36:26–27.⁵³ Closely related to the latter two are Jeremiah 32:39–41 and Ezekiel 11:19–20. All these passages reflect on the problem of human failure and offer a solution in the form of a transformed heart; all suggest complex possibilities for relating divine and human agencies and, as is the contention of this project, all were read alongside one another by their earliest Jewish interpreters.⁵⁴ As such, the interpretative traditions of these seminal texts provide potent starting points for deciphering Paul and his Jewish contemporaries’ respective positions about humanity’s ability to obey God.⁵⁵

At a methodological level, then, my inquiry is built on previous intertextual investigations. At the same time, this work arises out of a need for more reflection on Paul’s reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10. Hays, for instance, gives

52 Watson’s own reason for selecting texts is ‘simply on the grounds that they would make good dialogue partners for Paul’ (*Hermeneutics of Faith*, xi). In a work which looks exclusively at Lev 18:5, Preston Sprinkle has shown the value of limiting comparison to a specific text in his *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). He comes to similar conclusions as Watson (see esp. 196n10).

53 T.J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul*, 89, AnBib (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 54.

54 On the similarities between these texts, which would allow them to be read together, see Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 84–95, who advances previous arguments made by A. Cholewinski, ‘Zur theologishchen Deutung des Moabbundes’, *Bib* 66 (1985), 96–111 and Georg Braulik, *Deuteronomium*, Neue Echter Bibel Altes Testament (Würzburg: Echter, 1986), 2:212. For a full discussion of the prophets, see also Anja Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch: redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Ez 34–39* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 90–106, 110–111. Thomas M. Raitt, *A Theology of Exile: Judgment/Deliverance in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 204–06; cf. Baruch J. Schwartz, ‘Ezekiel’s Dim View of Israel’s Restoration’, in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 51.

55 One text that will not be considered in depth is Psalm 51:10. Psalm 51:10 was not as closely connected with these other texts in the interpretive tradition, most likely because Psalm 51 does not share with these others a return-from-exile motif.

Paul's heart-circumcision metaphor only a few paragraphs in light of its scriptural background.⁵⁶ Watson and Martyn believe Paul overlooks Deuteronomy 30:1–10 altogether because it gives a law-shaped solution to Israel's problem.⁵⁷ At the conclusion of his study on *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul*, however, Guy Waters proffers the relationship between Romans 2:29 and Deuteronomy 30:6 as a topic for further research.⁵⁸ Timothy W. Berkley goes further by establishing the allusion, but the focus of his study is on intertextual methodology with little thought given to either the context of Deuteronomy 30 or the implications that Paul's reading carries for agency dynamics.⁵⁹ In distinction from these previous studies, it is my aim to demonstrate how Paul drank deeply from these scriptural narratives about heart-transformation and show how they gave sustenance to Pauline convictions about grace, transformation, and agency.⁶⁰

This project, then, focuses on the interpretative traditions surrounding Deuteronomy 30, Jeremiah 31, and Ezekiel 36–37 with an eye to unlocking Second Temple views about grace and agency, transformation and obedience.⁶¹ Part I situates the passages from Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel within the larger context of each book. I begin by outlining two distinct ways in which Deuteronomy 30:1–14 can be read, each holding various implications for the

56 Hays, *Echoes*, 44–45.

57 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 436n41, 439; J. Louis Martyn, 'Epilogue: An Essay in Pauline Meta-Ethics', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 173–83.

58 Guy Prentiss Waters, *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 251–52.

59 Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17–29* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

60 Other studies on the interpretative tradition of Deut 30, Jer 31, and Ezek 36 include articles by R. Le Déaut, 'Le thème de la circoncision du cœur (Dt. xxx 6; Jér. iv 4) dans les versions anciennes (LXX et Targum) et à Qumrân', in *Congress Volume: Vienna, 1980*, ed. J.A. Emerton, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 178–205 and Werner E. Lemke, 'Circumcision of the Heart: The Journey of a Biblical Metaphor', in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 299–319. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, addresses the subject but cross-references Deut 30:6 only three times. Moreover, he offers no analysis of the Jewish background. Various other works touch on the theme both inside and outside of Paul, but no monographs are currently devoted to the topic.

61 As has become common today, I use the terms Second Temple Judaism and Second Temple period as a loose description of Jews living in and around the Second Temple period. Hence by including 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, I do not mean to suggest that these were written while the Second Temple was standing.

interaction between divine agency and the competence of moral agents. The motif of heart-transformation in Jeremiah and Ezekiel is then considered. Since Deuteronomy 30 is the most influential of the three for later interpreters, it receives primary attention.

Part 2 investigates how these passages were read in and around the Second Temple period. We begin with the Septuagint to see what insight this early translation might give into how the texts were read. Chapter 5 surveys the assorted allusions that appear in the Dead Sea documents. Chapter 6 examines texts from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. From an investigation into the uses of Deuteronomy 30 in Baruch, Jubilees, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra it will become clear that an array of hermeneutics and beliefs existed amongst ancient Jews. Part 2 closes with a chapter on Philo, who offers yet another perspective on these issues. While these specific texts are chosen because they manifest allusions to the heart-transformation narratives, the rationale behind the order of presentation is simply that it aids comparison.

Finally, in Part 3, we turn our attention to Paul. In chapter 8, an investigation into Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 29–30 begins to expose many facets within his way of structuring divine grace and human agency. Chapter 9 investigates how the inferences reached from Romans 2:17–29 interact with larger themes in Pauline theology, particularly his presentation of moral agency in the flesh and in the Spirit in Romans 5–8. Here we also explore Paul's peculiar use of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 in Romans 10:6–8. These initial conclusions based on the book of Romans are then briefly substantiated by an investigation of 2 Corinthians 3, Philippians 3, and Colossians 2 in chapter 10. The final chapter explores the implications this study has for various issues raised here in the introduction.

1.2.4 *Criteria for Determining Scriptural Reflection*

In his groundbreaking work, Hays proposed the following criteria for discerning intertextual echoes: 1) *Availability*; 2) *Volume*; 3) *Recurrence*; 4) *Thematic Coherence*; 5) *Historical Plausibility*; 6) *History of Interpretation*; 7) and *Satisfaction*.⁶² I draw on these criteria as they have been modified and developed by Berkley for the purpose of identifying sources of Pauline exegesis.⁶³ Initially, I will look for:

⁶² Hays, *Echoes*, 29–32.

⁶³ See Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, 60–64. Berkley improves Hays's excellent work by giving more weight to explicit verbal links and itemising 'Thematic Coherence' into 'Explication', 'Common Themes', and 'Common Linear Development'. For other discussions of criteria, see Michael B. Thompson, *Clothed with*

- 1) *Common Vocabulary*: Common vocabulary includes any verbal correspondence between the Jewish Scriptures and the text in question. Appearances of rare or technical vocabulary are weighted more heavily. While it may strengthen the allusion, grammatical exactitude is unnecessary. Furthermore, where Greek writers correspond to Hebrew traditions or where Hebrew writers correspond to extant Greek traditions, it is assumed that even without access to an author's Vorlage, reasonable deductions can be inferred about correspondence.
- 2) *Vocabulary Clusters*: If multiple vocabulary correspondences appear from a wider scriptural context, this strengthens the case that an author is drawing off of the entire context. Conversely, if vocabulary correspondence is strung throughout an interpreter's discourse, this could indicate that the scriptural passage forms a substructure to that discourse.
- 3) *Links with other Texts*: The widespread hermeneutical practice of associating texts by various links allowed Second Temple Jews to link Deuteronomy 30 with other passages (e.g., Deut 10:16, Ezek 36:26). Since this practice would often create a network of mutually-interpreting texts informing the basis for an interpreter's reading,⁶⁴ the presence of 'linked' texts increases the likelihood of an allusion. Moreover, considering which texts authors invest with hermeneutical priority gives some indication of an author's hermenutic and theology.
- 4) *Explication*: An allusion to the Scriptures will be deemed more likely if that allusion sheds light on an interpreter's presuppositions or argument.

Confirmatory criteria are:

- 5) *Recurrence*: If an author refers to a passage elsewhere, this gives additional credence to the suggested allusion.
- 6) *Common Themes*: Additional confirmation is gained when it can be shown that an author reflects on themes that are found in the proposed allusion.

Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13, JSNTSup 59 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 32–36; Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7*, AGJU 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 17–20; Roy E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2*, WUNT 102 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 24–25; Stanley E. Porter, 'The Use of the Old Testament in the New: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology', in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (1997), 80–88.

64 See Carol Kern Stockhausen, '2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis', in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 144–45.

- 7) *Common Linear Development*: When the movement of thought and themes in a scriptural passage parallel that of an interpreter, an allusion to the broader context will be deemed more likely.

In order to facilitate readability, I have limited detailed discussions of these criteria to those places where I feel echoes need more justification. At the outset, one should acknowledge that any such analysis holds a degree of subjectivity. Some proposals may become satisfying only in light of the cumulative weight of the entire project.

1.2.5 *Categories for Thinking about Grace and Agency*

In order to set conceptions about grace and agency within their ancient context, it is necessary to put to one side many modern assumptions about these topics.⁶⁵ That fact notwithstanding, given that ancient thought structures are in many ways no less complex than our own, the critical use of sophisticated language is a necessary and unavoidable tool in accessing the dynamics imbedded within ancient literature. I have cautiously employed the use of theological and philosophical terminology to facilitate the communication of ancient viewpoints. It might be worth clarifying some of the more important terms used in the present discussion:

Agent: one who performs an act to bring about subsequent effects.

Agency: the faculty of an agent or of acting.

Created Cause: a cause from within the created order.

Created Effect: a change in the created order made by a created cause.

Created Efficacy: the capacity which human agents possess to bring about change described in terms of their relations to others within a created causal nexus.

Competent Moral Agents: human agents that are sufficiently equipped to bring about the created effect of obedience to God.

Partially Competent Moral Agents: human agents that are partially equipped to bring about the created effect of obedience to God.

Incompetent Moral Agents: human agents who can in no way contribute to the created effect of obedience to God.

Integrity: an ability to speak of the human agent as a genuine cause in the created order because its agency is neither compromised nor diminished by the influence of other agents.

65 Barclay, 'Introduction', 3–4.

Competitive Relationship: when divine and human agency are related to one another in an either/or structure.

Non-contrastive Relationship: when divine and human agencies are not set in competitive relationship with one another: not either/or but both/and.

Kinship: when divine and human agencies are considered to be fluid aspects of a whole.

Asymmetry: when human agency operates in dependence upon divine agency.

Coincidence: when two agents are the subjects of the same effect.

Coinherence: when divine and human agency stand in inseparable unity.

Occasionalism: when human action provides only the occasion for God to bring about subsequent effects.

Grace: 'grace', in its broadest definition, is a gift given from one personal being to another. In the literature considered here, it most often refers to God's gift of putting people in proper relationship to himself.

This vocabulary raises two issues that need to be spelled out further in light of our current intellectual climate.

1.2.5.1 Models for Relating Divine and Human Agency

The first issue that requires discussion concerns what models are available for relating divine and human agency.⁶⁶ While the created efficacy of human agents can be considered in itself, apart from an immediate reference to God, it is important to realise that this does not necessarily rule out God's own agency. In our modern world, we tend to frame divine and human agencies in anti-thetical terms, structuring them in competitive relationship: the agency of one operates in inverse proportion to the agency of the other.⁶⁷ When this is done, talk of human efficacy necessarily limits either the scope or the potency of divine agency. Conversely, if within this model God's agency goes unrestricted, the result is occasionalism: humans are not the genuine cause of subsequent effects in the created order; human action simply provides a shell for an

66 For a helpful discussion of the models on which these reflections are based, see Barclay, 'Introduction', 6–7.

67 By associating this model with modern tendencies, I in no way wish to insinuate that it was not possible for ancients. Yet see J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

exercise of divine power.⁶⁸ While on this scheme human agency might be dependent on the divine agent for its existence, human freedom, nevertheless, must entail some type of independence from God's own action, and space for human action is always created by a divine act of Self-confinement.

Other models are available, however. It is possible to relate divine and human agencies in some non-contrastive fashion. In this case, talk of human agency need not deny or even limit divine agency. One example of this is what John M.G. Barclay has described as the kinship model. On this understanding, popular among the Stoics, God and humanity do not comprise ontologically distinct types of being; rather humans are parts of God. When humans act in accordance with the divine will, they represent an extension of God's will in the world. Here humans act in the same causal nexus as God, because in many respects the two are one and the same. And yet because it is humans who share in the divine (and not vice-versa), there is asymmetry in kinship oriented, non-contrastive relationships: human agency is always dependent on the divine.

Another way to relate divine and human agencies in a non-contrastive fashion is to conceive of God and humans as operating in different causal nexuses on account of God's absolute transcendence. In this case, God and humans are not of a similar type of being, but wholly distinct. Consider, for example, P.T. Nimmo's description of the way divine and human agencies are discussed in Barth:

The being in action of God and the being in action of the ethical agent are not two species of the same genus. Correspondingly, for Barth, divine action and human action cannot be brought together and compared as if they were two species of the same genus.⁶⁹

Unlike the kinship model, here the actions of God and humanity can coincide in a created effect without diminishing the integrity of the human agent as a *distinct* agent. When it happens that divine and human agencies are both equally responsible for the *whole* of a created effect, there are various possibilities for how these two agencies might relate within that act.

68 Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 86. I am greatly indebted to Tanner's work for many of these concepts and for sharpening my thinking on these issues. I am also indebted to George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

69 See Paul T. Nimmo, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth's Ethical Vision* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 122–25, here 123.

First, divine and human agencies could operate independently of one another, as on a parallel track. Of course, if God's agency is understood to extend to all created effects, then this would not imply that human effects are ever independent of the divine agent, only that as distinct causes on an effect, God and humans work autonomously. In contrast, one could also understand divine and human agencies to operate in intimate connection with one another. Here we could speak of divine and human agency not only coexisting in integrity, but also coinhering in basic unity: The human agent operates neither independently of the divine agent, nor is its agency eradicated by divine agency, nor even do the two agencies form a synthesis. And within this transcendent oriented, non-contrastive structure, there are various options for relating the two asymmetrically, either because the human agent is established by divine agency, or even because its agency is continually and directly sustained by divine agency.

Notable is that on non-contrastive structures that assume God's unrestricted sovereignty there is no need to mention divine agency where created causes adequately explain created effects. Talk of divine agency, then, while unnecessary, only serves to highlight divine involvement and/or humanity's dependence on God. But if a created effect cannot be adequately explained in terms of created causes, this will often require a direct reference to God's own agency.⁷⁰ An example of this would be in cases where human agents are either partially or completely incompetent to bring about a created effect.⁷¹

Also notable is that within such structures it is possible, as Kathryn Tanner argues, that under the direct determination and creative intention of God, creatures possess the capacity as effective agents to perform acts which influence God.⁷² One must be careful, therefore, not to confuse an author's predilection for speaking of God's agency in an unrestricted manner for a certain belief about the incompetence or dependence of moral agents. Even after taking into account God's foreordination of all things, in many cases we will see that we are still left with the question of whether humans are constituted with an agency sufficiently capable of performing an act to which God has determined to respond; or whether human efficacy is either partially or totally absent as a result of either anthropological corruption or creation.

70 Tanner, *God and Creation*, 105–06.

71 Miracles, e.g., fall into this category.

72 Tanner, *God and Creation*, 96–104. Molinism provides another way of conceiving this.

1.2.5.2 Associations with Grace

A second topic which requires further discussion regards modern assumptions about gift and grace. James R. Harrison has demonstrated how ancient discussion about divine χάρις is fruitfully understood against the backdrop of the Graeco-Roman benefaction system.⁷³ But in many respects, the grace-conceptuality behind this system functions very differently from the ways in which it functions in modern theological discourse.⁷⁴ Today, we tend to think of gift and grace as somehow unconditional. For a person to qualify for the reception of a gift or for a gift to carry with it certain conditions or preconditions is to undermine the very nature of the gift as gift. In contrast to modern gift/obligation dichotomies, in pre-modern cultures gifts assumed the necessity of reciprocation.⁷⁵ In the ancient world social, communal, and economic networks all depended upon cycles of reciprocity.⁷⁶ One gave gifts with the intention of establishing and furthering such cycles for one's own good and for the good of the community. Thus we read in Seneca, for example, how 'gift' was in no way exclusive of self-regard and expectation.⁷⁷ Even if Seneca's discussion of these topics represents one rather philosophical example, it nevertheless demonstrates how ancients could conceive of gift and grace in ways that strike moderns as altogether bizarre.

Accordingly, those seeking to understand ancient sensibilities cannot automatically suppose that grace is opposed to concepts like conditionality, worth, and expectation. This study proceeds on the assumption that in order to understand the nature of a gift, particular attention must be paid to the ways in which that 'gift' relates to expectations of reciprocity, qualifications

73 James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

74 Rightly, Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law*, WUNT 124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 170: 'The Christian history of the word may have somewhat obscured its semantic field.'

75 See the seminal work of Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990), which originally appeared in 1924 as *Essai sur le don*. For a general introduction to the literature, see Alan D. Schrift, 'Introduction: Why Gift?', in *The Logic of The Gift: Towards an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (London: Routledge, 1997), 1–22. For an overview of how these concepts relate to the New Testament, see David Arthur DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 95–156.

76 Seneca calls gift-exchange 'the chief bond of human society' (*Ben.* 1.4.2).

77 See, e.g., *Ben.* 4.40.1–2. See further Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and its Human Response', *HTR* 101 (2008), 16.

for reception, and the accessibility of gift outside of its reception as a gift.⁷⁸ Perhaps, then, all one should assume within the confines of the above definition is that gift/grace distinguishes itself from payment in so far as it cannot be demanded and involves some personal-relational component. Bearing these methodological considerations in mind, we are now able to turn to an analysis of the relevant texts in the Jewish Scriptures, Second Temple literature, and Paul.

78 On this last point note that if someone were to give me medicine necessary to sustain my life, and such medicine I could just as easily go and buy myself, that is entirely different than if someone were to give that same medicine in a situation where I could never afford to buy it myself! In each case both are gifts; in each case both are the *same* gift; but both are not gifts in the same way.

PART 1

*Jewish Scriptures: Restoration Agency in
Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel*



In Deuteronomy the covenant came not only with the possibility of life and blessing (28:1–14) but also with the prospect of death and curse (28:15–68). By chapter 29 Moses foresees how the curse will take effect. For the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Moses' nightmare had become a reality. What all three figures share is a refusal to let death and curse have the final word. In their own ways, Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel each imagine a restoration to life and blessing beyond any present or future failing on the part of God's people. But what exactly each author thought this restoration would entail to solve the problem of human ineptitude, and how it would come about, are the more evasive questions this section seeks to address.¹

¹ By examining these texts together, I do not want to suggest that differences do not exist between them. To tease out all those differences would take us away from our immediate concerns regarding conceptions of agency and transformation, however. What matters most for this investigation is that any Second Temple reader could connect these passages due to similarities in content and what hermeneutical strategies they might employ to make sense of the texts.

Deuteronomy 30: God and Israel in the Drama of Restoration

Deuteronomy 30:1–10 chronicles the plan for the reversal of the curse. The phrase ‘and it will be when all these things come upon you’ looks to an unspecified time in the future when Israel will find herself in exile (v. 1). Whether or not ‘all these things/words’ (כל־הדברים האלה) refers to seasons of both blessing and curse or simply to a time of curse is difficult to determine.¹ Grammatically, ‘all these things’ appears to concern both blessings and curses. The verses leading up to chapter 30, however, are dominated by the theme of curse (29:18–27)² and the verses under consideration respond to the situation of a broken covenant. It seems that even if Israel has at some time experienced both blessing and curse, כל־הדברים האלה has the curses primarily in view.

Israel and YHWH are the two actors ruling the discourse and both have roles in the drama of restoration. The *Leitwort* שׁוּב highlights and balances an interplay between the actors: Twice Israel is the subject of שׁוּב (vv. 1–2) and twice YHWH (v. 3). This dynamic is apparent, albeit in reverse order, in verses 9–10. Thus, verses 1–3 and 9–10 can be structured as follows:

- A) Israel returns and obeys YHWH, returning to her heart (vv. 1–2)
- B) YHWH returns to Israel, turning her turning (v. 3)
- B¹) YHWH returns to Israel (v. 9)
- A¹) Israel obeys and returns to YHWH (v. 10)

A relationship exists between divine and human action. The questions of how they are related and how verses 6–8 contribute to that relationship are more obscure and can be read in two distinct manners.

1 Whether these seasons are experienced sequentially, so Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 348, or intermingled, so S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3rd ed., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 329, is equally unclear.

2 Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), 362.

2.1 Reading 1: The Priority of Israel in Restoration

2.1.1 *The Priority of Israel and The Condition of Renewal*

The reading that has held the consensus in both ancient and modern times focuses upon Israel. Verses 3–7 indicate all that YHWH is willing to do once Israel returns (v. 2). Verses 1–3 form one long conditional sentence with verses 1–2 as protasis and verse 3 as the beginning of the apodosis, suggesting an ‘if Israel-then YHWH’ construction.³ Likewise, in this reading verses 9–10 form a similar construction so that in a series of three occurrences, an initial כִּי (v. 9) holds together an apodosis and the next two occurrences mark the protasis (v. 10): ‘YHWH will . . . if Israel . . . if Israel’. Verse 6 functions as ‘another step’ in the plan:⁴ After Israel returns to YHWH and YHWH returns Israel to the land, YHWH does a further work by circumcising Israel’s heart and transferring the curse to her enemies (vv. 6–7). Whatever the varying interpretative nuances of heart-circumcision,⁵ on this reading Israel elicits the divine gift. As P. Craigie summarises: ‘Having remembered, repented, and obeyed, then the people could look to God for his aid . . . only then could they expect to know once again his compassion.’⁶

2.1.2 *The Priority of Israel, Further Support*

Chapter 30 seems to support this reading. Verse 19 exhorts Israel to ‘Choose life!’, and verses 11–14 fashion a direct rebuke against those tempted to think they are unable to accomplish Torah: It is ‘near’ (קרוב) so they can ‘perform it’

3 Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 267; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 348. Commentators conclude the apodosis either at v. 7, v. 8, or v. 9.

4 Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 348.

5 J. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 108, understands YHWH’s work to be the removal of ‘the psychological impediments to wholehearted devotion’.

This finds some support in the LXX which translates לִבָּב as δὲάνοια in 29:17. Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 349, essentially thinks heart-circumcision makes obedience ‘enduringly possible’. Le Déaut, ‘la circoncision’, 181, understands the metaphor as the conversion which God himself performs.

6 Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 363; so also Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, 2 vols., WBC (Nashville: Nelson, 2001), 2:735. Tigay (*Deuteronomy*, 285) records how the rabbis understood the progression of verses 1–6 as follows: ‘When a person seeks to purify himself, he receives help in doing so’ (on the basis of Bekhor Shor and Ramban, citing Shab. 104a and parallels from Yochanan Muffs, *Love & Joy: Law, Language, and Religion in Ancient Israel* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1992), 17.

(לעשתו).⁷ Furthermore, while in verses 1–5 and in verses 9–10 there is a balance between Israel and YHWH turning, Israel is the only one who turns in verses 6–8. So out of the seven occurrences of שׁוּב, Israel is the subject four times, while YHWH is the subject three times. In addition, Israel's turning is stated emphatically in verse 8: וּאֵתָהּ תִּשׁוּב. When modified to incorporate all seven instances of שׁוּב, the structure of verses 1–10 suggests:

- A) Israel returns and obeys YHWH, returning to her heart (vv. 1–2)
- B) YHWH returns to Israel by turning her turning (vv. 3–7)
- C) Israel, even Israel, returns and obeys YHWH (v. 8)
- B¹) YHWH returns to Israel (v. 9)
- A¹) Israel obeys and returns to YHWH (v. 10)⁸

This structure highlights the priority of Israel's return: both YHWH and Israel turn, but the stress is on Israel who 'makes the first move'.⁹

2.1.3 *The Priority of Israel and Its Implications for Paul and Later Interpreters*

How we understand Deuteronomy 30 in its literary context will necessarily play a part in how we assess its interpreters. Watson, for example, suggests that Paul did not believe 'Israel of the present [had] succeeded in putting right its relationship with God (along the lines of Deuteronomy 30.1–10)'.¹⁰ In fact, for Watson Paul did not believe that Israel's situation could be resolved by that scenario, since Deuteronomy 30:1–10 witnesses to something other than an unconditional divine saving act. While Moses' song in chapter 32 would attain 'to a higher level of insight, testifying . . . to a divine rather than a human solution',¹¹ in Deuteronomy 30 Moses has opted for a human answer to Israel's problem.

Martyn has a similar objection. He sees Deuteronomy 30 as part of the classic moral drama which always presupposes the competency of the moral agent.¹² Though Martyn never mentions verses 1–10 explicitly, when he speaks

⁷ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 268.

⁸ Similar to Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 284.

⁹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 347; see also Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 266; Rodney Alan Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution*, Early Judaism and its Literature (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 15–18.

¹⁰ Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 436n41.

¹¹ Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 439.

¹² Martyn, 'Epilogue'.

generally about Deuteronomy 30 and about human failure being resolved through repentance, he appears to have the entire chapter in mind. For both these scholars, Deuteronomy 30 could not have been understood by Paul as a positive witness to the gospel because of its optimistic evaluation of human nature.

Yet these analyses assume that a reading prioritising Israel's return to the Law is the only valid reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10. While my analysis thus far has shown this to be a viable option, it is not the only possible construal. In fact, we shall presently see how ambiguity in Deuteronomy 30 also lends the text to a reading that prioritises the creative initiative of God, a reading in which Moses must assume the office of prophet and testify to YHWH's saving intervention. An analysis along these lines questions the assumption that Paul would bypass Deuteronomy 30:1–10 and, consequently, invites a reconsideration of how this text might have influenced him.

2.2 Reading 2: Divine Priority in Restoration

There are three ways in which Deuteronomy 30 opens itself up to a reading which prioritises God's initiative and agency: 1) syntactical ambiguity; 2) the structure of the text with respect to *Leitwörter*; and 3) the larger context of the book. We consider each in turn.

2.2.1 *Divine Priority and Syntactical Ambiguity*

2.2.1.1 Syntactical Ambiguity in Verses 1–5

Most commentators assert an 'if-then' relationship between verses 1b–3, beginning the apodosis in verse 3 with the change of subject from Israel to YHWH.¹³ An Israel-Priority reading then understands the relationship between protasis (if you return . . ., vv. 1a–2) and apodosis (then YHWH will . . ., vv. 3–7) as that of cause to effect. But as M. Brettler has pointed out, the syntax is ambiguous and does not necessitate these choices.¹⁴

While a protasis is introduced in verse 1a by the formula **וְהָיָה כִּי**, this expression appears five other times in Deuteronomy (6:10; 11:29; 15:16; 26:1; 31:21) and

13 Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 363; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 328; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 284; Lemke, 'Circumcision of the Heart', 309.

14 Marc Zvi Brettler, 'Predestination in Deuteronomy 30:1–10', in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*, ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 176.

the meaning is temporal in all but one.¹⁵ The exception, 15:16, is distinguishable by its context and syntax.¹⁶ Without grammatical or contextual reasons for thinking otherwise, it could be argued that כִּי וְהָיָה in 30:1 is best understood temporally: the contingency is with respect to time and not event.¹⁷

The location of the apodosis is also uncertain.¹⁸ Following the clause introduced by כִּי וְהָיָה comes a string of *wegatal* verbs. The only indication that the apodosis begins in verse 3 is the change in subject. But a change in subject does not mandate a shift from protasis to apodosis. In fact, on that basis the apodosis should begin in verse 1b where the subject changes from 'all these things' to 'you', resulting in a substantially different sense:¹⁹

And it will be when all these words/things come upon you, *then*²⁰ you shall return (וְהָשַׁבְתָּ) to your heart... and you shall return (וְשָׁבְתָּ) to YHWH... and you shall obey (וְשָׁמַעְתָּ)... and YHWH your God shall return (וְשָׁב)....

The contingency here lies purely in the condition of the curses taking effect. No contingency is placed upon Israel herself, as her turning forms part of the apodosis—something that *will* happen when the curses culminate. Read this way, as G. von Rad notes, '[the text] contains no admonitions, but... is clothed altogether in the style of prophetic predictions.'²¹ This is not to argue that a prophetic reading is *the* correct reading; it is simply to show that gaps exist

15 Paul A. Barker, *The Triumph of Grace in Deuteronomy: Faithless Israel, Faithful Yahweh in Deuteronomy* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 154.

16 Deut 15:16 comes in a casuistic section giving instructions for how one is to deal with the poor (15:7–11). Verse 12–18 present instructions for the treatment of an Israelite who has become an indentured servant, both in letting him/her go, and in the case that (כִּי וְהָיָה) the servant should wish to remain.

17 So Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 154. Even though Nelson (*Deuteronomy*, 44) gives v. 1a temporal significance, he perceives an 'if-then' relationship in vv. 1b–3. To do this he must distinguish between the enactment of the curses (v. 1a) and Israel's turning (v. 1b). The former is viewed as a temporal clause 'And it will be *when*...;', while the latter introduces the more important 'if you turn...'

18 See Brettler, 'Predestination', 176; Norbert Lohfink, 'Der Neue Bund im Buch Deuteronomium?', *ZABR* 4 (1998), 120–121; also admitted by Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 438–439n43.

19 Deut 23:10 suggests that the first ו can be a ו of apodosis. See Brettler, 'Predestination', 175, 177.

20 Craigie (*Deuteronomy*, 361) does something similar when he starts the apodosis at v. 1b and then carries it through v. 3:... then you... then YHWH.

21 Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1966), 183.

within the text,²² and those gaps open the text up to different perceptions. If nothing in verses 1–3 requires that competent readers prioritise the action of Israel, does the same hold true for verses 9–10?

2.2.1.2 Syntactical Ambiguity in Verses 9–10

As previously noted, verses 9–10 form a similar structure to verses 1–3 and are held together by three כִּי-clauses. The first כִּי has a causal function and links verse 9a to 9b.²³ Verse 9 has a thematic and lexical correspondence to verses 3–5 and can be argued to parallel YHWH's actions there.²⁴ Verse 10 links back to verses 1–2.²⁵ Thus verses 9–10 have a close relationship to verses 1–5. Yet how one relates the actions of YHWH and Israel depends upon how one takes the כִּי-clauses in verse 10.

P. Barker correctly notes that it is common for commentators to 'translate the particle in v. 1a temporally ("when") but those in v. 10 conditionally ("if")'.²⁶ Yet this frequently betrays a bias for the Israel-Priority reading. Grammarians tell us that it is often difficult to distinguish between temporal and conditional clauses.²⁷ This becomes particularly vexing when כִּי-clauses precede their main clause and refer to future events.²⁸ Most often the degree of probability

22 Notably, the relationship between protasis and apodosis is also ambiguous. Though the two often relate as cause to effect, protasis can also relate to apodosis as evidence to inference. Israel's turning then becomes the evidence that YHWH is restoring her.

23 The word 'causal', as applied by grammarians, is used broadly to include nuances such as cause, reason, motivation, and explanation, best expressed by the German *Begründungssatz*. A 'causal' rendering of the כִּי can thus be 'direct' or 'indirect'. Lemke ('Circumcision of the Heart', 309) suggests an emphatic function. The emphatic function of the כִּי, however, is questionable; see Anneli Aejmelaeus, 'Function and Interpretation of ki in Biblical Hebrew', *JBL* 105 (1986), 202–07.

24 On thematic correspondences, note that both sections involve the land and the fruitfulness of Israel. On lexical correspondence, note אֵשׁ with YHWH as subject; note also אֲבֹתֶיךָ.

25 Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 155.

26 Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 154, citing Craigie, *Deuteronomy*; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*; J. Ridderbos, *Deuteronomy*, trans. Ed. M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1984); Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994).

27 So e.g., Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. T. Muraoka (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 1991), §166a: '[I]n certain cases it may be difficult to decide whether a given clause is temporal or conditional'.

28 Aejmelaeus, 'ki in Biblical Hebrew', 197; but compare Joüon (*Grammar*, §166p), who suggests that כִּי is only 'sometimes used in the conditional sense of if'.

regarding the event or action in question guides the interpreter's choice:²⁹ the higher the probability, the more likely כִּי should be rendered temporally. Although the clauses in verse 10 do not precede their main clause, they do look to the future. And while the probability of the actions in verse 10 are yet to be determined, the corresponding clause in verse 1 contains a high degree of expectation. In the chapters surrounding our text, the curses invoking exile move from potentiality to inevitability (29:18–28; 31:16–17, 27–29). Further, as discussed above, כִּי וְהָיָה should almost certainly be rendered temporally. Given the high correspondence between verse 10 and verses 1–2, it is reasonable to postulate a similar reading of כִּי as 'when' in both. Thus, while there is a temporal correspondence between the actions of YHWH and those of Israel, and while those actions are interconnected through the use of the verb שׁוּב, in verses 9–10 the dynamics of that relationship remain uncertain.

For the divine-priority reading the ambiguities in verses 1–5 and verses 9–10 remain unresolved at this point. It is only by focusing in on verses 6–8 and rereading the ambiguous clauses through those verses' hermeneutical light that tensions are resolved. We must remember that such a rereading is far from forced since textual gaps remain obscure, inviting reexamination, and since all reading is in some way dialectical. The logic of the divine-priority reading will fully surface only after we examine certain structural features in Deuteronomy 30:1–10 and consider its message in light of earlier motifs in the book.

2.2.2 *Divine Priority and the Structure of the Text with Respect to Leitwörter*

If one were to decide the structure of this passage on the subject of verbs alone, and especially of the key verb שׁוּב, Tigay would surely be right to carry the apodosis begun in verse 3 right up to verse 8.³⁰ This structure is encouraged by the observation that while the emphatic pronoun אֲתָה marks a clear break between verses 7 and 8, none appears after verse 5. Supporting the Israel-Priority hermeneutic, this analysis renders heart-circumcision as one of many benefits YHWH will impart to Israel as a result of her return. Barker, however, following the analysis of G. Vanoni, has given reasons for understanding verses 6–8 as a unit.³¹ His structure centers on the even distribution of *Leitwörter* throughout the text. Verses 1–3 and verses 9–10 contain the following key words or phrases:

²⁹ Aejmelaeus, 'ki in Biblical Hebrew', 197.

³⁰ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 284; see also Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, 2:736; Norbert Lohfink, 'Der Bundesschluss im Land Moab: Redaktionsgeschichtliches zu Dt 28:69–32:47', *BZ* 6 (1962), 41.

³¹ Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 141–44.

return (שוב); heart (לבב); you will obey his voice (ושמעת בקלו); with all your heart and with all your soul (בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך), and some variation of commanding/commandments (מצוה/צוה). All these words or phrases are present in verses 6 and 8.

V6: And YHWH your God will circumcise your heart (לבבך) and the heart (לבב) of your seed so that you love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul (בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך), so that you might live.

V8: And as for you, you will return (תשוב) and will obey the voice (ושמעת בקול) of YHWH and will do all of his commandments (מצותיו) which I am commanding you (מציד) this day.

If we divide the text at verse 8, however, we lose this even distribution of *Leitwörter*: verse 8 on its own lacks any reference to the heart or to the crucial phrase *בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך*; verses 6–7 lack any reference to turning or obedience. There is good reason therefore to understand the whole of verses 6–8 as a kind of inner frame corresponding to verses 1–5 and 9–10:

- A) Israel returns and obeys YHWH, returning to her heart (vv. 1–2)
- B) YHWH returns to Israel by turning her turning (v. 3)
- C) YHWH circumcises Israel's heart,
- C2) so Israel loves, returns, and obeys (vv. 6–8).
- B¹) YHWH returns to Israel (v. 9)
- A¹) Israel obeys and returns to YHWH (v. 10)

On this construal, the interplay that exists between the actions of God and Israel in verses 1–5 and verses 9–10 is also apparent in verses 6–8; yet unlike those outer frames, the interplay is not concentrated in the verb *שוב*. Conspicuously, not once does YHWH appear as the subject of *שוב*. Instead, the convergence of divine and human agency is located in the *לבב*. It is on the heart that God operates and it is from the heart that Israel loves. The *ל* + infinitive construct (*אהבה*) communicates that the divine act of circumcising Israel's heart effects her love.³² Heart-circumcision is then presupposed in verse 8, motivating Israel's turning and obedience.

32 A similar dynamic is reproduced in the LXX's ἀγαπᾶν.

2.2.3 *Divine Priority and the Larger Context of the Book*

2.2.3.1 Israel's Heart Problem

The reading that emphasises YHWH's action in verse 6 finds support from the larger context of Deuteronomy. Critical for this reading is that YHWH must operate on the heart before Israel can obey. Israel's problem of infidelity is ultimately rooted in her heart. This assumption is corroborated by Deuteronomy's stress on the heart as the nucleus of human responsiveness toward God. לֵב is the explicit means whereby Israel is to אהב (6:5; 13:4; 30:6); עבד (4:29); דרש (10:12; 11:13); שוב (30:2); שמע (30:10). As Barker notes, 'These are all key verbs in Deuteronomy, specifying the most important terms of response to Yahweh. With all these verbs, the repeated expression ובכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך underlines the importance of the heart'.³³

Yet in Deuteronomy Israel's heart is unwell. Deuteronomy 29:17–22 warns how exile will result from walking after the stubborn and rebellious heart (vv. 18–22). When the next generation arises and other nations inquire about the exile, the cause is explained from a different perspective: '[B]ecause they abandoned the covenant' (v. 24).³⁴ According to the logic of chapter 29, the distorted heart amounts to an abandonment of the covenant and summons covenant curse. Earlier in the chapter, Moses declares that YHWH has yet to give Israel a 'heart to know' (לב לדעת, v. 3). Consistent with this pessimism is the assertion that Israel has rebelled from the Exodus up until the present day (9:7); she has been stiff-necked from the beginning (9:13) and in vital need of heart-surgery (10:16). As J.G. McConville observes: 'The alternatives placed before the people both at 11:26–32 and in ch. 28 seem to be mocked by a theology that claims Israel is constitutionally incapable of choosing the way of life'.³⁵ A reading that prioritises divine agency finds this problem resolved in God's initiative to circumcise the heart. Until this occurs, any requirement for Israel to turn is at best a reminder of a promise instilling hope and at worse a condemning critique leading to despair.

33 Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 159.

34 The text moves fluidly from the individual to the corporate. On this, see Dennis T. Olson, 'How does Deuteronomy Do Theology? Literary Juxtaposition and Paradox in the New Moab Covenant in Deuteronomy 29–32', in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 209; cf. Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 358–59.

35 J.G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomical Theology*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 134.

2.2.3.2 The Transformation of Demand into Promise

Finally, the unique manner in which divine imperatives come as promises in Deuteronomy 30:6 could encourage the divine-priority hermeneutic. This phenomenon occurs with the verbs מול and אהב. Deuteronomy 10:16 is critical for understanding the dynamics behind heart-circumcision and love in 30:6. For one, Deuteronomy 10:16 is the only other time the verb ‘circumcise’ (מול) occurs in Deuteronomy. Further ‘circumcise’ is used metaphorically with the object ‘foreskin of your heart’ (ערלת לבבכם). But in the divine-priority hermeneutic the value of Deuteronomy 10:16 is in serving as a foil.

After grounding the demand for covenant fidelity in electing love, Deuteronomy 10:12–16 calls Israel to fear, walk, love and serve with all her being (v. 12). And while she is to keep the commandments, Moses’ focus is not on rules, but on the fundamental disposition Israel is to have toward God.³⁶ And yet if Israel is to offer this quality of responsiveness she must eventually deal with her stubbornness through heart-circumcision (10:16). This very logic is presupposed in 30:6. The marked difference between the passages is that in 10:16 *Israel* is the agent responsible for heart-circumcision, and there מול carries imperatival force. In 30:6 *God* circumcises Israel’s heart and there מול holds the perlocutionary effect of a promise.

Closely connected with YHWH’s act of heart-circumcision in 30:6 is Israel’s act of love: לאהבה... את-לבבך. Barker gives no less than six reasons for supposing that אהב is the most prominent of all verbs used to describe Israel’s responsiveness in Deuteronomy, three of which concern us here: 1) it is the only verb qualified three times by the prepositional phrase בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך; 2) it is the most recurrent demand in Deuteronomy; and 3) it holds a central place in the *Shema*.³⁷ Whether or not אהב is the most important of responsive verbs, it has a critical place in the book and can be used to summarise the requirements of the covenant (6:4–5).³⁸ It is therefore of great importance that Deuteronomy 30:6 is the first and only place in the book where אהב has Israel as its subject and is not ‘expressed as a commandment (6:5; 11:1), or an infinitive construct dependent on a verb of command (10:12;

36 Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 107; Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 204.

37 Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 160. See also Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of “Monotheism”* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 99; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 204.

38 On the relationship between the *Shema* and love, see MacDonald, *Monotheism*, 97–108.

11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:16; 20) or a participle with similar effect (13:4).³⁹ Deuteronomy 30:6 makes Israel's *Shema*-fulfilment directly dependent on a divine act.⁴⁰ While a reader could seek to harmonize the command in 10:16 with the promise found in 30:6,⁴¹ it is also possible for one to hear chapter 30 transforming the divine command into a divine promise by bespeaking a future gift-act of God wherein he establishes covenant responsiveness.

2.2.4 *Divine Priority and the Invitation to Reread*

Life is the most general term for reward in Deuteronomy and has been taken to encompass both present and eschatological blessing.⁴² If in 30:6 Israel's act of love is closely connected with YHWH's act of heart-circumcision, then just as closely linked is Israel's life with her love. And since life is the result of Israel's love, in 30:6 life is ultimately the consequence of divine action:

YHWH will circumcise your heart >leads to (לְאַהֲבָה/ἀγαπάν) love for YHWH >leads to (לְמַעַן חַיִּיד/ἵνα ζῆς σὺ) life.⁴³

That life is so often listed as the consequence of doing the commandments (4:1; 5:32–33; 6:24; 8:1) confirms the relationship between obedience to the commands and love: both are ways of describing covenant fidelity, which results in life. This correlation is especially apparent in 30:16 where 'that which I am commanding you today' (אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם) is glossed as 'to love' (לְאַהֲבָה) and also 'to keep his commandments . . .' (וּלְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתָיו). If the logic of verse 6 is that the covenant fidelity which brings life is the result of heart-circumcision, then a reader might legitimately ask: How is Israel supposed to offer such fidelity in verse 2 prior to YHWH's enabling work? A divine-

39 Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 162.

40 So Georg Braulik, 'The Development of the Doctrine of Justification in the Redactional Strata of the Book of Deuteronomy', in *The Theology of Deuteronomy: Collected Essays of Georg Braulik* (N. Richland Hills, TX: Bibal, 1994), 163.

41 So Moshe Weinfeld, 'Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel', *ZAW* 88 (1976), 35n63: 'There is apparently no significant difference between God's circumcising the heart of Israel and Israel's circumcising their own heart'.

42 Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 307.

43 On לְמַעַן חַיִּיד, see Ronald James Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*, 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), §365.

priority hermeneutic will find the answer in verses 6–8 and reread the outer frames, and their ambiguities, in light of the central section. As such, Deuteronomy 30:6 does not just bear witness to YHWH's future gift-act, it testifies to the *divine saving initiative*, which reconstitutes moral beings, creates life and blessing out of death and curse, and refashions command into promise.⁴⁴

A reading of this nature will deem Tigay's suggestion that the circumcision of the heart is simply the removal of 'the psychological impediments to whole-hearted devotion . . . , a mental block',⁴⁵ or Driver's gloss that it removes 'dulness [sic] of spiritual perception'⁴⁶ inadequate. More difficult would be the notion that 30:6 teaches that one receives help from God in the process of self-purification. In the view of a YHWH-priority hermeneutic, all these suggestions fail to see the depth of Israel's problem. Likewise, Christensen's suggestion that 'God's commandments are his enablements',⁴⁷ would miss the point entirely; that would be precisely what verse 6 does not say. Rather, Israel's capacity to love is grounded in YHWH's transforming initiative to reconstitute humans into competent moral agents.⁴⁸

2.2.5 *Divine-Priority and 30:11–14*

A major reason for denying the plausibility of the divine-priority reading is the urgency with which Moses calls his hearers to obey the Torah in verses 11–20. If YHWH must make Israel a competent moral agent before she can obey, then why in verses 11–14 does Moses rebuke his hearers for believing that the commandments are too difficult? Given that these verses contain the most optimistic statement in Deuteronomy regarding Israel's power to perform Torah,⁴⁹ should that not speak against taking 30:1–10 as assuming a pessimistic anthropology?⁵⁰ While acknowledging certain syntactical ambiguities present within 30:1–10, Watson, for instance, remains unconvinced that 'the statement about divine action in v.6 . . . [is] . . . emphatic enough to determine the inter-

44 So Lemke, 'Circumcision of the Heart', 310.

45 Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 285.

46 Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 330.

47 Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, 2:740.

48 So, Lemke, 'Circumcision of the Heart', 310.

49 McConville, *Grace*, 137.

50 So Christopher J.H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 286; Thomas W. Mann, *Deuteronomy*, 1st ed., (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 158.

pretation of the whole passage—*especially in light of the resulting tension with 30:11–20*.⁵¹ How can the divine-priority reading make sense of these verses?⁵²

While it is normally assumed that verses 11–14 function as a return to the present,⁵³ there is room for a reader to doubt this. First, the introductory phrase **היום אשר אנכי מצוך היום** appears twice in the previous section (vv. 2, 8), a context which addresses the future. Thus **היום** does not necessarily mark a temporal change from verses 1–10, but could simply function to identify the commandment under discussion.⁵⁴

Second, the **כי** of verse 11 might support a correspondence between the sections. The **כי** Driver has labeled ‘introductory’ actually follows a string of **כי**-clauses beginning in verse 9b.⁵⁵ There I proposed that the **כי** may be read as introducing a *Begründungssatz*: a clause which broadly provides the cause, reason, motivation, or explanation for what precedes it.⁵⁶ As Aejmelaeus notes, ‘It is characteristic of the indirect causal expression [e.g. *Begründungssatz*] that they [sic] do not state the cause for *what* is actually said in the main clause but rather *the reason for saying it*.’⁵⁷ A reader might understand this to be the case in verse 9, where the clause ‘for (**כי**) YHWH will again delight in you for good’ supports the statement ‘YHWH your God will make you excel in everything’.⁵⁸ One can see the attractiveness of taking the **כי**-clauses in verse 10 as a continuation of this explanation: ‘YHWH will make you excel (v. 9a) . . . *for* YHWH will delight (v. 9b) . . . *for* you will obey (v. 10a) . . . *for* you will turn’ (v. 10b). If this is the case, what is to stop a reader from including verse 11, or even verse 14, from the litany of *Begründungssätze* enlisted to explicate what it will mean for YHWH to make Israel excel.⁵⁹ In other words, Moses can say ‘YHWH will make you excel’ precisely because the commandments will not be too hard; they will even be on the mouth and in the heart. Furthermore, and following this line of thought, the section could easily bear the translation: ‘this commandment *will not be* too difficult for you . . . it *will be* on your mouth’. Verses 11–14, then, would encourage the present generation concerning the things YHWH’s future

51 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 438–39n43, emphasis mine.

52 A proposal that is irrelevant for ancient interpreters is to view 30:1–10 as a later insertion (Brettler, ‘Predestination’, 185–88; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 330–31).

53 So Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 331; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 364; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 349; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 285; McConville, *Grace*, 137.

54 Cf. Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 185.

55 Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 331.

56 See Aejmelaeus, ‘ki in Biblical Hebrew’, 202–03.

57 Aejmelaeus, ‘ki in Biblical Hebrew’, 203, emphasis original.

58 So Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 186.

59 So Braulik, ‘Development of the Doctrine of Justification’, 164.

saving action will accomplish. While this reading may seem strained, what is important is that it is possible.

Besides, we must remember that Israel's problem in 29:3 is that she does not have a heart to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear. But in 29:3, the revelation of YHWH was thus inaccessible to her and she remained unresponsive, lacking the obedience revelation should bring. Something must have occurred for the pessimism of 29:3 to be transformed into the optimism of 30:11–14. On a divine-priority reading 30:6 provides the answer: verses 11–14 presuppose the moral competency granted to Israel on account of YHWH's action.⁶⁰

Regardless of what one thinks about this reading, it is worth noting that the Israel-Priority reading does not escape the tensions that are faced by the divine-priority reading. For instance, D.T. Olson calls 'the affirmation both that obedience and loyalty to God seem *very difficult* for Israel to maintain (29:22–28) and yet the statement that the commandments are *not difficult* and very near to the heart . . . (30:11–14)' a paradox.⁶¹ The optimism of verses 10–14 seems to be at odds with the pessimism verse 6 assumes.⁶² But when one takes into account that 30:6 falls between 29:22 and 30:11, the paradox disappears.⁶³ Thus, rather than *creating* a tension, the divine-priority reading might actually

60 So McConville, *Grace*, 156: the promised gift 'affirms Israel's capacity to respond adequately to God's command, because it knows that in the end God will "circumcise hearts"'. His view, however, is somewhat more nuanced; cf. p. 138. See also Barker, *Triumph of Grace*, 184: "The hiphils of שָׁמַע reflect this. We are told that Israel will hear (שָׁמַע, qal, vv. 2, 8, 10). This is now shown to be because Yahweh will make them hear (שָׁמַע, hiphil, vv. 12, 13) . . . Yahweh himself makes Israel hear by putting the word on its heart and mouth (v. 14). The repeated עָשָׂה in vv. 12, 13, 14 shows that putting the word in the mouth and in the heart has the same effect as causing Israel to hear' (pointing removed). Thus on this reading to put the word in the heart is part of what it means to circumcise the heart. In 29:3, Israel needed 'to hear', 'to see', 'to know'. That need is rendered null in verses 11–14. This is not on account of Israel's prophets and teachers; contra Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 331. Nor is it on account of the Law's written form, its clarity, or its being memorized; contra Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 286. Note the important distinction between YHWH's command in 6:6 to put the word עַל-לִבְבְּךָ (probably a command to memorize) and his promise in 30:14 to put it בְּלִבְבְּךָ. The nearness of the word and Israel's ability to obey has nothing to do with factors external to the individual. Instead, the immanence of YHWH's revelation is accomplished through God's reconstituting act.

61 Olson, 'Literary Juxtaposition', 209.

62 Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 349.

63 It is puzzling why Olson calls this a paradox, since he believes 30:6 presents 'the unprecedented notion of God circumcising the heart' which sets 'the human intellect and will toward God in obedience' ('Literary Juxtaposition', 209).

resolve a tension that is already present in the text when one does not read it in a linear fashion.⁶⁴

2.2.6 *Divine Priority and Its Implications for Paul and Other Interpreters*

Let me reiterate that my purpose is not to argue whether or not tensions exist within Deuteronomy 30, nor is my purpose to prove that a divine-priority reading is the best or only reading of the text. My purpose is simply to establish the cogent plausibility of such a reading as a strong reading so as to ask whether Paul or any of his contemporaries might have read this text in a comparable way. Watson's thesis is that Paul read Israel's Scripture so as to find it testifying to the unconditional saving action of God in Jesus Christ and believes that Paul passes over Deuteronomy 30:1–10 on account of its conditionality. But when we speak of 'unconditional' it is helpful to ask: Unconditional with respect to what? In a reading which prioritizes YHWH, Deuteronomy 30 could still be seen as conditional, but only with respect to time (the curse had to come upon the people) and instrument (Israel's love is a necessary link between heart-circumcision and life), but not with respect to initiative (YHWH must move first), or source (it is YHWH's activity which animates Israel's response). Paul, of course, has similar conditions with respect to God's saving action; e.g., the Christ event and faith.

2.3 Conclusion

Deuteronomy 30:1–10 is a text fraught with ambiguity that gives way to two plausible, internally consistent, yet conflicting readings. The passage can be understood to hold out the possibility of covenant renewal, a second chance for Israel to recommit to YHWH. It can also be read as the assurance that in the future YHWH will act decisively to rescue Israel and perform an unprecedented work whereby he founds Israel's obedience so as to secure her life. The differences between these two readings stem from the phenomena of textual gaps, gaps which any devoted reader will strive to fill. Since in large measure the filling of textual gaps is precisely what makes later readings unique, and any

64 For similar conclusions, see Steven R. Coxhead, 'Deuteronomy 30:11–14 as a Prophecy of the New Covenant in Christ', *WTJ* 68 (2006), 305–11; John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 473. For a recent analysis which lends support to the divine-priority reading, see Grazia Papola, *L'alleanza di Moab: Studio esegetico teologico di Dt 28,69–30,20* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2008), 215–220, 223–230.

particular reading interesting,⁶⁵ in section 2 we will want to note exactly how Second Temple interpreters go about filling those gaps. But before we do so, we need to see how the motif of heart-transformation functions in the other restoration narratives in the Jewish Scriptures.

65 An example of a reader who does not try to fill those gaps is Lemke, 'Circumcision of the Heart', 309n21, who argues on syntactical grounds that vv. 1–5 are conditional and vv. 6–10 are unconditional. Interestingly, his rationale is that ׀ usually introduces conditional clauses in legal texts and ׀ in narrative prose. But the only ׀ in vv. 1–5 comes in v. 4 and concerns how YHWH will return the exiles even 'if' they have been scattered to the far reaches of the globe and is not a condition for his retrieving them. On Lemke's own reasoning, he should reject a conditional reading of vv. 1–5. It is surprising that on Lemke's reading the shift from conditionality in vv. 1–5 to the unconditionality of vv. 6–10 does not indicate a change in authors (310). Even if we assume that our author/editor held to something like philosophical compatibilism, it is difficult for me to see how a single author/editor could hold such a construal of conditionality/unconditionality without being hopelessly illogical.

Heart Transformation in the Prophets: Jeremiah and Ezekiel

While influential, Deuteronomy 30 is not the only text that deals with conceptions of empowerment to obedience *via* the motif of heart-change. Before investigating Second Temple interpretations of this motif with a view to opening up respective understandings of grace, transformation, and agency, we need to consider how the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel relate the competency of the moral agent to the transformation of the heart. Surveying these prophetic books will heighten our sensitivity to the hermeneutics at work in later readings, especially given Paul and his contemporaries' propensity towards intratextual exegesis.

3.1 The Heart and Its Transformation in the Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah also employs the metaphor of 'heart-change' to describe human transformation.¹ As with Deuteronomy, in Jeremiah the heart is the nucleus of the moral Self and provides the 'moral control and guidance center' of the person.² The problems with and solutions to Israel's moral failures are located in the heart.

Following the heart has lead Israel away from YHWH and towards other gods (9:14). Her heart is stubborn and rebellious (5:23), polluted by evil (3:17; 4:14; 16:12; 18:12), and in need of circumcision (4:4). In fact, Israel's uncircumcised heart puts her under the same judgement as the rest of the nations (9:24–25). Regardless of how one renders the phrase *על-כל-מול בערלה*,³ the point is clear:

1 See 4:4; 24:7; 31:33; 32:39–40; cf. 3:16–17, 9:24–25.

2 Thomas Küger, 'Das "Herz" in der alttestamentlichen Anthropologie', in *Anthropologische Aufbrüche: alttestamentliche und interdisziplinäre Zugänge zur historischen Anthropologie*, ed. Andreas Wagner, FRLANT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 109.

3 Some prefer to render *על-כל-מול בערלה* as 'circumcised and uncircumcised alike'. Listing Judah second, however, would have been odd if she was considered a distinct category; so William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 1:214. Taking *על-כל-מול בערלה* as a single group, the LXX has 'all those who are circumcised in their foreskins' (*πάντας περιτετμημένους ἀκροβυστίας αὐτῶν*). Judah's presence in the list could be due to a possible political alliance she had with other circumcising

Israel would be judged with the nations because YHWH considered his people uncircumcised, being uncircumcised of heart. It is the heart, as opposed to external ritual, which YHWH tests (3:10; 11:20; 17:10). The assumption that physical circumcision on its own secured special favour with God was a grave mistake (9:23–24).⁴ Until it penetrated the heart, circumcision was incomplete.⁵

How then was Israel's situation to be rectified and was such rectification within her power to achieve? The answer to the first question is found in Jeremiah's prophetic vision about Israel's restoration.⁶ From the outset, Jeremiah holds out the possibility of a future hope beyond exile (3:16–17).⁷ That hope will be characterized by a transformative reshaping of Israel's religious life,⁸ including a spiritual renewal. One day people will no longer follow after the stubbornness of their evil hearts (3:17).⁹

Behind this future fidelity is a gift-event. YHWH promises to give 'a heart to know' (לב לדעת) YHWH (24:7). For Jeremiah, 'knowing YHWH' is an ethical-relational concept. To know YHWH is concomitant with having one's sins forgiven (31:34) and practicing justice (22:16). Not to 'know YHWH' is connected to having a heart for dishonest gain, spilling innocent blood, and practicing oppression (22:17).¹⁰ Up until 24:7, descriptions about the heart are entirely negative. By giving the people 'a heart to know', YHWH would remedy their impaired moral competence.¹¹

nations; so William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Press, 1986), 1:319. For a syntactical and historical argument for על-כל-מול בערלה being a reference to partial circumcision, see Richard C. Steiner, 'Incomplete Circumcision in Egypt and Edom: Jeremiah (9:24–25) in the Light of Josephus and Jonckheere', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999), 497–505.

4 So Douglas Rawlinson Jones, *Jeremiah: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 171; Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1986), 252.

5 Weinfeld, 'Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel', 34.

6 See esp., 3:16–17; 4:3–4; 9:24–25; 3:16–17; 24:5–7; 29:10–13; 31:31–34; 32:38–40.

7 'In those days' and 'at that time' may be conventional language for introducing the eschatological horizon; so Jones, *Jeremiah*, 101.

8 So Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 2 vols., AB (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 314.

9 On the unity between vv 16–17, see Weinfeld, 'Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel', 16–20.

10 On 'know' as indicating obedience, see Jeremiah Unterman, *From Repentance to Redemption: Jeremiah's Thought in Transition*, JSOT (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 76–80.

11 Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2002), 347.

This gift anticipates Jeremiah's descriptions of a new and eternal covenant (31:31–34; 32:38–40).¹² This covenant stands in both continuity (עוד, cf. 31:23) and discontinuity (ולא... עוד, 31:34) with the past.¹³ It is doubtless true that the discontinuity of Jeremiah's 'new' covenant has been overemphasized, motivated in part by a Christian desire to distinguish itself from Judaism. Such motives aside, Jeremiah's vision is presented as new—whether or not its newness is immediately apparent to us—and his accent is on discontinuity.¹⁴ But where is the discontinuity to be found?

The previous covenant is identified by the rebellion that followed it: It is the covenant 'which they broke/annulled' (אשר־המה הפרו, 31:32). Since 'they' refers to those led out of Egypt, the event described is most likely the debacle featuring the golden calf. Elsewhere in Jeremiah Israel's apostasy reaches back to the covenant's institution (7:22–26; 11:7–8; cf. Deut 9:7–13, 29:3).¹⁵ Tragically, the situation had not improved by Jeremiah's time. Israel has persisted in apostasy and exacerbated her situation (7:24–27; 11:7–8; cf. 16:11–12).¹⁶ In many ways the project of the Mosaic covenant failed to launch. Its lack of success, however, was not due to the covenant itself. Still less could failure be attributed to YHWH.¹⁷ But as both emphatic pronouns (אנכי/המה) indicate, the

12 Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 232; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 318; Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 348. In fact, the only other time in Jeremiah where נתן has לב/לבב as its object is 32:39. On the relationship between 31:31–34 and 32:38–40, see Unterman, *Repentance*, 114–15.

13 Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 454; cf. Wilber Wallis, 'Irony in Jeremiah's New Covenant', *JETS* 12 (1969); H.D. Potter, 'The New Covenant in Jeremiah xxxi 31–34', *VT* 33 (1983), 349, 354.

14 Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 466. Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 292n48, correctly points out that the newness of this text 'does not depend on Christian supersessionism'. R.E. Clements, *Jeremiah* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 191, believes it is simply a renewal of the previous covenant; cf. Wallis, 'Jeremiah's New Covenant', 107–10.

15 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:172–173, 175; J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 289.

16 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:172–173, 175; Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 289. Lundbom is accurate when he insists that לאחור ולא לפנים (v. 24) does not imply regression (*Jeremiah 21–36*, 483). Nevertheless, the מן of comparison in 7:26 does. While the prominal suffixes in the preceding verse are ambiguous, understanding the implied subject as the present generation is not problematic since the rebellion has lasted to the present day; see Peter C. Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 116. Amending אליכם in v. 25 to the 3 masc plur of the LXX and Syr. helps to resolve these tensions (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:173). These difficulties do not impinge upon the overall point.

17 Contra Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 629–30.

covenant's deficiency was to be located in the people (31:32). Israel's heart, stubborn and rebellious (5:23), polluted by evil (3:17; 4:14; 16:12; 18:12), directed 'backward and not forward' (7:24), has led her to other gods (9:14).

The new covenant, however, would not be characterised by the apostasy which dominated the previous one. In fact, the anthropological situation will be entirely different. YHWH pledges to transform Israel by acting on her heart. He will inscribe Torah on it (31:33), will give the people 'one heart and one way' (32:39), and place the fear of him within the heart (32:40). Previous descriptions of the heart provide the background for this promise.¹⁸ The metaphor of writing on the heart is used to describe the inclinations of people. Judah's sin is 'written . . . on the tablet of her heart' (בתובה . . . על-לוח לבם) because she is predisposed to sin (17:1). The promise to write Torah in the heart (31:33) is therefore a promise to reorient Israel's will so that she is inclined to obey.¹⁹ A similar thought is communicated in the first colon of that promise: 'I will put my Torah *within/among them*' (נתתי את-תורתי בקרבם, 31:33).²⁰ While this phrase could be taken to mean that Torah will be set in the midst of the congregation, other occurrences of קרב with לב in Jeremiah suggest otherwise. Take 4:14: 'Wash your hearts (לבך) from evil . . . ! How long will your wicked thoughts lodge in your inner parts' (בקרבך, cf. 23:9)? The command to wash the 'heart' is connected to thoughts 'in your inner parts'. Similarly, the focus of YHWH's

¹⁸ Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 468.

¹⁹ Jeremiah is not promising a developed cognition so much as a reprogrammed and enlivened will (*pace* Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 611–12; Potter, 'New Covenant', 353–54; cf. Mark Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 57–60). Though people will no longer need to say 'know YHWH!' (v. 34), such knowledge is covenantal and inseparably linked to obedience (cf. 2:8; 9:3, 23; and esp., 22:15–16). See further Brueggemann, *Jeremiah*, 293–94; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 401.

²⁰ The textual evidence concurs with the MT (Leningrad, Cairo, and Petropolitanus). Yet in the translation history the Peshitta, Targum, and LXX understand God's action as future. Some resolve the issue of the *qatal* perfect (נתתי) by detecting a scribal error (e.g., Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 2:154; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 610). Yet in some poetic texts where a *qatal* in the first clause of the colon is followed by a *weqatal* in the second clause, the events described occur simultaneously; e.g. Ps 139:13:

"For you formed (קניית) my inner parts;
you knit (תסכני) me together in my mother's womb."

Here, it is not as if God's fashioning work started in the past, but will finish in the future; 'in my mother's womb' makes that reading absurd. Instead, the different tenses seem to suggest a totality of action: God began and completed the process (cf. Ps 18:5; 114:3; Jer 4:30c). See Joshua N. Moon, *Jeremiah's New Covenant: an Augustinian Reading*, *Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement 3* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 236–38.

work in 31:33 is primarily anthropological.²¹ The new covenant ‘kündigt eine radikale anthropologische Erneuerung des Gottesvolkes.’²²

Corresponding to this pledge, YHWH promises to give Israel ‘one heart and one way’ (לֵב אֶחָד וְדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד, 32:39).²³ Modified by ‘one’, heart and way characterise a singleness of devotion which can be juxtaposed to previous descriptions of Israel seeking many lovers (3:1; cf. 3:2; 4:30).²⁴ As the infinitive לִירֵאָה indicates, YHWH’s gift results in Israel’s fidelity. Verse 40c–d expounds the gift: God will place the fear of him in the heart of the people so that they do not turn away. Again a purpose clause reiterates that the obedience required for covenant relationship results from a divine gift (cf. 7:23). The gift of God constitutes Israel as a competent moral agent who is inclined to live in accordance with the divine will.²⁵

3.1.1 *Jeremiah and the Question of Moral Competence*

If the new covenant is aimed at transforming the people of Israel into fully competent moral agents who faithfully obey, then what are we to make of Israel’s competence under the old covenant? Was her competence so thoroughly defective or corrupt as to leave her incapable of full obedience? Was the ability to overcome her impaired agency within her power to achieve? Or was she so incompetent as a moral agent, her will so damaged, as to be unable to even contribute to her restoration as a fully competent agent?

At least at first it appears that people are believed to have powers sufficient to contribute to their own reformation. So, for instance, Jeremiah’s early promise of spiritual renewal in 3:16–17 is contingent upon repentance (vv 12–14, 22;

21 Moon, *Jeremiah’s New Covenant*, 229–38; cf. Adrian Schenker, *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten: Jer 31 in der hebräischen und griechischen Bibel, von der Textgeschichte zu Theologie, Synagoge und Kirche*, FRLANT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 26–31.

22 Horst Seebass, ‘Erstes oder Altes Testament’, in *Die Einheit der Schrift und die Vielfalt des Kanons*, ed. John Barton and Michael Wolter (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 33. See also Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 178. Holladay (*Jeremiah*, 2:198) is probably right to understand the text as dealing with the corporate will and intention of the people.

23 The LXX’s ‘another heart’ and ‘another way’ suggests that either it or the MT has confused אֶחָד and אֶחָר in the Hebrew Vorlage.

24 Jones, *Jeremiah*, 417.

25 On the issue of Torah in the new covenant, see Adrian Schenker, ‘Die Tafel des Herzens’, in *Text und Sinn im Alten Testament: Textgeschichtliche und bibeltheologische Studien*, OBO (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 68–81. Compare Femi Adeyemi, ‘What is the New Covenant “Law” in Jeremiah 31:33?’, *BSac* 163 (2006), 320.

4:3–4).²⁶ Jeremiah concludes this section by assuring Israel that if she turns (אם-תשוב),²⁷ removes (ואם-תסיר) her idols, and swears (ונשבעת)²⁸ by YHWH, then the nations will bless themselves in YHWH (4:1–2). In contrast to Deuteronomy 30, the conditional syntax is clear, introduced and carried forward by אם.

But does Jeremiah believe that the people can fulfil these conditions? It seems so. Jeremiah follows his conditional statement with a command: ‘Plow up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to/be circumcised by YHWH (המלו ליהוה) and remove the foreskins of your heart’. The former metaphor seems to be borrowed from Hosea²⁹ and is another way of saying: Remove your abominations and stop fornicating with other gods (4:1). Through the second metaphor Jeremiah calls the men of Judah to המלו (circumcise themselves/be circumcised) and ‘remove the foreskin of [their] hearts’ (והסרו ערלות לבבכם, v. 4). In light of the preceding trope and Jeremiah’s heart language elsewhere, removing the foreskin of the heart indicates a preparatory act that allows for spiritual receptiveness in the totality of human life.

But who performs this act? The text is somewhat ambiguous. Should we take the *niphal* המלו (circumcise) reflexively with ל marking an indirect object (i.e. ‘circumcise yourselves to YHWH’),³⁰ or passively with a ל of agency (i.e. ‘be circumcised by YHWH’)?³¹ If taken passively, the text looks at the same phenomenon from two vantage points. The first clause would present heart-

26 Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 81: ‘The language of promise inserted in the middle of the calls to repentance (3:14–18) assumes the fall of both Israel and Judah. And so the call to repentance, whatever its force as an earlier message of Jeremiah (that did not issue in repentance), is now represented as a word to exiles, for whom repentance is possible’. So also, Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 61. Note, however, that the contingency of Israel’s return coupled with her continual whoredom give way to a statement of grief which leaves the reader extremely doubtful with respect to Israel’s future (v. 19). The conjunction with emphatic pronoun, ואנכי, would seem to imply contrast (‘but’), and undermines confidence in the promise coming true. While this text imparts hope, it is not hopeful.

27 While the apodosis of 4:1a, ‘if you turn’, is most likely 4:1c ‘then to me you shall turn’ (אלו תשוב) and therefore relates to its protasis as an obligation (i.e. if you do this, do it this way), the second two conditional constructions (vv 1d–4) are consequential (if you do this, this will happen) and assume that Israel has performed the first condition. See further, Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 1:126–1:127.

28 Or perhaps as the beginning of the apodosis: ‘Then she may swear . . .’

29 Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 129.

30 Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, §269.

31 *Ibid.*, §280.

circumcision from the perspective of divine agency (be circumcised by YHWH) and the second from the perspective of human agency (remove the foreskin of your heart). Assuming a compatibilist account of the divine and human will, there is no reason why these clauses should not stand together.³² Such a reading also finds support in Jeremiah's later insistence that the heart is under YHWH's control (31:33; 32:40).

Other factors, however, forward a reflexive reading (circumcise yourselves). First, the verb סור ties verses 1–2 and 3–4 together (4:1, 4:4) and implies that the metaphors explicate (כי) the clear conditional statements of verses 1–2. Thus המלו ליהוה is explaining the conditions given to the people. Second, if YHWH is the agent of circumcision, this would be his only act in 4:1–4. Otherwise the stress is entirely upon the human agent. YHWH even lacks a direct role in the apodosis. The context would thus seem to suggest that it is best to understand המלו reflexively.³³

But even if taken passively, המלו ליהוה is nevertheless a command to the men of Judah. Jeremiah places the onus upon the people and thus assigns YHWH's act an instrumental role,³⁴ somewhat comparable to the Israel-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30:6.³⁵ While impaired, Jeremiah insinuates that the people are nevertheless competent to rectify their situation. A few verses later he entreats the people to wash their hearts 'so [they] might be delivered' (למע תושעו, 4:14). Furthermore, he opens his Temple Sermon with a series of conditional clauses: For *if* the people truly amend their ways (כי אם-היטיב הטיבו) . . . then they could dwell in the land (7:5–7). All this suggests that we are dealing with agents who are morally capable of overcoming their rebellious tendencies.

32 Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 129–30. Contra, Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 330.

33 In other cases where the *niphal* of מול is followed by ל (Gen 17:10, 12; 34:15, 22; Ex 12:48), the ל is often taken as marking possession. Robert Althann, "מול "Circumcise" with the Lamedh of Agency", *Bib* 62 (1981), 239–40 suggests taking all six cases as a ל of agency, thereby eliminating the problem of having to take Jer 4:4 as an exception. The LXX is less supportive of his conclusion. Gen 17:12 and Jer 4:4 could possibly be understood as datives of agency, but 17:10, 34:15, or 34:22 are in the genitive. A survey of cases where *niphal* verbs are followed by ל in Jeremiah casts further doubt on his proposal. Examples where ל marks an object of the verb are numerous (e.g. 4:11; 5:13; 11:5; 13:20; 14:16; 15:15; 19:6; 23:16; 31:3; 32:22; 33:17; 40:9). Two possible but unlikely examples where ל denotes agency are 6:12 and 31:38. The only clear example is 8:3. The closest parallel we have to 4:4 is 34:14, where at the end of 7 years, slave owners are to release a fellow Hebrew 'who has been/sold himself to you' (אשר-ימכר לך). Clearly the slave has not been sold 'by you' since possession is assumed.

34 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:88.

35 So Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 67, who assumes an Israel-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30.

Yet a closer look at the book reveals a certain ambivalence on the question of whether or not people can change their ways. Just as soon as the people are commanded to repent, we also learn that they do not know how to do good (4:22). And while they might have eyes to see and ears to hear, they refuse to use them (5:21). As the book moves forward, the buoyant notes of potential change are drowned out by a chorus of deep despondency. Speaking to the people becomes futile. It is not simply that they will not listen; having uncircumcised ears, they *cannot listen* (וּלֹא יִבְּלוּ לְהִקְשִׁיבַ, 6:10).³⁶ Jeremiah is even told not to intercede for the people because the window of opportunity has closed (7:16–20).

From such an indictment it appears that Jeremiah speaks to a people beyond reformation (7:27).³⁷ They are no different from the nations and stand under the same judgement (9:24–25). By comparing the people to an Ethiopian who cannot transform his skin and a leopard who cannot change its spots (13:23), Jeremiah casts Israel in a state that cannot be resolved by human endeavor: they are *unable* to do good.³⁸ Describing her inability as the result of habitual performance, ‘training in evil’ (לְמַדֵּי הָרַע), does not soften this indictment. Jeremiah’s analogies do not suggest that she is ‘virtually’ incapable of change,³⁹ but that change by human undertaking is now an absolute impossibility (whatever may have been the case before).⁴⁰

3.1.2 *Jeremiah’s Narrative of Moral Competence*

How then do we make sense of this ambivalence regarding the question of moral competence in book of Jeremiah? One way to resolve this tension is along narrative lines. It seems that as the fall of Jerusalem approaches and Jeremiah’s calls to repentance go unheeded, the book’s anthropological pessimism grows deeper and the question of Israel’s moral competence becomes

36 Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 1:214.

37 Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 125. This position stands regardless of the textual problems in 7:27. Elsewhere, Jeremiah conveys the people’s propensity to reject his message (cf. 1:16–19; 5:1–5; 6:10, 16–18; 8:23–9:5; 18:18). For an argument for the MT of v. 27, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 484.

38 Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 193, 314, though he thinks the verse has been inserted. On the nature of the construction, see Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 1:415; Joüon, *Grammar*, §167m.

39 As assumed by Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 305; Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 374; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 687 (with caution).

40 So Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 140. The only other time the adjective לְמַד appears is in 2:24 where it means ‘accustomed’.

clearer.⁴¹ Thus J. Unterman notes a shift in emphasis in 24:5–7 where ‘repentance takes a secondary position and God’s promise of redemption takes center-stage.’⁴² Ambiguity is not erased, however, as the final clause of 24:7 could indicate that the grounds for Israel’s hope rest upon her initially turning in wholehearted repentance.⁴³ On the other hand in verses 5–7 there are no less than eight first person singular verbs with YHWH as the actor. The action climaxes with YHWH giving Israel a heart to know. *בִּי־יִשְׁבוּ אֵלַי בְּכָל־לֵבָם* seems more likely to describe the outcome of YHWH’s gift rather than its condition.⁴⁴ If so the meaning ‘is not that Yahweh’s work of rehabilitation is conditional on the wholehearted repentance of his people, but rather that this wholehearted repentance is part and parcel of his work of restoration.’⁴⁵

41 D.A. Knight, ‘Jeremiah and the Dimensions of the Moral Life’, in *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God’s Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman*, ed. James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel (New York: Ktav, 1980), 88.

42 Unterman, *Repentance*, 87. When he concludes that the initial act of the exiles’ repentance is the rationale for all the promises of restoration (81–82), however, Unterman fails to distinguish in what respect repentance is conditional. He assumes that it is with respect to generating initiative, but vv. 10–11 suggest otherwise. Furthermore, he continually conflates chronological order with logical order, committing the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Just because the exiles’ seeking is mentioned or occurs prior to YHWH’s restorative act by no means necessitates that their seeking is the ‘formal cause’ of restoration (82).

43 Against the common causal rendering, J. Drinkard translates the *כִּי* conditionally (‘if they will return to me with all their heart’) based on the following reasons: (1) the causal rendering represents an unconditional promise which goes against Jeremiah’s theological understanding; (2) the strong disjunctive accent (*athnach*) ‘lends to the conditional nature of the phrase’; and (3) the condition rhetorically functions as the focal point of the entire verse (Craigie, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 356, 360). Though on a syntactical level Drinkard proposes a legitimate rendering, his arguments are not altogether convincing. Disparity between earlier (3:12–14) and later (chs 30–33) prophecies makes it impossible to appeal to Jeremiah’s ‘theology’ of conditionality and assertions about the condition being the focal point of this verse begs the question. All things considered, the implications of a massoretic accent mark are hardly strong enough to carry the weight of his conclusion.

44 Lemke, ‘Circumcision of the Heart’, 313–14.

45 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:609. So also Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 178; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 486. While Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 232, thinks Deuteronomy 30:1–10 and Jeremiah 24:4–7 are distinct with respect of condition, his view is dependent upon an Israel-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10. Similarly, Unterman, *Repentance*, 66–67, asserts a ‘major ideological difference’ between the texts. He fails, however, to pick up the variance within the Deuteronomic literature itself, which cannot be determined simply on the basis of whether a promise motif or repentance motif occurs first in any given text. Against such positions are my earlier arguments for the strength of a YHWH-priority reading, and both

The shift away from Israel's action is perhaps clearer in 29:1–23. There Jeremiah sends a letter to the exiles in which he reiterates YHWH's promise that after the appointed time, YHWH will fulfil his word by bringing the exiles back into the land (v. 10).⁴⁶ Verse 11 grounds this promise in YHWH's sovereign counsels: **כי אנכי ידעתי את־המהחשבת אשר אנכי חשב עליכם**.⁴⁷ By rooting the promise in the divine decree, Judah is assured that YHWH intends her good and ultimate serenity (**שלום**, v. 11), which includes his listening to her prayers (v. 12) and her seeking and finding him (v. 13).⁴⁸ In view of verses 10–11, it seems best to understand Israel's seeking not so much as a pre-condition to the promise, but as part of that promise.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the **כי**-clause in verse 13 does specify that the reason she will find him is precisely because YHWH's fulfilling his purposes entails her seeking him wholeheartedly (v. 13). So while her finding him is contingent upon a comprehensive seeking—a necessary and instrumental condition—nevertheless such seeking is part of her promised future.⁵⁰

What about 31:31–34 and 32:38–40? Unterman believes that since 'repentance is not a factor' all contingency disappears in these texts.⁵¹ Lapsley reminds us, however, that 31:31–34 is preceded by a reflection on Ephraim's repentance:⁵²

texts' irrefutable interests in human responsiveness. Compare **אלי בכל־לבם** in v. 7 with **כי תשוב אל־יהוה אלהיך בכל־לבבך** in Deut 30:10.

- 46 It is somewhat unclear whether Israel's seeking YHWH happens whilst still in Babylon (so v. 14bc seems to indicate) or after returning (as v. 10 seems to indicate).
- 47 So Jones, *Jeremiah*, 364, who glosses the phrase, as a way of expressing divine purpose and providence in history. The LXX reads: **καὶ λογισθῆμαι ἐφ' ὑμᾶς λογισμὸν εἰρήνης καὶ οὐ κακὰ τοῦ θούνηαι ὑμῶν ταῦτα**, appearing to have lost the emphasis due to haplography. See further, Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 353–54.
- 48 Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 2:133, omits any notion of seeking from the text. He does so (as he admits) against all the external evidence.
- 49 Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 404: 'The people are able to respond positively because God has already taken the initiative and given them promises upon which they can count'; So also Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 63; contra, Marion L. Soards, 'The Righteousness of God in the Writings of the Apostle Paul', *BTB* 15 (1985), 199.
- 50 So Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 178: 'Thoroughgoing repentance is the prerequisite for re-election, but God's giving "them a heart to know" is the precondition for that kind of repentance. Deliverance creates a transformation which produces the repentance expected of God's elect'. Cf. Ernest W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 81; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 588.
- 51 Unterman, *Repentance*, 115.
- 52 Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?: The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 63.

Bring me back so I may be returned, for you are YHWH my God. For after turning away, I repented; and after I was taught, I struck my thigh. I was ashamed and profoundly dismayed, for I bore the shame of my youth (vv. 18b–19).

These often overlooked verses leave room to understand the divine promises in verses 31–34 as contingent upon Israel's initial repentance. So Lapsley concludes, "[T]he divine response which immediately follows this confession of sin and shame suggests that the people's repentance *motivates* Yahweh to deliver them."⁵³ Yet this is not a closed case. There is an organic relationship between 31:2–9 and 31:15–22, and when taken as a whole, Unterman observes:

the possibility that YHWH's mercies were moved because of the harshness of their physical condition cannot be disregarded, "the people who are left of the sword have found favor in the desert" (v.2). It is even possible that YHWH's declaration of His merciful intentions in vv. 2–9 was the motivating force behind Ephraim's confession.⁵⁴

Perhaps more to the point, the expressed reason given for YHWH's mercy is YHWH's mercy; not the people's response: 'For as often as I speak against him, I still very much remember him; *therefore my womb groans for him, I will surely have compassion on him*' (על-כן המו מעי לו רחם ארחמנו) (v. 20). Moreover, the section concludes by stating that 'YHWH has *created* [ברא] a new thing' and the new thing is repentance (v. 22). Read this way, Jeremiah 31:31–34 preserves the emphasis of 24:5–7 and 29:10–13. Israel's repentance retains a subordinate role, while YHWH's transforming initiative is highlighted.⁵⁵

3.1.3 *Transformed Agency in Jeremiah*

As the book develops, it seems that Jeremiah eventually loses hope that Israel is capable of overcoming her moral impairment, even abandoning the heart-circumcision metaphor altogether: Israel needed more than heart-repair (4:4); she needed a heart-transplant (24:5–7). In the end, then, Israel's moral

⁵³ Lapsley, *Bones*, 63, emphasis original.

⁵⁴ See Unterman, *Repentance*, 48–52.

⁵⁵ The disagreement between the conclusions here and those of Unterman (*Repentance*, 115) results from different approaches, i.e. diachronic verses synchronic. For him, only vv. 27–37 are considered a unit, and vv. 15–22 date during the Reign of King Josiah (48–53).

ineptitude was not to be resolved by human ingenuity. The remedy had to come from outside of Israel and yet it also had to root out and affect something at the very core of her existence.⁵⁶ The giving of a 'heart to know' transforms Israel so that she can participate in covenantal reciprocity. A new covenant forecasts a time of perfect and complete obedience when apostasy is no longer a possibility (31:31–34; 32:38–40). The oracle completely overturns the state of affairs depicted earlier in the book.⁵⁷

What we find here is an eschatological promise; for Jeremiah does not simply forecast a better day, but a perfect day, an *idealized* reversal of Israel's present situation. In this eschatological era, the mechanism that makes Israel obedient is a Torah-conformed will. YHWH's revelation will become central to the very makeup of the people of God. As 32:38–40 spells out, the people will fear YHWH because they have fear embedded in their hearts.

As with Deuteronomy 30:6, the interplay between divine and human action converges in the heart. Yet Jeremiah hints at a relationship between divine and human agencies that goes further than Deuteronomy. Verse 41 notes that YHWH performs this reconstituting act 'with all [his] heart and all [his] soul' (בכל־לבי ובכל־נפשי). Here an expression reserved to communicate the pinnacle of human responsiveness now describes YHWH's initiative to achieve such responsiveness. Human agency is thereby grounded in divine agency.⁵⁸

56 After surveying moral identity in Jeremiah, J. Lapsely (*Bones*, 52) concludes that 'Jeremiah continues to assume a basically intact model of the virtuous moral self, capable of knowing and doing the good'. Jeremiah's depiction of humans as corrupt represents a 'minor chord' which is concerned only with his generation (52, 58, 64). Curiously, however, Lapsely fails to mention 7:24–27 and 11:7–8, both of which indicate that Israel's apostasy goes back to her origin. Though she argues that people retain the ability to repent, beyond chapters 2–4 she only cites 18:11 and discusses 24:5–7. The former hardly supports her conclusion, since in 18:12 the people answer, 'In vain we will follow our own plans . . . each according to the stubbornness of his evil heart'. Likewise, her reading of 24:5 assumes that those in the remnant are good. But the text says that YHWH will *regard* them *for* good (i.e., for a good end). Finally, her distinction between the people's problem being located *in the direction* of the will and not *in their capacity to exert the will* hardly supports her conclusion that the people are capable of good (50). Apparently, she believes making a distinction between the moral will and moral equipment allows for this (51). But it is unclear how the will is not part of the moral equipment since it is 'the thing which controls moral decision-making' (50). And it is hard to see how a will permanently predisposed toward evil does not effectively render persons incapable of good.

57 Compare this oracle with e.g., 5:4–5, where no one 'knows' YHWH's way and 6:13 where sin is rampant from the least to the greatest (מקטנם ועד־גדולם).

58 Importantly, the restoration of the divine-human relationship is announced in the terms of the covenant formula with the accent placed upon YHWH's commitment (וְאֲנִי, v. 38). So Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 21–36, 518, 520.

In pledging to cut the new covenant YHWH ensures that he will *continue* doing good to the people (לֹא־אֲשׁוּב מֵאֲחֵרֵיהֶם לְהִיטִיבִי, v. 40). This ‘good’ surely includes his gift of moral competence. In Jeremiah’s vision, then, human agency is founded on a divine agency that *continues* to work in the human agent.⁵⁹ That human agency is not abrogated is suggested by the result clauses ‘that they may fear me’; ‘that they might not turn from me’ (vv. 39b, 40d). Divine and human agency are related in a direct and positive manner.

3.2 Ezekiel and the Recreation of Moral Agents

Issues regarding humanity’s moral competence saturate the book of Ezekiel as well. Like Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, Ezekiel contains the hope that God will transform people into faithful covenant partners, all the while bringing his own unique contributions and perspective to such hope. The two passages that most directly reflect on these themes are 11:17–20 and 36:24–27. Differences notwithstanding, both passages speak of 1) deliverance from exile, 2) cleansing from idolatry, 3) the transformation of Israel’s personhood, 4) a resulting obedience, and 5) a reinstatement of the covenant formula. In both texts the divine agent is the source of transformation, which is especially reflected by the repetition of the *Leitwort* נתן (give).⁶⁰ But what is this gift exactly and how does it relate to human agency? We consider those questions in turn.

3.2.1 *The Gift of a New Self and Divine Spirit*

Ezekiel declares that YHWH will replace Israel’s heart of ‘stone’ (אבן) with a heart of ‘flesh’ (בשר, 11:19; 36:26). ‘Flesh’ must be defined both in contrast to ‘stone’ and by its being the place where the new heart is inserted. A heart of stone most likely expands Ezekiel’s earlier descriptions of Israel’s heart as ‘hard’ (קשה, 2:4; 3:7).⁶¹ If the hard heart is a stubborn one, a stony heart is calcified in unresponsiveness.⁶² To place a ‘heart of flesh’ in Israel, then, is to give Israel

59 Holladay asserts, ‘The passage offers no solution to the riddle of how the new situation will reconcile human freedom with the new exercise of God’s sovereignty in injecting his law into the heart of the people’ (*Jeremiah*, 2:198). Yet we may need to consider the possibility that Jeremiah does not correlate human freedom with autonomy; that in fact, human freedom is experienced most fully precisely under this kind of exercise of divine sovereignty.

60 נתן appears 3x in 11:19 and 4x in 36:26–27.

61 Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 2 vols., NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1:353.

62 Compare the ‘soft’ (רכך), responsive heart of Josiah (2 Chr 34:27).

a sensitive disposition, responsive to YHWH.⁶³ Importantly, Ezekiel says that the heart of stone is removed from the ‘flesh’, insinuating that a stony heart is unnatural. Putting a heart of ‘flesh’ into ‘flesh’ thus completes the human constitution.⁶⁴

The ‘new’ heart (36:26) that God will give is a singular heart (11:19). Coming as it does after the removal of idols (v. 18),⁶⁵ ‘one heart’ (לב אחד)⁶⁶ carries a similar connotation to Jeremiah 32:39—to be singular in focus.⁶⁷ Added to this new heart is a new spirit (רוח חדשה). The absence of an article or pronominal suffix in 11:19 raises this question: Is this God’s Spirit or a human spirit? Since the concern is with the duplicity of the human mind and will and since describing God’s Spirit as ‘new’ would seem odd, it appears that ‘spirit’ refers to the human spirit here. רוח thus correlates with לב to describe an anthropological renovation.⁶⁸ That being said, in 36:26–27 Ezekiel closely associates the gift of anthropological renewal with the bestowal of YHWH’s own Spirit (רוחי),⁶⁹ and there the two cannot be separated.⁷⁰

3.2.2 *Obedience through the New Self and Divine Spirit*

In both texts, God’s gifts of a new Self and divine Spirit are intended to bring about obedience; in both, Israel’s ‘capacity for right action is dependent upon a radical change in their being.’⁷¹ This change leads to a direct reversal of the

63 Due to Ezekiel’s insistence on both physical and heart circumcision for participation in worship in the new temple (44:7–9), and that nowhere does he actually describe the heart as being circumcised, it is best to understand that concept as the one being described in 11:19 and 36:26; so Le Déaut, ‘la circoncision’, 183.

64 Lapsley, *Bones*, 104; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 2 vols., AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 2:730.

65 Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 143: ‘שקוץ’ is always associated with idolatry’. See also Michael A. Grisanti, ‘שקץ’, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), §2.

66 The LXX reads ἐτέραν, while the Syriac and Targum revise according to חדש in 18:31 and 36:26.

67 Cf. 1 Chr 12:33, 38; Ps 86:11. For its opposite, compare Ps 12:3.

68 P.M. Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*, JSOTsup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 111; cf. Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 181.

69 Block, *Ezekiel*, 1:353; ‘The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of רוח in the Book of Ezekiel’, *JETS* 32 (1989), 27–49. For an extensive study on the function of רוח and the comparable terms in Greek, see now John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

70 As Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 2:730) notes, ‘Vs. 26a is explicated by vss. 26b–27a’.

71 Lapsley, *Bones*, 105.

earlier depictions of Israel as disobedient to the divine will.⁷² But whereas in chapter 11 this outcome is communicated through a purpose clause (למען, v. 20), chapter 36 says that YHWH will make (ועשיתי) Israel obey (v. 27). It appears that the gift of the divine Spirit has somehow intensified the connection between divine and human agency.⁷³ Through the Spirit-gift, God participates 'directly in man's new obedience'.⁷⁴ Divine participation does not render Israel's agency inconsequential, however, as the restoration involves her cleansing the land of idols (11:18).⁷⁵ Nevertheless, even this act is associated with YHWH's direct influence since it comes as the 'declaration of YHWH' and as a response to the outburst: 'YHWH, *You* (אתה) are making a complete destruction of the remnant' (11:13). If YHWH's refusal to destroy the remnant is borne out by the remnant's actions, then those actions must somehow be attributable to divine agency.⁷⁶

But it does not appear as though divine and human agency are related in inverse proportion to one another. For one, in 36:23 human agency is shown to be integral to YHWH's purposes. As M. Greenberg notes, 'God's holiness... would be vindicated and acknowledged by all nations, through the agency of Israel'.⁷⁷ It is through the creation of a new humanity that is both formed by and taken up in divine action (vv. 26–27) that YHWH would make his glory known. Furthermore, the descriptions of Israel loathing herself and her former practices make little sense if her humanity has been abrogated (36:31). Rather than effacing human agency, it would seem that God has actually reinforced and enhanced the efficacy of the newly created moral agent

72 Compare בחקי לא הלכתם ומשפטי לא in 5:7 and בחקותי לא הלכתם ואת־משפטי לא עשיתם in 11:12 with 11:20: ישמרו ועשו.

73 Williams (*Hebrew Syntax*, §520) lists למען as a purpose clause. Joüon (*Grammar*, §169g) notes that while it is especially used to indicate purpose, it can also have consecutive force. ועשיתי followed by את אשר does not share this ambivalence (cf. Eccl 3:14). On the relationship between divine initiative, divine gift and human obedience, see further Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 115–16.

74 Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 2:249.

75 Block, *Ezekiel*, 1:352.

76 So Lapsley, *Bones*, 104: 'Verses 17–20 should be read all together as one divine act of deliverance'.

77 Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 2:735, presumably taking the ב in בככם to denote agent or means (cf. Williams, § 243, 245).

by working directly through human obedience.⁷⁸ This inference finds support in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.

3.2.3 *The Dry Bones Illustration*

The vision of the valley of dry bones illustrates how at the restoration God will create Israel anew. 'Create' is an apropos description, since the discourse powerfully evokes the Genesis narrative to advance its point: 'Behold I will send breath/Spirit into you so that you live' (הנה אני מביא בכם רוח וחיייתם) (v. 5; cf. Gen 2:7).⁷⁹ The comparison with creation is made possible by Ezekiel's insistence that the exiles are dead.⁸⁰ It is notable that after God has placed sinews, flesh, and skin on the bones, they still need 'breath/Spirit' (vv. 7–8). Drawing on the creation narrative, the bones cannot be considered alive until God sends his breath/Spirit into them (vv. 9–10).⁸¹ The indwelling of YHWH's Spirit is thus native to reconstituted human nature.⁸²

Importantly, in the vision YHWH's creative activity is not devoid of human means; it comes as a result of Ezekiel's obedience to the command to prophesy (vv. 4, 7). And while Ezekiel testifies on YHWH's behalf that this is what YHWH will do (vv. 5, 12), it is precisely as Ezekiel prophesies (בהנבאי) that YHWH works.⁸³ This dynamic sequence is explicitly repeated in a second stage regarding the indwelling of the Spirit (vv. 9–10).⁸⁴ Both phases of the vision vividly

78 Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 2:735) believes that 'God's uninterrupted glorification entails the curtailment of human freedom'. This is the case only if one accepts a particular definition of 'freedom'.

79 See further Ashley S. Crane, *Israel's Restoration: A Textual-Comparative Exploration of Ezekiel 36–39* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 94, 99, 100; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 137; Christopher R. Seitz, 'Ezekiel 37:1–14', *Int* 46 (1992), 53; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2:257–58.

80 As indicated by the fact that the bones are very dry (v. 2), have been slain (v. 9), and come up from graves (vv. 12–13). So Lapsley, *Bones*, 170.

81 Daniel Isaac Block, 'Beyond the Grave: Ezekiel's Vision of Death and Afterlife', *BBR* 2 (1992), 34. Of course, this is at some variance with the creation story itself, since it involves רוח rather than נשמה and נפש. Paul exploits this variance in 1 Cor 15:45.

82 On relationship between the רוח, life, and death at the creation, see Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 14–35.

83 Likewise Block (*Ezekiel*, 2:376) suggests that the awkward syntax 'emphasizes the connection between the prophetic word and event'. So also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2:257: '[T]he prophet participates in the divine activity'; contra Michael V. Fox, 'The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones', *HUCA* (1980), 8–9.

84 On the two stage process and parallelism between vv. 4–8 and vv. 9–10, see Block, *Ezekiel*, 2:375n37. On the rhetorical effect of dividing restoration into two stages, see Fox, 'Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision', 10–13.

demonstrate that YHWH's saving plan will utilise the means of Ezekiel's obedient speech (v. 12), even though the creative activity is fully attributed to God.⁸⁵

Such observations become more suggestive if one accepts that throughout the book Ezekiel himself represents the newly created agent.⁸⁶ Significant in this respect is the address 'son of man/Adam' (בן־אדם). Son of man most certainly suggests a 'human' and so distinguishes Ezekiel from God.⁸⁷ And yet his being completely under the influence and power of the Spirit along with his exercising obedience toward God (cf. 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 8:3, 11:1) distinguishes Ezekiel from his audience. It could be that the phrase denotes humanity in its mortality as in 31:12; and yet this is also the only time (out of 94 occurrences) when Ezekiel is not specifically addressed. To understand the import of the title as 'mortal' without considering Ezekiel's life seems imbalanced.⁸⁸ When the latter is taken into account, 'son of man' denotes Ezekiel as a true אדם: 'a model of the human creature who does hear the divine word, who responds fully and appropriately to what YHWH is doing.'⁸⁹ As one vivified by YHWH's 'Spirit', he acts *in* the divine will; therein his agency is substantiated.⁹⁰

3.2.4 *Motivation and Initiative*

In chapter 11 the objective of the divine gift is simply to reverse Israel's situation by making her obedient (11:20; cf. 5:7, 11:12). In chapter 36, however, the explicit reason given for saving deliverance is YHWH's concern for his reputation (vv. 21, 22, 23).⁹¹ These verses unambiguously and emphatically communicate that restoration will not be for any good done by Israel;⁹² in fact, she is to feel shame for her past (vv. 31–32), understanding that her disobedience is the

85 Davis (*Swallowing the Scroll*, 116) asserts that Ezekiel does not envision 'a new creation which eliminates the element of willful obedience, but rather a radical act of forgiveness which . . . frees Israel from the burden . . . of the past and renders it capable of hearing, of forming new habits, and of entering into a new relationship with YHWH'. While I agree that Israel's wilful obedience is not eliminated, reverberations of the creation story suggest something much more radical than forgiveness and the capacity to form new habits.

86 For an extensive argument on this subject, see Lapsley, *Bones*, 116–17.

87 Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 1:61.

88 Cf. William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 26; Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 1:62.

89 Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 83–84, emphasis removed.

90 Interestingly, the first time Ezekiel is called 'son of man' is also when he is infused by the Spirit (2:1–2).

91 Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 97.

92 The negation of a noun clause with אֵל is emphatic (Joüon, *Grammar*, §160c; Block, *Ezekiel*, 2:349, 2:351n82).

reason the divine name requires vindication.⁹³ There is an innate connection between Israel's fidelity and YHWH's reputation; a desire for the latter motivates the establishment of the former.⁹⁴ So while in chapter 11 the prospect of Israel's obedience motivates YHWH's work, in chapter 36 obedience can be understood only as a penultimate motivation—YHWH's own glory being the ultimate motivation. In either case, any obedience or remorse on Israel's part must be understood as the logical outcome of a divine saving initiative, the result of God's transformative gift. In both texts, 'the yearning of Yahweh for the obedience of his people . . . [is] satisfied through a remarkable divine initiative whereby Yahweh will grant as gift that which he previously demanded.'⁹⁵ The reciprocity necessary for covenant relationship is therefore the outcome of and not the prerequisite for the gift-event.

3.2.5 *Ambiguity in Ezekiel*

In the context of Ezekiel's temple vision, the prophet-priest is commanded to mediate vital information about YHWH's temple and Torah in order to bring about shame and obedience in the people (43:10–11).⁹⁶ He is to 'make known' and 'write' the design of the new temple and its laws 'so that the people of Israel might obey' (וישמרו, v. 11). Such a command assumes that people are generally competent to obey God if given the right knowledge. A question arises as to how this understanding of moral competence relates to the transformation of the Self put forward in chapters 36 and 37.

Lapsley assumes that this competence has to be the result of a 'new moral core' due to earlier statements in the book about human ineptitude.⁹⁷ Commending this reading one might observe how the laws which Ezekiel reveals to Israel are bound up with the new Temple—they are *its* instructions

93 See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 2:728–729.

94 Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 179; Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 127.

95 Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 99n55. Pace Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 88, 90–91, who goes further than the evidence will allow when he draws a sharp contrast between the pictures of moral competence in chapters 11 and 36. On the relationship between divine initiative, divine gift, and human obedience in Ezekiel more generally, see Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 115–16.

96 The distinction between the people being told about the temple to cause shame in v. 10 and being told after they have felt shame in v. 11 is that in v. 10 they are told about the temple generally, whereas in v. 11 it is described in further detail (Lapsley, *Bones*, 178–79).

97 Lapsley, *Bones*, 181: 'But the possibility of adhering to the *torot*, of doing the right thing, is now open to these people thanks to the watershed event of Yahweh's recreation of human beings in chapter 36–37 . . . earlier in the book [obedience] would have been impossible'.

(צורתו) and *its* statutes (חקתיו). Obedience to laws bound up with the new temple administration would seem to assume that this obedience happens after the temple has been built and the salvific events of chapters 36–37 have already taken place. Israel is then addressed as a morally competent agent on the basis of God's prior reconstituting work and the moral competence that verse 11 describes is not incompatible with an assumption that moral competence can only come through God's transforming gift.⁹⁸

But it also must be admitted that the text is not all that clear. 40:10 seems to take us out of the vision with a command to Ezekiel to make known these things in the present, echoing 40:4.⁹⁹ That being the case, one could argue that this verse speaks of a knowledge of God's future plans which is intended to bring about *present* obedience. If so, Ezekiel is addressing agents who are capable of obeying God's revealed laws prior to any personal transformation. Such a view of moral agency stands in tension with the picture that is painted elsewhere in the book.

If 43:10–11 raises some questions about Ezekiel's overall picture of moral competence, 18:30–32 even more so. In contrast to 11:17–20 and 36:22–28, 18:30–32 describes Israel's transformation as a type of obedience that she is responsible to perform. Similar to chapters 11 and 36, 18:30c–32 speaks of the necessity of a new heart and a new spirit. Here the crucial terms 'life' and 'death' sharpen the exigency of spiritual renovation. Yet instead of promising Israel new spiritual faculties, 18:31 insists that Israel must make/get/acquire (עשה) them for herself. If 36:27 intensifies the role of the divine agent, 18:31 blunts it. These verses lack the notion of gift so demonstrable in chapters 11 and 36. As D. Block notes, 'What is promised elsewhere as a divine act and as a gift is now recast as a command.'¹⁰⁰ We might add that here the new heart and spirit are components of, rather than grounds for, repentance (30c–31).¹⁰¹ Israel's making for herself a new heart and spirit has the same effect as her turning and living (v. 32). The people become 'agents of their transformation into new selves.'¹⁰²

98 Compare this notion of obedience through hearing with Deuteronomy where the theme of obedience through hearing and remembering is prevalent (4:9–10). And yet in Deuteronomy the people ultimately fail to obey and the threats of 4:25–28 become a reality. On one reading, Deuteronomy's restored state downplays the importance of 'hearing', while suggesting something more is needed for the word to take root in the human heart (30:6, 14).

99 See Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit*, Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 335.

100 Block, *Ezekiel*, 2:588.

101 Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 53.

102 Lapsley, *Bones*, 76.

Curiously, there is no mention of these elements promoting obedience. Their very establishment represents a type of obedience. While concerns about divine retribution and theodicy are clearly at issue, the rhetorical effect of these verses is to underscore Israel's responsibility to change her Self and her ways.¹⁰³

These passages to greater or lesser degrees present conflicting impressions of moral competence and introduce a tension into the book as a whole.¹⁰⁴ How to reconcile these diverse statements about moral agency remains unclear. Later readers must develop their own ways of navigating the picture of moral competence presented in the book.¹⁰⁵ What is clear is that how any reader decides to reconcile chapter 18 with chapters 11 and 36 will invariably determine that reader's understanding of how the new heart and new spirit function in Ezekiel's vision.

103 On the effect of focusing on questions of theodicy at the expense of questions regarding divine and human agency, see Lapsley, *Bones*, 25–26, 41. That these verses deal with a culpability that is both corporate and national is easily demonstrable: (1) The imperatives 'cast off' (השליכו) and 'make' (ועשו) are in the plural, and (2) the vocative, 'Oh house of Israel' (בית ישראל) suggests that a national fate is at stake (Contra Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 49). Yet these admonitions come at the end of a section where case law forms are applied to the national experience (Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 41). As Lapsley notes, 'the legal language of chapter 18 lends itself to an atomistic view of morality' (*Bones*, 77).

Lapsley makes a distinction between questions of levels of responsibility (individual vs. corporate) and the capacity of human responsibility (see, e.g., 28). While I am uncomfortable with her notion of capacity due to its indebtedness to Kant (see her 'Philosophical Assumptions', 11–12), I am suggesting that the level (individual) rhetorically emphasizes accountability—not to downplay, but to complement the corporate. So Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 1:341: 'Torah laws, whose style Ezekiel imitates, use the singular in particular cases without intent to oppose the individual to the collective; the signification of the singular is, rather, each and every individual in the collective'. Similarly, Gordon Matties, *Ezekiel 18 and the Rhetoric of Moral Discourse* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 7, 152. For a thorough critique of overly individualistic readings, see Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 35–60.

104 Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 125.

105 See now Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 88–94. Note J.D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 48: 'to ask which comes first, grace or works, is like asking about the chicken and the egg'. Yet compare Davis' response: 'In view of this enabling intention, I cannot agree with Levenson's comment. . . . The extent of the disaster reveals Israel's powerlessness to initiate its own restoration; the depth of its sin destroys any illusion of an equal partnership with God' (*Swallowing the Scroll*, 122).

3.3 Conclusion

In all three books considered thus far, a political crisis and failure, whether prospective or retrospective, gives way to fresh reflections on the moral competence of human agents. To one degree or another, all three prescribe an anthropological transformation as the cure for the lack of such competence.¹⁰⁶ Somewhat unclear, however, is the extent to which humans are incompetent, the role humans play in their own transformation, and the relationship between divine and human agency in the transformed existence.

All three books introduce ambiguity when they place transformation under the responsibility of the human agent (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4; Ezek 18:30–32), while also promising it as a divine act (e.g., Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33; 32:39–40; Ezek 36:26–27). Textual gaps make Deuteronomy 30:1–10 particularly susceptible to different understandings of human competence and divine agency. A careful reading of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, however, suggests that both books at least come to despair ‘that unaided or unimproved human nature could ever meet what God expected’.¹⁰⁷ Neither prophet found the metaphor of circumcision adequate to describe Israel’s need. Israel no longer needed a circumcised heart, but a completely new heart. In these books it would seem that God’s gift of transformation provides the solution to a comprehensive ineptitude.¹⁰⁸ As such, any human response, including repentance, must come under the power of God’s creative initiative.

Along with evidencing a more dire pessimism about human competence, both prophets insinuate that God’s saving agency perpetually works in the newly created moral agent (Jer 32:39–40; Ezek 36:27). While on certain constructions of divine and human agency this would necessarily limit human agency, it must be remembered that here the goal of the divine work is to establish human participation in a mutually affirming relationship, the reinstatement of the covenant formula.¹⁰⁹ If the prophets cannot conceive of a relationship with God devoid of genuine reciprocity,¹¹⁰ then it seems unlikely

106 Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 181: ‘It will not do merely for God to elect Israel and try it all again one more time. . . . God has to deal with their proven and enduring tendency toward *waywardness*’ (emphasis his). So also Gowan, *Eschatology*, 69.

107 Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 176.

108 Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 89–90, 94. Compare Lapsley, *Bones*, 63, however, whose argument seeks to demonstrate how even Jer 31:31–34 could be read as YHWH’s response to Israel’s initiative.

109 See David Noel Freedman, ‘Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme’, *Int* 18 (1964), 431.

110 See Raitt, *Theology of Exile*, 178.

that either prophet believes the divine gift diminishes the human contribution to that relationship or damages the integrity of the human agent. Neither would it seem that God has decreased his expectations of humans.¹¹¹ Rather, both prophets speak of an ongoing aspect of divine gifting which continues to provide the grounds for and possibility of human ability and responsibility.

111 While Raitt (*Theology of Exile*, 181) believes that the 'conditionality' of the Mosaic covenant 'has been wholly superseded' in the prophets' messages, he rightly insists that 'the moral rigor of the Mosaic Covenant is not abandoned'. Similarly, speaking of the latter portion of Jeremiah, he states: 'The amazing thing in these passages is the tenacity of holding together both the salvation era sign-marks of election, forgiveness, deliverance, and the refusal to compromise away the necessity of moral preconditions, even if those moral preconditions are fulfilled by God as an arbitrary act of his divine prerogative God's standards have not changed, and ultimately what he expects of his people has not changed. But the source of initiative and the divine strategy are so radically transposed that we sense that we have been brought to the beginning of a new era' (179). And further, '[m]an is still evaluated by his actions in relation to the norm of the law Here, however, the man who is evaluated by the norm of the law is no longer natural man left to his own power and his own instincts toward goodness' (176). See also Gowan, *Eschatology*, 72–73.

PART 2

Early Jewish Interpretation and Theology



Having surveyed the contours of moral agency in the the books of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, we are now in a position to see how these seminal texts were taken up by some of their earliest interpreters. Carol Newsom recently pointed out how, in spite of the fact that they represent minor voices in Israelite thought, the pessimistic visions of moral competence in Jeremiah and Ezekiel ‘become important touchstones for the development of more complex and varied approaches in Second Temple Literature.’¹ What can be said about the influence of Jeremiah and Ezekiel can be stated more forcefully about the influence of the book of Deuteronomy. In chapters 4–7, we investigate early Jewish interpretations of the heart-transformation narratives, with a view to opening up some of those ‘more complex and varied approaches’ to the questions of moral competence, agency, and gifting.

¹ Carol A. Newsom, ‘Models of the Moral Self: Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism’, *JBL* (2012), 14.

The Septuagint

4.1 Introduction

The Septuagint is perhaps the earliest witness to the interpretative traditions of the restoration narratives we have analyzed, and provides ‘access to the theological trends and hermeneutical principles of Judaism in the Hellenistic period.’¹ The specific theological motif that this study is taken up with is the relationship between God’s gifting, divine and human agency, and human transformation. When it comes to questions of initiative, agency, and the exact nature of heart-transformation, the texts found in the Hebrew Bible are ambiguous. What, if anything, might the Septuagint tell us about initial interpretations of such questions? I will begin with a brief consideration of initiative and agency, before looking at how ‘heart-transformation’ is understood by the Septuagint translators.

4.2 Initiative and Agency

With respect to questions of initiative and agency, the Septuagint translations do very little to resolve the ambiguity of the Hebrew text. This can be seen, for instance, in the verses which open Deuteronomy 30. There it was noted how ambiguous syntax opens the text up to two plausible, internally consistent, yet conflicting readings. On one reading, God’s blessing is contingent upon Israel’s turning. On another reading, there is no condition placed upon Israel at all.² In the Septuagint, a simple temporal clause (καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἄν) is followed by a series of καὶ + future indicative verbs. Verbs that do not follow this pattern are embedded within subordinate clauses and off the main line of discourse (e.g., ἦν ἔδωκα; οὐδὲ ἔάν σε διασκορπίσῃ κύριος, v. 1). If this construction indicates some kind of temporal condition, the Septuagint does nothing to flag for its

1 Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 89.

2 So: and it will be when all these words/things come upon you, *then* you shall return [them] (וְהִשְׁבַּת) to your heart.

readers where the protasis ends and the apodosis begins. The Septuagint thus preserves the ambiguity of the Hebrew.

In most places under consideration, the Septuagint renders the elusive כִּי-clauses with ἐάν. In some places this shows that the translator took the כִּי-clauses as conditional, ruling out a general, causal reading (i.e. LXX Deut 30:10). Unfortunately, since ἐάν can introduce any number of conditional relationships, the Septuagint leaves open the question of what kind of condition the translator believed the texts present us with. In LXX Jeremiah 24:7 ὅτι renders the כִּי-particle. While ὅτι normally indicates a relationship of direct or immediate causality, in the Septuagint ὅτι is also used 'to introduce a motivation or an explanation in loose connection with the preceding context'.³ Very little can be made of the translators' decisions at these points.

Another important text regarding divine and human agency is Jeremiah 4:4. On the surface, LXX Jeremiah 4:4 appears to clear up the ambivalence of the Hebrew when it renders the *niphal* imperative הַמְלוּ with a passive imperative form of περιτέμνω: περιτέμηθητε τῷ θεῷ (be circumcised by/for God).⁴ We cannot be certain, however, that περιτέμηθητε should be taken passively. The distinction between the middle and passive voice is blurry, especially in the Septuagint and in later Greek.⁵ Moreover, the next clause translates וְהִסְרוּ (remove) with the middle imperative form of περιτέμνω.⁶ The use of περιτέμνω for two different Hebrew roots may even indicate that the translator understood the clauses as more or less equivalent. The second clause could provide an interpretive gloss on the first, in which case the translator took הַמְלוּ לַיהוָה reflexively (circumcise yourselves to God), even though he rendered הַמְלוּ with a passive form (περιτέμηθητε). If so, the aorist passive form is not indicating divine agency so much as reflecting the distinction between the underlying *niphal* (הַמְלוּ) and *hiphil* (וְהִסְרוּ).

3 See Anneli Aejmelaes, 'ὍΤΙ causale in Septuagintal Greek', in *On the Trail of Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 20.

4 Unfortunately, τῷ θεῷ is hardly more conspicuous than לַיהוָה, but should probably be taken as an indirect object (for God) since most often a dative of agency will be accompanied by a preposition.

5 F.C. Conybeare and St George William Joseph Stock, *A Grammar of Septuagint Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), §83: '[i]nstances of passive form with middle meaning are common in the LXX'. They list Num 22:34; Judg 15:9; 16:20; 16:26; 3 Reigns 17:3; 18:1; 20:25. See also Luke 11:38 in the New Testament.

6 Since this is the only time where we have either a middle or passive imperative form of περιτέμνω, it is hard to determine the exact meaning of these forms here. From the use of the middle elsewhere in the LXX (see especially Gen 34:24; Deut 10:16; Est 8:17; Jud 14:10), one may detect a slightly discernible difference between the middle and passive voices.

Even still, the fact that περιτέμνω is given two distinct forms might well indicate that the acts are to be understood independently of one another. Yet another option is that the LXX understands two separate but correlating commands. The first command is a passive imperative (be circumcised) and could refer to either physical or metaphorical circumcision. If physical circumcision is in view, the first command would refer to a human's responsibility to get circumcised physically and the second command represents a human's responsibility to match that external reality with an internal one.⁷ But if this first command does not pertain to physical circumcision, then together the two clauses would describe the same process—heart-circumcision—from the vantage point of two distinct agents: God and humans. Unfortunately, one cannot determine with any degree of certainty which of these scenarios the translator had in mind and there is not enough evidence in these texts to determine the Septuagint translators' respective beliefs regarding the relationship between divine and human initiative and agency.

4.3 Heart Operation

An investigation of the LXX is more fruitful when it comes to the operation performed on the heart. Where the metaphor of circumcision is involved, broadly speaking, one can detect how the Septuagint-translators took this operation in at least two directions. Deuteronomy 30:6 and Jeremiah 4:4 demonstrate this.

4.3.1 *Deuteronomy 30:6*

καὶ περικαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν καρδίαν σου καὶ τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ σπέρματός σου ἀγαπᾶν κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδιάς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου, ἵνα ζῆς σύ.

LXX Deuteronomy 30:6 renders the verb מוּל (circumcise) with περικαθαρίζω (purge entirely⁸/clean morally⁹). Of its 32 occurrences in the MT, the LXX translates מוּל with περιτέμνω (circumcise) 30 of those 32 times. LXX Deuteronomy 30:6 represents one of two anomalies. Since we find מוּל rendered περιτέμνω in

⁷ Behind the translator's choice may be a concern that heart-circumcision is not played off against physical circumcision, an issue that arises in Paul and Philo.

⁸ περικαθαρίζω: LSJ.

⁹ περικαθαρίζω: T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and Twelve Prophets* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 452.

LXX Deuteronomy 10:16, the peculiarity of 30:6 should not be attributed to the metaphorical use of מוֹל. Besides, מוֹל is not used metaphorically in Joshua 5:4, the other anomalous case. So why has the LXX chosen to translate מוֹל in 30:6 with περικαθαρίζω and are there any conclusions we can draw from this lexical decision?

We begin with the function of περικαθαρίζω in LXX Isaiah 6:7 and LXX Leviticus 19:23. In LXX Isaiah 6:7, περικαθαρίζω translates כפר and has ἀμαρτίας as its object. This act of ‘purging’ with coal from the altar comes as a response to Isaiah’s confession that he possesses unclean lips (ἀκάθαρτα χεῖλη, 6:5). Along with purging sin, the ritual is said to ‘remove lawlessness’. In this context, it seems reasonable to assume that Isaiah’s sin and uncleanness are related as cause to effect (cf. Lev 16:16a, 30; 18:24–25a).¹⁰ With such a close connection between sin and impurity, it is likely that ἀμαρτίας is a metonym for the impurity caused by sin. Thus in LXX Isaiah 6:7 περικαθαρίζω means to purify by expunging an impurity caused by sin through sacrificial means.

LXX Leviticus 19:23 is less straightforward. It commands the people of Israel to ‘purge the uncleanness’ (περικαθαριεῖτε τὴν ἀκαθαρσίαν) of the fruit trees which they planted when they entered the land. In the MT, however, the people are commanded ‘to treat as uncircumcised the foreskin/uncircumcision [of the tree], namely its fruit’ (וערלתם ערלתו את-פריו). How do we account for these differences?

To describe fruit as uncircumcised would likely have been misunderstood in a greek-speaking context. The translator then chose to render ערלת as ἀκαθαρσία as a way of communicating to his greek audience how the fruit was unacceptable, beyond the bounds of the covenant. Although the cognate accusative ערלתו וערלתם (treat its foreskin as uncircumcised) might suggest any number of things,¹¹ the idea of impurity in ערלת ‘led to understanding the verb as necessarily meaning a form of purification’: the people were to remove the fruit from the tree.¹² Most likely the translator associated the cognate accusative (וערלתם ערלתו) with the idea of circumcision,¹³ but communicated the

10 For a more thorough study on the relationship between sin and impurity and an overview of the major contributions, see Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, and Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), chapter 5.

11 For a list, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1678.

12 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus*, scs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 305.

13 This conjecture is supported by his using a ‘περί compound’ to translate ערל. See Leslie C. Allen, ‘ערל’, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed.

idea of circumcision with περικαθαρίζω (cleanse) in keeping with its 'dynamic equivalent' rendering of תרלץ as ἀκαθάρσια.

A similar value is attached to circumcision in LXX Joshua 5:4, the other case where the LXX deviates from its usual translation of מול. Joshua 5:4 comes in the context of the 2nd wilderness generation readying themselves to enter the promised land. Importantly, it occurs immediately prior to Passover (vv. 10–12). Woudstra notes how 'although the account does not explicitly link the two . . . the connection between vv. 2–7 and v. 10 is obvious';¹⁴ the circumcision ritual is placed here because it is a necessary condition for Passover participation (cf. Ex 12:48b).¹⁵ When LXX Joshua 5:4 translated מול as περικαθαίρω (cleanse completely), a synonym of περικαθαρίζω,¹⁶ it clarified what is implicit in the narrative; namely, that circumcision brings ritual purification. Circumcision was a rite that set an Israelite apart and gave him access to the worship cult.

Perhaps there is a comparable dynamic at work in LXX Deuteronomy 30:6, where the LXX interprets מול as an act of cleansing.¹⁷ Such an interpretation finds support in the surrounding context. Similar to Isaiah 6:7, Israel needs God to alleviate the consequences of her sins (LXX Deut 30:3). And like Isaiah, the specific sin from which she needs relief is idolatry (Deut 29:17–18; cf. Is 6:5),¹⁸ an explicitly defiling sin (Lev 18:24–30; 19:31; 20:1–3; Jer 2:23).¹⁹ One can see how through the worship of foreign gods, living in a foreign land, and involvement in βδέλυγμα (29:16, 20) would have left Israel unclean. It must

Willem VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 537–38, who suggests that the cultic role of circumcision stands behind these interpretative choices. See also Wevers, *Leviticus*, 305. When Wevers writes how 'In MT this reads "you must circumcise its foreskin . . ."; it is unclear whether he is also taking the cognate in the direction of the LXX or whether he thinks the Vorlage reads מול (304). Compare Cécile Dogniez and Marguerite Harl, *Le Deutéronome* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992), 307, who also refer to Lev 19:23 '[p]our l'usage de perikatharizein là où l'hébreu emploie le verbe de la circoncision'.

14 Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 102.

15 Woudstra, *Joshua*, 102.

16 Le Déaut, 'la circoncision', 184.

17 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, SCS (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 480–81.

18 On the background of idolatry in Isaiah 6, see G.K. Beale, 'Isaiah vi 9–13: A Retributive Taunt against Idolatry', *VT* 41 (1991), 257–78; see also, Gregory Yuri Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy*, JSOT (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 125–30.

19 Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55.

also be remembered that Israel's moral uncleanness was potentially defiling to the land (Ps 106:36–40). These various contextual factors could be marshalled in support of the LXX translator's interpretation of heart-circumcision as some sort of purification which was necessary for a return to the land.²⁰

It should be noted that while cleansing (moral or ritual) represents part of circumcision's metaphorical potential, it by no means exhausts that potential.²¹ Especially with the heart as its object, circumcision could deal with the source of human behaviour.²² Elsewhere in Deuteronomy where the metaphor appears circumcision is not juxtaposed with being unclean/impure, but with being stubborn/stiff-necked (תקשו... ערפכם/σκληροκαρδία, 10:16). From chapter 29 it could be argued that the fundamental problem with the heart is its orientation (vv 3, 17–18), not its impurity. If it is not entirely self-evident that the focus of the metaphor in Deuteronomy 30:6 is cleansing,²³ then LXX Deuteronomy 30:6 may provide evidence of one interpreter's theological hermeneutic. This specific hermeneutic is influenced by priestly conceptions, shows a concern for ritual purity, and thus interprets God's saving work as an act of purification from sin. One notable effect of the LXX's translation is that loving the Lord is now closely associated with ritual purification. Furthermore, God's transforming work in LXX Deuteronomy 30:6 focuses on rectifying the consequences of Israel's idolatry, but not so much its cause.

Of course, the reasons for our translator's choice need not be strictly theological. Cleansing offered a motif that transferred more or less seamlessly into the conceptual world of his Greek speaking audience. In addition, since

20 G. Mayer notes how LXX Deut 30:6 and Josh 5:4 are unique in understanding the metaphor as a condition for cultic purity; see his 'מול', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 162. Elsewhere he states that 'Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah and P identify uncircumcision with cultic impurity' and '[p]ossession of a foreskin is a sign of breaking the covenant'; see G. Mayer, 'ערל', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 360.

21 Due to the metaphorical function of circumcision here, it might be reading too much into it to ask whether the 'purity' was moral or ritual.

22 So Le Déaut, 'la circoncision', 180, calls it: 'la source... de son comportement religieux'.

23 Though, interestingly, one early Ebionite Christian or Samaritan convert to Judaism, Symmachus, seems to have understood the circumcision metaphor in terms of purification consistently: Jer 4:4: καθαρισθητε τῷ ὠκυρίῳ καὶ περιέλεσθε τὰς πονηρίας τῶν καρδιῶν ὑμῶν; Jer 6:10: ἀκάθαρτον τὸ οὖς αὐτῶν (also Aquila); Ezek 44:9: ἀκάθαρτος καρδίᾳ καὶ ἀκάθαρτος σαρκί; Ex 6:12: οὐκ εἰμι καθαρὸς τῷ φθέγματι. See also Wevers, *Deuteronomy*, 480–81, who thinks it is clear that the MT meant 'cleansing' and that the LXX only makes this explicit. Apart from noting LXX Deuteronomy 30:6's similarity with LXX Joshua 5:4, he does not give any reasons for why 'cleansing' is the evident meaning of מול in Deut 30:6.

circumcision involves the removal of something, cleansing presents a natural substitution. Yet even if these factors encouraged the translator to choose *περικαθαρίζω*, they do not explain why he chose *περικαθαρίζω* over other options. Why, for instance, did he not choose any number of other verbs that would adequately connote removal to a Greek speaking audience? It seems to me that the translator had a choice, and in that choice we find traces of a hermeneutic at work.

4.3.2 *Jeremiah 4:4*

περιτμήθητε τῷ θεῷ ὑμῶν καὶ περιτέμεσθε τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν

Even though LXX Jeremiah 4:4 might not tell us a great deal about initiative and agency, it does witness to how the heart-circumcision metaphor was understood by one of its earliest interpreters. LXX Jeremiah has carried forward the ‘circumcision’ motif by translating *סור* (remove) in the second clause with the middle imperative form of *περιτέμνω*. By what appears to be the influence of LXX Deuteronomy 10:16, it also rendered the object *לבויות לבבכם* (foreskin of your hearts) as *σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν* (your hard-heartedness).

To translate *לבויות לבבכם* as *σκληροκαρδίαν* clarifies how the translator understood the import of heart-circumcision. *σκληροκαρδία* has to do with ‘stubbornness of attitude in refusing to do God’s will’.²⁴ In Sir. 16:10 those with *σκληροκαρδία* are set alongside people described as obstinate (*ἀπειθής*, v. 6) and arrogant (*ὑπερηφάνια*, v. 8). In Mark 16:14, Jesus rebukes his disciples for *σκληροκαρδία* because they refused to believe the witnesses of his resurrection. LXX Ezekiel 3:7 uses a lexical cognate (*σκληροκαρδισος*) to describe people who are unwilling to listen (*μὴ θελήσωσιν εἰσακοῦσαι*) to the Lord or his prophet. Thus for LXX Jeremiah 4:4 heart-circumcision involved the transformation of the human will.

4.4 Conclusion

While Paul and his contemporary kinsmen will each wrestle in their own unique ways over texts in their sacred tradition, they will still wrestle from within that tradition. The Septuagint serves as an important foundational step in the tradition’s development. From this investigation it appears that there is very little modification to detect in the LXX over the issues of agency and

²⁴ *σκληροκαρδία*: Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 514.

initiative. The LXX does evidence two different metaphorical interpretations of heart-circumcision, either as connoting purification or the reorientation of the will. As this study continues to look at these themes in the Jewish interpretive tradition, it will be interesting to see if and how any of these early developments are taken up.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

5.1 Introduction

We continue our study of the interpretative traditions of these important restoration narratives by turning to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The texts found in the caves near Khirbet Qumran appear at once promising and perplexing. Promising because of the sheer number of scrolls that engage with Israel's scriptural heritage; perplexing because of the questions and debates that continue to surround these documents. Who wrote the scrolls and what relationship do they have to the community that lived at Khirbet Qumran? How should we identify this community and where do they fit on the landscape of Second Temple Judaism? It was initially assumed that the manuscripts belonged to a sectarian, essene community living by the caves. While this hypothesis has been challenged at various points throughout the years, the view that the scrolls were the property of an essene-like sect that lived at Qumran remains the most accepted hypothesis, questions and difficulties notwithstanding.¹

To assume that this community was sectarian, however, does not mean that it was completely isolated or utterly unique. Studies on the *Damascus Document* and the *Community Rule* prove illuminating in this respect. It is generally assumed that the *Community Rule*, which governs the *Yahad*, served the Qumran community itself, while the *Damascus Document* applied to people living in camps that stretched throughout Judea (CD 7:6–7; 12:19–23). Be that as it may, the *Damascus Document's* presence amongst the scrolls, along with textual and thematic similarities between it and the *Community Rule*, implies that there is a strong relationship between the Qumran community and communities living throughout Judea.

A connection between the Qumran community and other groups is strengthened when we consider the textual history of the *Community Rule*. Alison Schofield has recently argued that multiple and somewhat contradictory

1 For a different perspective, see Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?: The Search for the Secret of Qumran* (New York: Scribner, 1995); see also Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

versions of the *Rule* seem to have existed and been copied contemporaneously.² While some have wondered how contradictory versions of the *Rule* could have simultaneously functioned in a single community, perhaps a better way forward is to assume, as Schofield argues, that the various editions of the *Rule* were being preserved and developed by distinct but related essene communities and brought to Qumran under duress. While it has long been assumed that the *Damascus Document* was used in multiple settlements, John Collins has argued that the *Community Rule* also functioned beyond the Qumran settlement.³ While one could assume the *Rule* comes from the *Damascus Document* and that its mention of multiple settlements is an obsolete holdover from its parent text, this evidence may well suggest that the *Yahad* was an association of multiple communities networked across Judea.⁴ Whether or not Collins's proposal is correct, it does seem that the community at Qumran and the texts associated with it represent the thought of a larger body of Jews living at the time. While recognising that further research may modify this approach, I cautiously proceed on the assumption that the scrolls were written or copied for the purposes of sectarian, essene-like communities, represented by the community that resided at Qumran.⁵

The hypothesis that the Qumran community was sectarian and connected to a wider movement throughout the land, of course, does not entail that every scroll originated in the sect or was sectarian in nature. Obviously some texts, like the biblical manuscripts, were neither. Our relatively sparse knowledge of the various Jewish groups living at this time, however, makes it difficult to determine the precise boundary between sectarian and non-sectarian literature.⁶ This study therefore examines both those works which are clearly

2 Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yahad: a New Paradigm of Textual Development for the Community Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); 'Rereading 1QS: New Paradigms of Textual Development in Light of Cave 4', *sDs* 15 (2008), 196–220.

3 See 1QS 6:1c–8a; also attested in 4QS^d.

4 See John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: the Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); similarly Eyal Regev, 'Between Two Sects: Differentiating the Yahad and the Damascus Covenant', in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Texts and Context*, ed. Charlotte Hempel (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 449.

5 James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 61.

6 So VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 61. Criteria for classification has been proposed by Devorah Dimant; see her 'The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance', in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness: Papers on the Qumran Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 23–58 and now Devorah Dimant, 'The Vocabulary of the Qumran Sectarian Texts', in *Qumran und die Archäologie: Texte und Kontexte*, ed. Jörg Frey, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011),

yahadic/sectarian and those works where the exact connection to the *Yahad*/sectarian community is less clear. Where a text does not clearly manifest sectarian attributes, this will be noted and taken into account.

5.2 Scriptural Engagement

5.2.1 *Reading Restoration: Sectarian Texts*

Scripture stood at the heart of the community's self-understanding, as Moses, the Prophets, and David offered a testimony that was imperative to understand (4Q397 14–21, line 10).⁷ MMT is representative in this respect.⁸ There we find that the errors of an opponent could not be separated from his failure to read rightly. It is therefore unsurprising that C12–31 presents an exposition from Scripture intended to set him on the proper path so that he, and his community, may be counted righteous (C30–32).⁹ The stakes set on correctly reading could not be higher.

5.2.1.1 MMT

¹²... And further it is written that [you shall stray] from the pa[t]h and this evil will encounter [you]. And it is writ[ten: ¹³and it shall happen] [when ¹⁴a]ll [these] thing[s] shall befall you at the e]nd of days, the

347–95. On the difficulty of delineating sectarian from nonsectarian texts, see especially Carol A. Newsom, “‘Sectually Explicit’ Literature from Qumran”, in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, ed. William Henry Propp, et al. (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–87. See also Robert A. Kugler, ‘Whose Scripture? Whose Community? Reflections on the Dead Sea Scrolls Then and Now, By Way of Aramaic Levi’, *DSD* 15 (2008), 5–23. Eileen M. Schuller, ‘Research on the Sectarian Scrolls in North America’, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective: a History of Research*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Ingo Kottsieper (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 46 notes the special difficulty of classifying liturgical materials.

7 The view that C10 refers to a tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible has come under scrutiny; see, e.g., T.H. Lim, ‘The Alleged Reference to the Tripartite Division of the Hebrew Bible’, *RevQ* 20 (2001), 23–37; E.C. Ulrich, ‘The Non-Attestation of the Tripartite Canon in 4QMMT’, *CBQ* 65 (2003), 202–14. Nevertheless, as the citation formulas indicate, C10 refers to authoritative texts. Since David is paired with the books of ‘Moses’ and the ‘Prophets’, his life was to be ‘attentively considered’ (יָרַב) through reading (C23, C25).

8 Hanne von Weissenberg, *4QMMT: Reevaluating the Text, the Function and the Meaning of the Epilogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 169.

9 Moshe J. Bernstein, ‘The Employment and Interpretation of Scripture in 4QMMT: Preliminary Observations’, in *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History*, ed. John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein, SBL Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 49.

bles[sing and] the curse, [and you shall return it to] your [heart] ¹⁵and will turn [to him with al]l your heart ¹⁶and with a]ll [your] soul at the end [of time.] ¹⁷[And it is written in the book] of Moses and in the b[ook of the prophet]s, that there will come [...]... [...]... [...]...¹⁸ [the bles]sing[s...]... [...] in the days of Solomon the son of David and also the curses ¹⁹[which] came in the days of [Jer]oboam son of Nebat and up to the ex[i]le of Jerusalem and of Zedekiah, king of Juda[h] ²⁰[that] he should bring them in [...]. And we are aware that part of the blessings and curses have occurred ²¹that are written in the b[ook of Mos]es. And this is the end of days, when they will return in Israel ²²to the To[rah...] and not turn bac[k] and the wicked will act wick[edly] and [...] ²³and [...] remember the kings of Israe[l] and attentively consider their deeds, how whoever of them ²⁴feared [the... To]rah was freed from afflictions; and those who so[u]ght Torah ²⁵[forgiv]en sins. Remember David, one of the pious [and] he, too, ²⁶was freed from many afflictions and was forgiven. And also we have written to you ²⁷some of the works of the Torah which we think are good for you and for your people, for we s[a]w ²⁸that you have intellect and knowledge of the Torah. Attentively consider all these matters and seek from him that he may support ²⁹your counsel and keep far from you the evil scheming of Belial, ³⁰so that at the end of time, you may rejoice in finding that this part of our words are true. ³¹And it shall be reckoned to you as righteousness when you do what is upright and good before him, for your good ³²and that of Israel. (4QMMT C12–32)¹⁰

Along with Moses, the Prophets, and the life of David, the final chapters of Deuteronomy also testify to the community's existence. The exposition above

10 Taken from 4Q397 f14–21; 4Q398 f11–13, f14–17 *col. II*. The reconstruction of this text is very difficult. For the composite text as a whole and a full discussion of the issues, see now Weissenberg, *4QMMT*, 1–102. Weissenberg prefers Strugnell's placement of 4Q398 11–13 against Kister (89). See J. Strugnell, 'MMT: Second Thoughts on a Forthcoming Edition', in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Eugene Charles Ulrich and James C. VanderKam (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 67–70; see also the discussion by E. Qimron, 'The Nature of the Reconstructed Composite Texts of 4QMMT', in *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History*, ed. John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein, SBL Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 12–13. Though the placement of the lines does not impact my overall argument, I have used Kister's placement of C18–24. On *מִקְצֵת דְּבָרֵינוּ* as 'this part' (C30), see S.D. Fraade, 'To Whom It May Concen: 4QMMT and Its Addressee(s)', *RevQ* 19 (2000), 517.

opens with two (possibly three) citations from Moses' fifth book: Deuteronomy 31:29 is followed by what appears to be a combination quote from 4:30 and 30:1–2.

And further it is written:

you shall stray from the path and
this evil will encounter you.

שתסור מהדרך וקרתכה
הרעה

And it is written:

and it shall happen when all
these things shall befall you at
the end of days (והיא כי יבוא עליך
זהו כול הדברים האלה באחרית הימים
הברכה והקללה), and you shall return it to
your heart (והשיבותה אל לבבך)
and will turn to him (ושבתה אלו)
with all your heart and with all
your soul (בכל לבבכה ובכול נפשכה)
at the end of days (הימים באחרית);
4QMMT C12–16)

For I know that after my death you will
surely act corruptly and you shall stray
from the path (וסרתם מן-הדרך) that I
have commanded you. And evil will
encounter you at the end of days
(וקראת אתכם הרעה באחרית הימים),
because you will do what is evil in the
sight of YHWH, provoking him to anger
through the work of your hands. (Deut
31:29)

When you are in tribulation, and all
these things find you in the end of days
(ומצאוך כל הדברים האלה באחרית הימים),
and will turn to YHWH (עדיהוה)
your God and obey his voice. (Deut
4:30)

And it shall happen when all these
things shall befall you, the blessing and
the curse (והיה כייבאו עליך כל-הדברים
האלה הברכה והקללה), which I have set
before you, and you shall take them to
your heart (והשבת אל-לבבך) among all
the nations where YHWH your God has
driven you, and will turn to (ושבת)
YHWH your God, and obey his voice in
all that I command you today, with all
your heart and with all your soul (בכל-
לבבך ובכל-נפשך, Deut 30:1–2)

As the underlined portions indicate, the language of MMT C12–16 is lifted from Deuteronomy.¹¹ The citation is in two parts, introduced and divided by

11 G.J. Brooke, 'The Explicit Presentation of Scripture in 4QMMT', in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, Cambridge, 1995. Published in honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten, ed. Moshe J. Bernstein, et al., STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 78.

the refrain 'as it is written'.¹² The first part is from Deuteronomy 31:29, where Moses forecasts Israel's apostasy after his death. G.J. Brooke attributes the differences between text and citation to a certain *Tendenz*: 'As in several other places, MMT here abbreviates the scriptural text by omitting the redundant phrase **וקראת אתכם** and it replace [*sic*] the periphrastic construction **אתכם** with a verbal pronominal suffix'.¹³ MMT also changes the suffixes from plural to singular in order to apply the citation to its addressee.¹⁴ Thus with a desire to appropriate the text for the present situation, our author maintains that Deuteronomy has a powerful voice that needs to be heard.

For our author it is important that the evil that will come upon the people in Deuteronomy 31:29 occurs **באחרית הימים** (in latter days/at the end of days). Whether **באחרית הימים** is pulled from Deuteronomy 31:29 or from Deuteronomy 4:30 matters little.¹⁵ Either text produces the same outcome: in Deuteronomy 30 Moses forecasts the 'end of days'. Thus our author believes himself to be living on the cusp of the eschatological era (C21).¹⁶ While the blessings and curses have already taken place in part (C18–C20),¹⁷ a new scene is about

12 ובספר כתוב (C11) indicates that a quotation has been lost.

13 Brooke, 'Explicit Presentation of Scripture', 77.

14 Brooke, 'Explicit Presentation of Scripture', 77.

15 The similarities between Deut 4:30 and 30:1–2 make it difficult to determine whether or not 4:30 is in view at all. Our author could have taken the phrase from 4:30 and read it into 30:1–2; so Elisha Qimron, and John Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 10 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 55. Or he might simply have read the phrase from 31:29 into 30:1–2. We can be sure that Deut 30 is echoed due to the phrases 'the blessing and the curse' and 'you shall take [it/them] to your heart'. And yet in Deut 30 there is no mention of 'end of days', a phrase our author firmly places in his second quotation. Deut 4:30 does contain this phrase, but there the blessings and curses 'find', rather than 'befall'.

16 Bernstein, 'Scripture in 4QMMT', 48. See also Reinhard Kratz, 'Mose und die Propheten: Zur Interpretation von 4QMMT C', in *From 4QMMT to Resurrection: Mélanges qumraniens en hommage à Émile Puech*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 168.

17 García Martínez, '4QMMT in Qumran Context', in *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History*, SBL Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 20–23, argues that this is not a reference to eschatology on the basis of the phrase's meaning in Deut 31:29 and on account of the community's belief that this history had already played out. Weissenberg, 4QMMT, 189, follows García Martínez. But the citation stops precisely before **באחרית הימים** in 31:29. By transferring the phrase to the end of Deut 30:1–2, MMT associates the 'latter days' more with the time for 'turning' than with previous periods. See also S.D. Fraade, 'Rhetorics and Hermeneutics in Miqsat Ma'aseh ha-Torah (4QMMT): The Case of the Blessings and Curses', *DSD* 10 (2003), 161. For a supporting conclusion on *Florilegium*, see G.J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4Q Florilegium in its*

to unfold. The question of what this new movement will entail is answered in C21–22:

זוה הוא אחרית הימים שישובו בישראל לת[--] ולוא ישוּבו אחו[ן]

The meaning is difficult on any account. Who or what is returning and how should we reconstruct לת? Qimron and Strugnell have the translation ‘when they [i.e. the blessings] will return to Israel forever and not be cancelled’.¹⁸ In order to do this, they have (1) taken ב directionally, (2) reconstructed לת as לת[מיד], and (3) understood the final phrase ולוא ישוּבו אחו with לת[מיד] to describe the permanency of the new situation. In support of this proposal is the fact that Israel has not been the subject of any verbs in the section thus far. Based on the preceding clause, the ‘blessings and curses’ are the closest candidates for the antecedent.¹⁹

Yet this consideration must be balanced against the evidence that these lines give an interpretation of Deuteronomy 30:1–2 and in those verses the blessings and the curses never ‘return’ (שוב); they ‘come’ (בוא), while Israel is the subject of שוב three times. Moreover, the clause that immediately follows speaks of ‘the wicked’ who ‘act wickedly’. This description fits as a juxtaposition to the righteous who keep Torah. Supporting this reading, F. García Martínez argues (1) that it is better to translate ב locatively, ‘in Israel’, on the basis of the line’s preference for using ל to indicate direction, and (2) that לת should be reconstructed as לת[ורה] instead of לת[מיד] on the basis of passages like 1QS 5:22; 4Q171 fl 2:2–3.²⁰ On balance, it seems preferable to maintain our original translation and understand these lines as describing a new era which is ripe for recommitment to Torah (cf. 4QFlor 1–3 ii:3). If so, ולוא ישוּבו אחור (‘and they will not turn back’) should be understood in relation to לתורה as qualifying the type of obedience the people offer (resolute) more than the length of blessing (continual).²¹

Jewish Context, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 176. On the expression באחרית הימים in the scrolls, see Annette Steudel, ‘אחרית הימים’ in the Texts at Qumran, *RevQ* 16 (1993), 225–46.

18 Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, 61. García Martínez (‘4QMMT in Qumran Context’, 22n27) does not take Qimron and Strugnell to be assuming that ‘blessings’ are the subject. But compare Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, 60n18, 61n22.

19 See Kratz, ‘Mose und die Propheten’, 167.

20 García Martínez, ‘4QMMT in Qumran Context’, 18–19. So also Fraade, ‘Rhetorics and Hermeneutics’, 153.

21 Cf. 1QS 1:16–17; so Fraade, ‘Rhetorics and Hermeneutics’, 153n10; Kratz, ‘Mose und die Propheten’, 169.

As a motivation for obedience, the addressee is directed toward the lives of the kings, especially David, who sought Torah, performed righteous deeds, and were granted forgiveness of sins (C23–26). Since eschatological rejoicing comes on the basis of Torah-faithfulness (C30),²² the addressee must seek Torah for his own sake and for his community (C23–26). And while such practices would certainly have provided a sociological function (as all communal practices have), what ultimately matters is that the works performed are done 'before him' (לפניו); i.e., God who has the ability to reckon righteousness (C31).

The process of seeking is closely connected with the act of reflecting: By attentively considering the works of the kings, the addressee is to seek Torah (C23, C28). Beyond seeking Torah, the addressee is implored to seek God, both for assistance and for protection from Belial (C28–29). For these sectarians, the world-scene is more complex than a person autonomously following Torah uninhibited by outside agents. Rather, people act on a battleground of cosmic forces. Since one's desire to act rightly can be frustrated, it is necessary to seek the aid of God, who is able to stay any powers that might curtail the faithfuls' obedience.²³

But it is difficult to determine whose initiative stands behind the restoration and how competent people are thought to be. The fact that 'intellect and knowledge' qualify the addressee for receiving instruction (C28) suggests that he holds a degree of competence: he is able to seek God through exegetical reflection. Still, he *needs* the instruction, as well as God's support and protection (C29). He would thus seem competent to elicit God's support, but not completely competent to obey without that support. Although it is not altogether clear what instigates the period of seeking, MMT does give evidence of a community who read Deuteronomy 30:1–2 as bespeaking an eschatological period in which people obey Torah. If we are going to understand what role verse 6 played in the community's reading of Deuteronomy 30, however, we must turn elsewhere.

5.2.1.2 The Community Rule

¹This is the rule for the men of the Community/*Yahad* who freely volunteer to turn from all evil and to keep themselves steadfast in all he commanded in compliance with his will: to separate from the congregation of ²the men of injustice in order to constitute a community/*Yahad* in Torah and possessions, and acquiesce to the authority of the Sons of Zadok. . . .

22 J. Strugnell and Devorah Dimant, '4Qsecond Ezekiel', *RevQ* 13 (1988), 94.

23 See the descriptions of a 'three-actor drama' in Martyn, 'Epilogue', 177–78.

No one should walk in the stubbornness of his heart in order to go astray following his heart,⁵ and his eyes and the musings of his inclination. Instead he is to circumcise (לְמוֹל),⁽²⁴⁾ in unity, the foreskin of intention/inclination/nature (יִצַר), and stiffness of neck, in order to lay a foundation (לִיסָד) of truth for Israel, for the Community/*Yahad* of the eternal⁶ covenant, which makes atonement (לְכַפֵּר)⁽²⁵⁾ for all who freely volunteer for holiness in Aaron, and for the house of truth in Israel, and for those who join them. . . . Whoever enters the Council of the Community/*Yahad*⁸ . . . shall swear with a binding oath to return to the Torah of Moses according to all that He commanded with all⁹ his heart and with all his soul, in compliance with all that has been revealed from it to the Sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret His will and to the multitude of men of their covenant. (1QS 5:1–9)

Column 5 begins a new section in the *Community Rule* which sets out principles that are central for faith and practice. That it at one time might have opened the *Rule* nominates it as a fruitful place to launch our discussion of the community's understanding of heart-circumcision.²⁶ Particularly inviting is this passage's resonant allusions to Deuteronomy 29–30. Line 4's injunction that 'a man not to walk in the stubbornness of his heart' (לֹא יֵלֶךְ אִישׁ בְּשִׁרְרוֹת) (לְבו) is taken from Deuteronomy 29:18's warning against the one who boasts: 'I will walk in the stubbornness of my heart' (בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לְבִי אֵלֶךְ). This motif is followed in both texts by a form of מוֹל. We also read that those who enter the covenant return (לְשׁוּב) to the law of Moses—specifically to 'all which he commanded' (בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה), 'with all their heart and all their soul' (בְּכֹל לֵב וּבְכֹל) נִפְשׁ, 5:8–9), echoing Deuteronomy 30:2's description of the returnees who will 'return (וּשְׁבַת) to YHWH . . . and obey his voice in all that I [i.e. Moses] am commanding you today . . . with all your heart and with all your soul' (כָּל אֲשֶׁר־אֲנֹכִי) (מִצְוֹךְ הַיּוֹם . . . בְּכָל־לֵבְכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם). The verbal allusions, thematic resonances, and similar movements between 1QS 5:1–9 and Deuteronomy 29–30

24 From לְמוֹל forward comes a string of infinitives, leaving the subject of the verbs somewhat ambiguous. Here, I have carried forward the masculine singular of line 4. Compare Michael O. Wise, et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), who have gone with the plural.

25 It is noteworthy that עוֹלָם לְכַפֵּר בְּרִית does not appear in 4QS^{b,d}.

26 See Markus N.A. Bockmuehl, '1QS and Salvation at Qumran', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, et al., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 407; Sarianna Metso, *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 37n6.

demonstrate the former's reliance upon the latter.²⁷ Again these chapters played a clear and fundamental role in constructing and defining the *Yahad's* self-understanding.

1QS 5:4 has utilised the language of Deuteronomy 29:18 as a foil to describe the character of a true covenant member. The one who 'walks in the stubbornness of his heart' describes an apostate. This is evident from 1QS 2:11–17:

¹¹And the priests and Levites shall continue, saying, 'Cursed by the idols which his heart reveres, ¹²whoever enters this covenant, and places the obstacle of leaving his iniquity in front of himself to fall over it. ¹³When he hears the words of this covenant, he will congratulate himself in his heart, saying: "I will have peace, ¹⁴in spite of my walking in the stubbornness of my heart." However, his spirit will be obliterated, the dry with the moist, without mercy. ¹⁵May God's anger and the wrath of his verdicts consume him for everlasting destruction. May all the ¹⁶curse of this covenant cleave to him. May God separate him for evil and may he be cut off from the midst of all the Sons of Light . . .'

From the *Rule's* standpoint, a person who walks after a stubborn heart is cursed already.²⁸ Even if that person has voluntarily departed from the community or been excommunicated, they cannot be considered true covenant members since they will not endure (2:16–17).²⁹ Instead, those who enter the covenant are 'to circumcise . . . the foreskin of inclinations and stiffness of neck' (עורלת יצר ועורף קשה) (למול . . . עורלת יצר ועורף קשה), 5:5). While features of 1QS 5:1–9 align it with Deuteronomy 29–30, line 5 contains significant restyling that introduces integral components of the community's reading strategy.

27 Less significant verbal resonances are הנסתרות and הנגלות in lines 11–12 (cf. Deut 29:28). The description of the one who 'goes after his heart, and his eyes and the musings of his inclination' in lines 4–5 might recall Deut 29:3: לב לדעת ועינים לראות. Since a description of ears (אזנים לשמע) is absent, this proposal cannot be confirmed.

28 1QS 7:18–19 suggests that it is possible for those who have been members less than ten years to return (7:22–24).

29 On the possibility that there were those within the community who were 'unbelievers' at heart, see Eugene H. Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination: A Theological Study of the Thanksgiving Hymns*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 48; cf. Jan Joosten, 'The Interpretation of Deuteronomy 29:17–18 in the Hellenistic Period', in *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran*, ed. Deborah Dimant and Reinhard Gregor Kratz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 112–113, 115.

First, while Deuteronomy 30:6 speaks of the circumcision of the heart, 1QS 5:5 refers to the circumcision of the יצר. From other occurrences in 1QS, יצר is difficult to define. It seems to carry the meaning 'purposes' or 'plans' (4:5, 8:3), but can also mean 'form', as in the form of a clay pot (11:22). Probably more important for determining its meaning here are its appearances outside 1QS. For example, 1QH^a 7:16 states: 'I know that a man [cannot choose] his way, nor can a man establish his steps, I know that the inclination (יצר) of every spirit is in your hand'. The structure of this line associates יצר with 'establishing steps' and 'choosing (?) a way', suggesting a relationship with human volition. יצר often carries a negative connotation as well, and so in 1QH^a 13:6 there is a plea for God not to leave the person to the devices of the inclination (יצר). In CD 2:16, the יצר, along with the licentious eye (ע[י]גי זנות), leads to the downfall of both celestial beings and humanity (2:17–3:4).

Important for our purposes is the close association between יצר and the heart elsewhere in the scrolls:

For you know the inclination (יצר) of every work, and scrutinise every reply of the tongue. You establish my heart (לבי) [with] your [tea]ching and with your truth. To straighten my steps on the paths of justice.... (1QH^a 15:13–14)

you have given a pure heart. The evil inclination (יצר רע) [you have] remo[ved] (4Q436 fla+bi:10)

And YHWH judged them according to [all] their ways, and according to the thoughts of the inclination of their heart (ובכמהשבות יצר ללבם). (4Q370 fli:3)

In the first of these, the fact that God knows every inclination (יצר) is supported on the grounds that he establishes the heart. יצר is associated with לב and seems to connote 'motivation'. Similarly, 4Q436 fla+bi:10 links the removal of the evil inclination with the giving of a pure heart. In our final example, the 'inclination of the heart' is the source of devices and יצר appears to describe the heart's direction. In sum, יצר can be used to describe or to denote the disposition of the will.³⁰ While neutral in itself, יצר is often considered

30 Or as R.E. Murphy defines it: 'ysr is the make-up, the nature of something in the concrete, as it acts' ('Yeser in the Qumran Literature', *Bib* 39 [1958], 334, emphasis his); cf. Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, 191–92.

corrupt.³¹ This survey throws light on 1QS 5:5's reading of Deuteronomy 30:6: when 1QS 5:5 renders the object of circumcision as יצר instead of לבב, it interpretively understands 'heart' as the direction of the will,³² specifically in its tendencies toward evil.

This conclusion is corroborated by a second observation about the differences between these texts: whereas Deuteronomy 30:6 has the naked heart as its object (את־לבבך), the *Rule* supplies 'foreskin of intentions and the stiffness of neck' (עורלת יצר ועורף קשה). But this correlates more with Deuteronomy 10:16 than 30:6:

Circumcise the *foreskin* (ערלת) of your heart, and have *stiffness of neck* (וערפכם... תקשו) no longer.

Important vocabulary features in 1QS 5:5 overlap with Deuteronomy 10:16 but are absent from Deuteronomy 30, suggesting that Deuteronomy 10:16 was read into Deuteronomy 30.³³ As we have seen, the two texts assign different agents to the circumcising act: in 10:16 Israel is commanded to circumcise her heart, while in 30:6 God promises to circumcise her heart. In contrast to 'the man who walks in the stubbornness of his heart', 1QS 5:5 describes community members who have circumcised their inclinations.³⁴ Along with this descriptive function, מול assumes the illocutionary force of an imperative for anyone considering the *Rule*.³⁵ By reading Deuteronomy 10:16 into Deuteronomy 30:6,

31 See, e.g., 4Q417 flii:12; 4Q422 1:12. See also the reconstructions of 4Q436 fla+bi:10; 11Q6 f4 5:16. Le Déaut ('la circoncision', 191–92) attributes this to the community's dualism and anthropology. These wider considerations are addressed below (pp. 107–133).

32 Seely, 'The "Circumcised Heart" in 4Q434 Barki Napshi', *RevQ* 17 (1996), 532, suggests that יצר and לבב are basically synonymous. Compare Le Déaut, 'la circoncision', 192, who notes that יצר is not a simple substitution for heart.

33 ערף, ערלה, and קשה are all taken from Deuteronomy 10:16. While Le Déaut ('la circoncision', 191) correctly detects an allusion to 10:16, he fails to pick up on the allusions to Deut 30 in the surrounding context. Freedman and Miano see a reference to Ezek 18:30–31 and thus on human initiative ('People of the New Covenant', in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, JSJSup [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 22). While Ezek 18:30–31 and Deut 10:16 share a common focus on human initiative, the latter is more clearly in view.

34 With Sanders, I understand the individual to be the subject (*Paul*, 300). Garnet, *Salvation and Atonement in the Qumran Scrolls*, 1 Aufl ed., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977), 60–64, following Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951), 19n18, 49–19n18, 50, understands God to be the subject. This fails to distinguish between Deut 10:16 and 30:6.

35 On the significance of the community's discourse not being restricted to members, see C. Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 6–12.

the *Rule* (1) maintains that heart-circumcision is an act on the will which the human agent is responsible to perform and (2) mutes divine agency by eliminating the promise motif of Deuteronomy 30:6.³⁶

If circumcising the inclinations represents a defining characteristic and requirement of community members, then those members must have begun as partially competent moral agents. While their hearts had certain evil impulses, they were not so inclined that they could not enact self-reform. The text does not specify how this reform materialised. Lines 8–9 return to the language of Deuteronomy 30:1–2 and are followed by a reference to the teachings of the Sons of Zadok.³⁷ This sequence may intimate that heart-circumcision is somehow related to Zadokite exposition. In whatever way the act occurred, by construing the community's identity in the light of Deuteronomy 30 and in contrast to the apostate in Deuteronomy 29:18 the *Rule* assumes that restoration promises are coming true for its members as they follow the Zadokite teaching. And while they await the consummation of that restoration, the community represents a proleptic version of the new age (5:8–9). Herein lies the justification for appropriating Deuteronomy 30:1–10 for their own identity: they have removed their evil inclinations; they live covenant-keeping lives; and thus, they are the beginnings of God's eschatological community.

5.2.1.3 Damascus Document

The relationship between the *Damascus Document* (hereafter CD), the *Community Rule*, and the communities governed by those respective documents is rather complex and scholarly consensus has yet to be reached.³⁸ Difficulties notwithstanding, the two documents are textually related and manifest similar mentalities. We may safely infer that there was a very strong relationship between the two groups. As with MMT and the *Rule*, the scriptural literature provides, as Lars Hartman puts it, 'a kind of warp on which the text [of CD]

36 So Le Déaut, 'la circoncision', 192.

37 As correctly noted by Nitzan, 'Repentance in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 147, return to Torah assumes its 'Zadokite-sectarian interpretation'.

38 For more recent discussions and proposals see, e.g., Michael A. Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 213–31; Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant* esp. chaps. 5 and 9; Charlotte Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Tradition and Redaction* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998); Regev, 'Between Two Sects: Differentiating the Yahad and the Damascus Covenant', 431–49. For older works, see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Essenes and their History', *RB* 81 (1974), 215–44; Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the 'Damascus Document'*, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOP Press, 1983).

is woven.³⁹ Israel's scriptural heritage was not only marshalled in service of the community, but provided the community with its very identity.⁴⁰ This is true in spite of its infrequent use of citation formulas. Subterranean reverberations in CD testify to the scriptural consciousness of its audience. Davies notes how 'whole passages of [Scripture] provide a conceptual framework for the *Admonition*, their influence unremarked by a reader who is not, like the author and his original audience, steeped in biblical language and literature . . .'.⁴¹ This is especially true of how the community viewed its history. As demonstrated from its opening lines, 'The cumulative force of the numerous quotations and allusions amounts to a statement that the "plot" of CD can be read in the bible.'⁴²

¹(Vacat) And now, hear, all who know righteousness, and understand the actions of ²God; for he has a dispute with all flesh and will carry out judgment on all those who spurn him. ³For when they were unfaithful in forsaking him, he hid his face from Israel and from his sanctuary ⁴and delivered them up to the sword. But when he remembered the covenant with the forefathers, he saved a remnant ⁵for Israel and did not deliver them up to destruction. And at the moment of wrath, three hundred and ⁶ninety years after having delivered them up into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ⁷he visited them and caused to sprout from Israel and from Aaron a shoot of the planting, in order to possess ⁸his land and to become fat with the good things of his soil. And they realised their iniquity and knew that ⁹they were guilty [men]; but they were like blind persons and like those who grope for a path ¹⁰over twenty years. Yet God discerned their works (ויבן אל אל מעשיהם), because/that they sought him with their whole heart (כי בלב שלם דרשוהו) ¹¹and raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness, in order to direct them in the path of his heart. (CD 1:1–11)

A covenantal background informs the opening passage. Along with a host of other references, J.G. Campbell detects illusions to Deuteronomy 27:17; 28:20, 29; and 29:20, 21, 26.⁴³ The purpose of the passage is to reveal to the

39 Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5*, ConBNT (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1979), 11.

40 Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 55.

41 Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 54–55.

42 Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 55. See also Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 99.

43 Jonathan G. Campbell, *The Use of Scripture in the Damascus Document 1–8, 19–20*, BZAW (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), refer to the chart on p. 179.

'knowledgeable' (יודעי) a *riḇ*, the covenant lawsuit God has against Israel.⁴⁴ The many allusions to covenantal texts and the purpose statement lead Hartman to conclude: 'Although the connections between the CD text and the individual passages of the OT are a bit loose, there can be no doubt that it is precisely the OT covenant blessings and curses that have influenced the contents of the CD passage'.⁴⁵

Our text is not describing present realities so much as rehearsing a historical narrative that continues in its effects.⁴⁶ Thus CD does not echo Deuteronomy for a discussion of the covenant, its stipulations, blessings, and curses as such, but wishes to chronicle these motifs as they have played out on the stage of human history. These lines contain a *narrative* of sin-exile-restoration, which Dunn believes has its basis in Deuteronomy 30.⁴⁷ The pattern is straightforwardly evident in lines 3–5: after Israel forsakes the covenant (3a), God punishes Israel (3b–4a), and then restores her (by restoring a remnant) (4b–5a), which has been played out in the historical events of the Babylonian exile, its aftermath (5bff.), and continues up to the time when the community was formed.

Yet the pattern of Deuteronomy 30 that Dunn believes reverberates through these lines is also present in Deuteronomy 4:25–31 and verbal allusions from the latter suggest that it might be the primary referent. Deuteronomy 4:31 concludes its pattern with the statement: '[God] will not forget the covenant of your fathers' (ולא ישכח את-ברית אבותיך). CD 1:4 could be translated similarly to mean that restoration occurred when God 'remembered the covenant of the former ones' (ובזכרו ברית ראשנים).⁴⁸ Most likely, however, this phrase is taken from Leviticus 26:45 (וזכרתיו להם ברית ראשנים), which comes from a context containing the sin-exile-restoration pattern.⁴⁹ Even so, line 10 of CD says that God discerned the remnant's works 'because/that they sought him with their whole heart' (כי בלב שלם דרשוהו), an echo of Deuteronomy 4:29: כי תדרשנו

44 See Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 56–61; Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 61–62; Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 628.

45 Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 79.

46 So Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 57.

47 Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 60–61; cf. Campbell, *Scripture in the Damascus Document*, 59, 66, 102–103.

48 See, for instance, the translation by Wise, et al., *Scrolls of 1:4*. Compare CD 1:4 with 8:18 and 19:31 which use the more explicit ברית האבות.

49 Noteworthy is that in Lev 26 it is only *after* their 'uncircumcised heart' is humbled that God remembers his covenant (v. 41).

בכל-לבבך.⁵⁰ Is there not good reason for understanding Deuteronomy 4:25–31, or even Leviticus 26, rather than Deuteronomy 30, as the ‘source text’ from which CD gleaned the sin-exile-restoration pattern?

The many references in CD 1:1–2:1 to the chapters surrounding Deuteronomy 30 suggest otherwise.⁵¹ References to Deuteronomy 4:25–31 are probably best accounted for by the pervasive intratextuality of the Deuteronomic passages themselves. To be sure, the positive role of Deuteronomy 29–30 in no way denies the influence of other texts. Rather, what is in view is a phenomenon that permeates the Second Temple literature, namely, that various texts are being read alongside one another and in light of the experience of a particular community. Thus while we might not be able to distinguish between CD’s readings of Deuteronomy 4:25–31, 29:17–30:10, and the other alluded material, that in no way hinders our ability to say something about how CD read all these texts together.⁵²

Apostasy in CD: In both Deuteronomy 29 and CD 1:1–2:1 what sets off the narrative is the apostasy of the people of God. CD 1:3 begins to ground God’s *rib* in historical events by recalling how Israel ‘abandoned’ (עזבו) God. CD 3:10–12, another pre-exilic survey, recounts Israel’s apostasy with similar language: ‘The very first to enter the covenant made themselves guilty and were delivered up to the sword, for having abandoned (עזבם) God’s covenant and . . . followed the stubbornness of their heart (שרירות לבם)’. As previously noted, Deuteronomy 29:18 and 23 depict walking after the stubbornness of one’s heart and abandoning YHWH’s covenant, respectively, as the events which brought the curse and exile.

Restoration in CD: Restoration is also understood in the light of Deuteronomy 29–30.⁵³ God began to call out a remnant of exiles and prepare them to inherit the Land (CD 1:4–5). Following Deuteronomy 4:31, God’s act of preserving a remnant is intrinsically bound up with the memory of his initial covenant

50 Also alluded to in Jer 29:13: בכל-לבבכם.

51 Explicit verbal allusions to Deut 29 include אלות בריתו (Deut 29:20 [only here in Hebrew Bible] at CD 1:17), דור אחרון (Deut 29:21 at CD 1:12). Note also how in both God’s ‘anger burns’ (Deut 29:26; CD 1:20). And throughout CD apostates are described as בלכתם בשרירות לבם (2:17–18; 3:5; 8:8, 19; 19:20, 33; 20:9; cf. Deut 29:18). Deut 30:5’s repetition of the root ירש might be detected in CD 1:7’s לירוש. And Deut 30:9’s side by side combination of ‘land’ and ‘good’ (אדמתך לטובה) is reminiscent of CD 1:8’s בטוב אדמתו (Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 105).

52 For an argument that the community read Deuteronomy as a unit, see Waters, *The End*, 45–48.

53 See pertinent references in n51 above.

(CD 1:4).⁵⁴ The remnant are those who ‘realised their sin and knew that they were guilty men—were like blind persons and like those who grope for the path’ (1:8–9). This portrayal corresponds to Deuteronomy 30:1’s projection of Israel, who will ‘return to [their] heart’ (והשבת אל-לבבך) in exile. Since the exact meaning of והשבת אל-לבבך is somewhat unclear, CD could easily have understood the phrase to describe a remnant that came to recognise Israel’s sin and its consequence. Supporting this hypothesis is J.G. Campbell’s suggestion that since the Teacher of Righteousness teaches ‘later generations’ (דורות אחרונים; CD 1:12),⁵⁵ ‘Those who grope’ are ‘the later generation’ (הדור האחרון) mentioned in Deuteronomy 29:21. In any case, line 10 makes it clear that the remnant’s recognition entailed action: ‘Yet God discerned their works (מעשיהם), that they sought him with their whole heart’ (כי בלב שלם דרשוה) (1:10). Even though this last phrase is lifted from Deuteronomy 4:29,⁵⁶ it fits well as a summary description of the returnees in 30:1–10; three times in those verses they are characterised as acting ‘with all their heart’. Deuteronomy 30’s influence might be detected further in Deuteronomy 30:8’s description of those who are restored as those who ‘work’ (עשה) all the commandments.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, on one reading of Deuteronomy 30 Israel’s wholehearted turning initiates the restoration (30:2).⁵⁷ YHWH responds to Israel’s turning by turning to her, by bringing her into the land, and by circumcising her heart (30:3–6). In CD, the remnant’s acknowledging (בין) its iniquity is returned by God’s acknowledging (בין) the remnant’s works. As in Deuteronomy 30:1–3, CD 1:8–10 contains an interplay between divine and human activity; but rather than centering on the verb שוב, that interplay is located in בין (knowing), which fits CD’s opening address to יודעי צדק (‘those who *know* righteousness’). As with the remnant, so God’s knowledge entails action: ‘he raised up a teacher of righteousness (מורה צדק) in order to direct them in the path of his heart.’⁵⁸ God then responds to the remnant’s recognition and deeds

54 The restored covenant is in fundamental continuity with the original covenant (CD 8:16–18). See James C. VanderKam, ‘Covenant’, in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 152; Bockmuehl, ‘1QS and Salvation’, 391n36 and bibliography there.

55 Campbell, *Scripture in the Damascus Document*, 102.

56 To describe the heart as שלם, however, appears in Kgs, Chr, and Isa.

57 See pp. 26–28.

58 As Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery: In Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), 49, notes: ‘[The teacher of Righteousness] is the primary mediator of the sectarian revelation; the priests are its primary stewards; the whole community... its ultimate addressees’. See also Michael Fishbane, ‘Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran’, in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation*

by performing an act that will facilitate the group's further faithfulness (similar to the 'two-step' reading of Deuteronomy 30:6). Since what the מורה צדק comes to do is 'make known' (וידוע), even the opening line's address to יודעי צדק suggests that the group's sustained existence is a manifestation of the teacher's work.⁵⁹ While there is no direct reference to the circumcision of the heart, its place in the narrative is substituted by the giving of divinely inspired scriptural interpretation, suggesting that the revelation of scriptural interpretation and the act of heart-circumcision were linked in the community's mind. It seems reasonable to conclude that for CD, the the circumcision of the heart which Deuteronomy 30:6 describes takes place when one exegetes the scriptures according to the teacher's divinely inspired hermeneutic.

The importance of revelation in CD's reading of the restoration is further borne out in 3:12b–16:

¹²[B]ut with those who remained steadfast in God's precepts, ¹³with those who were left among them, God established his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them ¹⁴hidden matters in which all Israel had gone astray: (vacat) his holy sabbaths and ¹⁵his glorious feasts, his just stipulations, and his truthful paths, and the wishes of his will, which ¹⁶man must do in order to live by them.

Following a survey of Israel's perpetual unfaithfulness (3:4b–11), lines 12b–13 describe the remnant, who 'remained steadfast in God's precepts'. God established his covenant with them; hence they are the true heritage of 'Israel' (3:13). The reinstatement of the covenant happened through 'revealing' (לגלות) hidden things (נסתרות), which include 'sabbaths', 'feasts', 'stipulations', 'truthful paths', and 'the wishes of his will' (3:13c–15). This list reflects an ongoing dispute between the CD community and other Israelites over the proper interpretation and practice of Torah (cf. 4:12b–5:16).⁶⁰ For CD, accurate exegesis (פרוש) comes from divinely inspired teachers and gives the understanding that is necessary

of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, ed. M.J. Mulder and Harry Sysling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 361–62. Even if, as Davies (*Damascus Covenant*, 63–65) suggests, מורה צדק is a latter gloss, he also admits that in its original composition the passage still communicated some event of revelation (74–75).

59 This conclusion questions those who would say that the Teacher of Righteousness had no redemptive function (e.g., Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 46). For the *Yahad*, redemption was closely related to proper understanding.

60 More specifically, the things listed probably reflect calendar disputes that were prevalent amongst Jews at that time (Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 43n5). See the discussion in Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 81–83, 86–87.

for Torah practice (6:14–21).⁶¹ ‘Understanding’, as Davies suggests, ‘is predominantly the outcome of an *exegetical* process.’⁶² The consequence of an accurate hermeneutic is brought out by the relative clause which immediately follows: the ‘hidden things’ are things ‘which a man must do (יעשה) in order to live (וחיה) by them’ (3:15–16).⁶³ Line 20 reinforces its eternal significance: ‘Those who are remaining steadfast in it will acquire eternal life’. If in order to keep Torah one must understand it, to misunderstand is eternally fatal (3:17).⁶⁴

CD’s stance on the importance of divinely revealed and inspired interpretation cannot be attributed solely to the community’s existential experiences; reading sacred texts also played an influential role. As I have tried to establish, Deuteronomy 29–30 provided a lens through which to understand the CD story. But not all is of equal value in those chapters. As the transition from exile and death to restoration and life, Deuteronomy 29:28 plays a fundamental role hermeneutically. It states:

The hidden things (הנסתרת) are to YHWH our God and the revealed things (והנגלת) are to us and our children forever (עד-עולם), to do (לעשות) all the words of this Torah.

CD 3:15–16 echoes some important words and themes from this verse. First, we have the repetition of the key roots גלה and סתר.⁶⁵ Second, CD has picked up on the eternal (עד-עולם) nature of the revealed things and applied it to God’s covenant: God established his covenant with Israel ‘forever’ (עד-עולם). Third, the ‘hidden things’ that are revealed to the remnant specifically include stipulations to follow (3:13c–15), consonant with Deuteronomy 29:28’s theme that the ‘revealed things’ are for Torah practice. Finally, for both Deuteronomy 29:28 and CD the purpose of revelation is ‘to do’ (לעשות) Torah. These allusions elucidate for us how CD read Deuteronomy 29–30 in the light of its own historical situation.

For CD covenant reestablishment occurred when ‘hidden things’ were ‘revealed’ to the remnant, things which in Deuteronomy 29:28 belong to

61 See further Bockmuehl, ‘IQS and Salvation’, 392, who notes how the praxis of halakic insights distinguish the faithful.

62 Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 127, emphasis his. So also Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 44–45.

63 Cf. Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21; Neh 9:29. See further Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 58–66.

64 On the necessity of proper understanding for obedience in the Scrolls, see Fishbane, ‘Mirka at Qumran’, 344–347, 360.

65 So Campbell, *Scripture in the Damascus Document*, 61n20, 77.

YHWH. The specifics of this revelation—sabbaths, feasts, etc.—give the vital knowledge one needs in order to do, and thus ‘live by them’. As with Deuteronomy 30:6, CD believes that Torah faithfulness is necessary for eternal life (cf. 4Q266 f11:11–12). Yet CD reads in Deuteronomy 29:28 that in order for one ‘to do’ (לַעֲשׂוֹת) Torah one must possess the revealed things.

CD then finds in Deuteronomy 29:28 the hermeneutical key for understanding the restoration. It is the revelation of an accurate Torah-hermeneutic that can be marked as *the inceptive salvific event* which separates the community from the rest of ‘apostate’ Israel and enables a person ‘to do’ Torah (line 15).⁶⁶ As Davies writes, ‘What is being communicated is the theological claim that the נִסְתָּרוֹת are now in the possession of a privileged group, and not of all Israel; only this group can fulfil the law.’⁶⁷ As such, only those who remain in this group (through Torah obedience) will enjoy eschatological life.⁶⁸ In the Damascus Community, Deuteronomy 29:28 and 30:6 are read together and bespeak the revelatory moment on which the community was founded.

Though enhancing our study, CD is nevertheless of a piece with the gift-dynamics of MMT and the *Community Rule*. Here, God’s gift of sending the teacher comes to those distinguishable by their works (1:8). And while due to ignorance those works could only be described as groping (1:8), it was wholehearted groping nonetheless (1:9). Such ignorance is resolved only after God reveals hidden things to the community. In line with a ‘two-step’ reading of Deuteronomy 30, CD assumes a partial competence on the part of the gift-recipients. But their lack in competence is not due so much to a faulty will—their groping was wholehearted—as to ignorance.⁶⁹ Having this problem resolved, the competent human agent is now placed under the full knowledge of the divine requirement. It is up to him (or her) to respond by continuing to make the choice of obedience and so enter eschatological life (3:15–17, 20).

66 Fishbane, ‘Mirka at Qumran’, 364; Aharon Shemesh and Cana Werman, ‘Hidden Things and their Revelation’, *RevQ* 18 (1998), 412.

67 Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 87.

68 Fishbane, ‘Mirka at Qumran’, 664: ‘By following the true meaning and practice of the Law, the sectarians believed that they would not sin and would be guaranteed salvation’.

69 So Shemesh and Werman, ‘Hidden Things’, 412: ‘[the sectarians] sin . . . consisted of the failure to comply with the hidden commandments which were unknown to them at that point in time. This contrasts with the rest of Israel who audaciously violated the revealed commandments as well; consequently, not only were they unworthy of the revelation of the hidden commands, they were deemed culpable for their failure to observe them’.

5.2.1.4 The *Hodayot*

Allusions to Ezekiel's new creation narrative appear throughout the *Hodayot*. We see, for instance, the combination of 'spirit' (רוח) and 'given' (נתן) in 8:19. The Psalmist goes on to recount how God put this spirit in him to lavish kindness on him, to cleanse (טהר) him by God's holy spirit, and to bring him near (8:20; cf. Ezek 36:25–26). Since to 'bring near' most likely refers to entrance into the sect,⁷⁰ it is the spirit-gift which the author believes purified him and incorporated him into this holy community.⁷¹

In 20:11–12 the Psalmist declares: 'I, the Instructor, have known you, my God, through the spirit (רוח) which you put/gave (נתן) in me, and I have listened loyally to your wonderful secret through your holy spirit'. The idea of a spirit being placed into a person so that they know God is reminiscent of Ezekiel 36–37. There, the spirit-gift causes people not only to know God (Ezek 36:11, 23, 38; 37:6), but also to obey the commandments (Ezek 36:27). But how exactly does the spirit bring about obedience? The prophetic text does not answer. The psalmist has filled in the gaps: the spirit or holy spirit grants the instructor insight into God's secrets, thus aiding his interpretation, which he then passes on to others.⁷²

The psalmist unveils more of his reading-strategy in 1 QH^a 21:4–5. He praises God for opening his eyes to see and ears to hear; for revealing his truths to one uncircumcised of ear and heart, hinting at Deuteronomy 29:3 and 30:6. The motivation for the divine act, however, appears to be explained in terms of Ezekiel 36:22: God did these things for the sake of his own glory (6–7).⁷³ More important are the two references to a heart of stone (לֵב הָאֲבֹן):⁷⁴

¹⁰And I, I am a creature ¹¹[of clay...an ear of du]st and heart of stone... For you have given to the ear of dust, and you have inscribed forever what is to happen in the heart of ¹³[stone...]

70 See Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliern von Qumran mit einem über Eschatologie und Gegenwart in der Verkündigung Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 124–26.

71 Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 206.

72 Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 188–89.

73 See Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in Literature of the Second Temple Period*, JSNTSup 270 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 49. See also 1QH^a 12:38; 14:10.

74 In the Hebrew Bible, this phrase appears only in Ezekiel's restoration narratives.

In this passage the psalmist describes his experience of revelation through a mixture of terminology from Deuteronomy 29–30 and Ezekiel 36. In some sense, he must believe that the combination of God’s spirit and revelation has inaugurated some kind of restoration.⁷⁵ The restoration is not complete, however. While the disclosed word has opened his eyes and ears, there is no mention of a heart of flesh because, most likely, the psalmist believed this type of transformation was something to occur at the eschaton.⁷⁶

As is fitting for an expression of praise, the *Hodayot* focus on God’s agency in bringing cleansing and renewal.⁷⁷ Since such fore-grounding does not necessarily deny human competence, it remains unclear from this brief survey how the Psalmist viewed his anthropological condition before receiving the spirit. Perhaps we get a hint when the Psalmist declares that God does these things for his own glory (1QH^a 21:6–7). If this expression has the same rhetorical edge as it does in Ezekiel 36, then human initiative is being ruled out.

5.2.2 Reading Restoration: Uncertain Texts

5.2.2.1 11QT

We begin our survey of those texts whose relationship to the *Yahad* is more opaque by looking at the Temple Scroll (11QT). While the Temple Scroll seems to lack certain prominent sectarian features, it also has much in common with other clearly *yahdic* texts, not least of which is its utilization of the Sin-Exile-Restoration pattern found in Deuteronomy 30.⁷⁸ After cataloguing the curses that have come upon Israel, 59:5–13 states:

75 Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, 49–50.

76 Support for this might be seen in the *Treatise on the Two Spirits* (discussed below at pp. 113–118), especially if 1QS 3–4 also alludes to Ezek 36. See Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, 50–51; see also Anja Klein, ‘From the “Right Spirit” to the “Spirit of Truth”: Observations on Psalm 51 and 1QS’, in *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Reinhard G. Kratz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 182; Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 210–11.

77 Maston, *Divine and Human Agency*, 80, correctly notes that the hymn or prayer genre is not bound to contrast God’s righteousness with human sinfulness. Nevertheless, the genre does communicate through particular modes of speaking, and sensitivity to genre is necessary to understand communicative intents.

78 While many scholars still attribute the Temple Scroll to the *Yahad*, others reject any connection to the community altogether, believing that the work originated in priestly (possible Zadokite) circles and was hidden in the cave around 70 CE. Devorah Dimant, ‘Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian: The Case of the Apocryphon of Joshua’, in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran: Proceedings of a Joint Symposium by the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and the*

⁵And they, themselves, in the lands of their enemies, shall cry ⁶and scream under a heavy yoke; and they shall call, but I shall not listen, they shall shout but I shall not reply ⁷to them because of their evil deeds. Rather I will hide my face from them; and they shall be fodder, ⁸and prey and spoil, and no-one will save them because of their wickedness—for they broke my covenant ⁹and their soul loathed my law, so that they became guilty of all wrongdoing. After they shall return ¹⁰to me with all their heart and all their soul, in agreement with all the words of this Law. ¹¹Then I will save them from the hand of their enemies and redeem them from the hand of those who despise them, and bring them ¹²into the land of their fathers, and I shall redeem them and multiply them, rejoice in them. ¹³And I shall be their God and they shall be my people.

Here Israel's petitions to God are denied on account of her sin (5–8). Eventually, however, God will receive Israel's entreaty and redeem her to the tune of Deuteronomy 30:5, 7 and 9.⁷⁹ Though no explicit reason is given for the transition from non-listening to listening, it would seem that whereas beforehand Israel's cries were marred by evil deeds (7–8), her seeking is now acceptable because it is wholehearted (10). Confirming this is the change in verb tenses from imperfect (ישׁוּבוּ) to *weqatal* (וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים) at the beginning of line 11, which marks the apodosis 'then I will deliver them'. It is important to note that even while Israel's obedience is the impetus for restoration, God responds in spite of a broken covenant. Since Israel would have no claim on God and no rights to intervention, salvation remains a gift, even while it entails certain qualifications. As in MMT, there is no indication that the divine gift affects Israel's anthropological state, and in both texts Deuteronomy 30:6 is conspicuously absent in the retelling of Israel's story. Perhaps behind this silence stands an assumption about Israel's (or the remnant's) relative moral competence. With the proper path revealed, all that remains is for Israel to act.

5.2.2.2 Barki Nafshi

The precise relationship between the *Yahad* and the *Barki Nafshi* is difficult to determine. David Seely has labelled these fragmentary works sectarian due to the late Hasmonean or early Herodian date of the extant manuscripts, the

Hebrew University Institute for Advanced Studies Research Group on Qumran, 15–17 January, 2002, ed. Esther G. Chazon, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 106–107, places 11QT in an intermediate category 'between' sectarian and non-sectarian.

79 Verbal resonances include, e.g., שׁוּשׁ, רְבֵה, אִיב, בּוֹא, שׁנָא, אֵב.

full orthography of 4Q436 and 4Q437, and similarities to the *Hodayot*.⁸⁰ Though believing that the contents of these fragments are consistent with the community's worldview, George Brooke detects no explicit sectarian vocabulary in them and thus prefers a non-sectarian origin.⁸¹ Whatever the case, these hymns clearly echo themes from Deuteronomy 29–30,⁸² and attribute heart-circumcision to divine agency.

³In the abundance of his mercy he has favoured the needy and has opened their eyes so that they see his paths, and their ear[s] so that they hear ⁴his teaching. He has circumcised (וימול) the foreskin of their hearts and has saved them because of his mercy and has set their feet firm on the path. . . .

⁹he turned darkness into light before them, and rough paths into a plain. He revealed to them the Torah of peace and truth. [. . .] ¹⁰ their spirits to the measure, established their words on the scales and their uprightness like flutes. For he will give them an[oth]er heart, and they will walk on pa[ths of . . .] ¹¹and also he has brought them on the path of his heart for they pledged their spirit. (4Q434 f1i:3–4, 9–11)

The hymn praises God for circumcising the heart of the needy in conjunction with opening 'their eyes' (עיניהם) and 'their ears' (ואזני[ם]). Deuteronomy 29:3 states that YHWH had not given Israel a heart to know (לב לדעת), eyes to see (עינים לראות), or ears to hear (אזנים לשמע). By associating the gift of heart-circumcision with the community's ability to see, hear, and walk, the psalmist suggests that he understood Deuteronomy 30:6 to resolve the predicament of

80 See now Moshe Weinfeld and David Rolph Seely, 'Barkhi Nafshi', in *Qumran Cave 4, xx: Poetic and Liturgical Texts, Part 2*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, DJD, 29 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 255–334, previous observations found in David Rolph Seely, 'The Barkhi Nafshi Texts (4Q434–439)', in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April, 1995*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen David Ricks (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 194–214.

81 G.J. Brooke, 'Body Parts in *Barkhi Nafshi* and the Qualifications for Membership of the Worshiping Community', in *Sapiential, Liturgical, and Poetical Texts from Qumran, Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo, 1998: Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet*, ed. Daniel K. Falk, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 79–80.

82 Seely, "Circumcised Heart" in 4Q434', 533–34.

29:3.⁸³ There is a question as to how fully a divine-priority reading is incorporated into the hymn, however. Line 11 states ‘and also he has brought them on the path of his heart for/because they pledged their spirit’ (כי ערבו את רוחם).⁸⁴ While God is clearly the circumcising agent, it is possible that God is ultimately responding to an eagerness on the part of the people.

Significantly, the divine work provides the ability to ‘see his paths’ and ‘hear his teaching’. In clearly sectarian documents there is a close relationship between heart circumcision and exegesis. The same appears to be the case here. Line 9 associates the revelation of Torah with God turning darkness into light, making rough paths plain. Themes of enlightenment unto obedience are apparent elsewhere in the hymns.⁸⁵ If the *Barkhi Nafshi* hymns are not of sectarian origin, then it is safe to assume that the sectarians interpreted these lines as describing an enlightenment the community experienced through Torah-exposition.

Line 10 describes yet another of God’s saving actions, his giving ‘another/one heart’ (לב א[ח]ר).⁸⁶ Similar to line 4, the act allows the people to walk on paths . . . the path of his heart (בדרך לבו). This appears to come from Jeremiah 32:39, where YHWH promises to give his people לב אחד and דרך אחד; an act YHWH says that he will do with his ‘heart’ (לבי). Given that ר and ד are easily confused, and given the Septuagint’s ὁδὸν ἐτέραν, the hymn most likely alludes to Jeremiah. Thus instead of echoing Deuteronomy, line 10 borrows language from Jeremiah to repeat the same theme, showing how Deuteronomy 30 could be associated with Jeremiah’s new and eternal covenant. It seems that Ezekiel could also be employed to portray these themes in the *Barkhi Nafshi*. Though a rather corrupt text, 4Q436 1 ii 1–3 praises God for removing impurity and

83 Seely (“Circumcised Heart” in 4Q434; 533) is probably correct to suggest that the circumcision of the heart allows the eyes to see and ears to hear.

84 Compare the translation in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols., (Leiden: Brill, 1997): ‘for their spirit at ease’.

85 So 4Q436 1.i:5: ‘You have commanded my heart and my inmost parts you have taught well, lest your statutes be forgotten’. The context concerns the confession that God gives ‘knowledge to strengthen the downcast . . . to make receptacles of knowledge’. See further, David Rolph Seely, ‘Implanting Pious Qualities as a Theme in the Barki Nafshi Hymns’, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20–25, 1997*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, et al. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society in cooperation with the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000), 227.

86 Esther G. Chazon, *Qumran Cave 4, xx: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2*. DJD 29 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 271: ‘The reading of אחר is uncertain because it occurs in a break between two pieces of skin’.

stiffness of neck from within, and replacing these with a pure heart and a holy S/spirit.⁸⁷

In sum, the *Barkhi Nafshi* hymns praise God for circumcising the heart and show how Deuteronomy 30 could be associated with Jeremiah's promised new covenant and Ezekiel's promised new heart and spirit. These hymns neither witness to nor rule out the possibility that the restoration was initiated by God's saving agency. It is difficult to know how to synthesise the hymn's testimony that God circumcises the heart with 1QS's insistence that the community circumcised their own hearts. If the covenanters did write these hymns, perhaps the dynamic at work is similar to what we see in the *Hodayot*. But if, as seems likely, the *Barkhi Nafshi* originated outside the community, then perhaps they tell us something about how the hymns were taken up by those sectarians who copied, read, and used them.⁸⁸ It may well be significant that heart-circumcision is absent in other versions of the *Rule*. Brooke has made the suggestion that the text represented by 1QS 5:5 was influenced by the *Barkhi Nafshi* and so we can differentiate between the original perspective of the hymn's author and its subsequent value for the community.⁸⁹ In other words, the change in agency dynamics could well represent an adaptation by the community. Given the clarity with which we have seen human agency foregrounded in the non-liturgical, *yahadic* texts, the difference between *Barkhi Nafshi* and 1QS 5:5 manifests the heightened stress the sectarians placed on human agency. Even still, it must be asked how the community understood these hymns when they speak of God's circumcising the heart. One possibility is that while God is the circumcising agent, God is ultimately responding to an eagerness on the part of the people, similar to what we see in CD 1:10.⁹⁰

5.2.2.3 Words of the Luminaries

4Q504 is a pre-sectarian text written in Hasmonean script that probably dates to the middle of the second century BCE.⁹¹ These lines from fragments 1–2

87 The Hebrew text was first made available in Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: the Hebrew and Aramaic Texts from Cave Four* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991), 3:317; see now DJD 29, 297.

88 Brooke, 'Body Parts in *Barkhi Nafshi*', 79–80, suggests that these hymns should be looked at from the author's point of view and from the point of view of those who utilised them in the community at Qumran.

89 Brooke, 'Body Parts in *Barkhi Nafshi*', 83.

90 Barry D. Smith, *What Must I Do to be Saved?: Paul Parts Company with his Jewish Heritage*, New Testament Monographs (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 33.

91 James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 242.

retell the restoration narrative with words from Leviticus 26:45, Deuteronomy 4:30 and 30:1–2, demonstrating how these texts could be read together.⁹²

⁹... You remembered your covenant [cf. Lev 26:45], ¹⁰for you redeemed us in the sight of the nations and did not desert us ¹¹amongst the nations. You did favours to your people Israel among all ¹²the countries amongst whom you had exiled them, to place ¹³upon their heart to turn to you (להשיב אל לבבם לשוב) and to obey your voice, ¹⁴[in agreement] with all that you commanded through the hand of Moses your servant [cf. Deut 30:1–2], ¹⁵[fo]r you have poured your holy spirit upon us, ¹⁶[to be]stow your blessings to us, so that we would look for you in our anguish [cf. Deut 4:30]. (4Q504 ffl–2 col 5:9–16)

As S. Hultgren notes, lines 12–13 straightforwardly make God out to be the initiator of restoration: ‘Whereas Deut 30:1 simply says that in exile *Israel* will call (והשבת) to mind the covenant with its blessings and curses and will return to God . . ., leaving it open as to how this will happen, 4Q504 says explicitly that it is *God* who caused these to come (להשיב) to Israel’s mind so that Israel could return to God’.⁹³ Lines 15–16 associate this initiative with the giving of a ‘holy spirit’.

4Q504 thus illustrates a divine-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30. Whether ‘holy spirit’ describes a divine Spirit, anthropological transformation, or both, is difficult to determine.⁹⁴ If the reconstruction כִּיָּא is correct, then we should not doubt that this holy spirit is the effective means whereby the people obey. At the very least, this roots obedience in the divine gift.

A close connection between the S/spirit and Deuteronomy 30 is also found in another passage in the *Words of the Luminaries*.

⁴[... Fo]r you are the God of knowledge and every though[t...] ⁵These things we know because you have favoured us with a h[oly] spirit. [Have pity on us] ⁶[and do not ho]ld against us the iniquities of the forefathers in all their wic[ked] behaviour, ⁷[those stiff-]necked. You, redeem us and forgive, [please,] our iniquity and [our] s[in]

¹¹Circumcise the foreskin of [our heart...] ¹²[...]... again. Strengthen our heart to do [...] ¹³[...] to] walk in your paths. (4Q504 f4:5–7, 11–13)

⁹² See the discussions above on MMT and CD.

⁹³ Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 111, emphasis his.

⁹⁴ Defining the holy spirit as ‘your holy spirit’ suggests the former.

The opening lines of fragment 4 proclaim the works of God. The knowledge required for this confession is not natural; it must be traced back to the endowment of a holy spirit (5). While partial, lines 6–7 can credibly be reconstructed as a petition to God not to punish his people for the sins of their stiff-necked ancestors. This is followed by a plea for God to circumcise their heart (11). We can tell that ‘heart’ is the object of God’s work by the parallelism of line 12: ‘Strengthen our heart to do’ (חזק לבנו לעשות). ‘To do’ along with line 13 indicates that God’s work would enable obedience. Thus corresponding with its divine-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–2, the *Words of the Luminaries* attribute heart-circumcision to divine agency and associate this act with an enlightenment that leads to obedience.

Yet another passage from 4Q504 correlates this divine-priority reading with ‘implanting the Law in the heart’.

Remember¹² your marvels which you performed in the sight of the peoples, for your name has been called out over us.¹³ [These things were done] that we might [return] with all (our) heart and all (our) soul, and to implant your law in our heart (ולטעת תורתכה בלבנו)¹⁴ [that we do not stray from it] either to the right or the left. For you will heal us from such madness, blindness and confusion. (4Q504 ff 1–2 col. 11:12–13)

While line 13 is fragmentary, ‘with all (our) heart and all (our) soul’ (בכול לב ובכול נפש) might suggest an allusion to Deuteronomy 30. Other verbal allusions to Deuteronomy 30 in 4Q504 make this proposal more attractive. Yet here Deuteronomy 30 is not simply correlated with ‘spirit’ but with the implanting of Torah in the heart, a connection to Jeremiah’s new covenant.⁹⁵ The text looks back at God’s marvellous works in history and sees that these things were done so that the people’s wholehearted repentance might come to fruition (line 13).

In sum, the *Words of the Luminaries* witness to a reading of Deuteronomy 30 which prioritises divine agency and connects heart-circumcision with ‘holy spirit’ and ‘new covenant’. It is noteworthy that the author of 4Q504 seems to have believed that heart-circumcision was something that was not yet in his community’s possession. How are we to understand this prayer in light of the *yahadic* claims to possess circumcised hearts (1QS 5:5)? While it could be that the *Yahad* believed heart-circumcision was something that could be repeated

95 Jer 31:31 reads: ועתה את־תורת־י בקרבם ועל־לבם. One could see how נטע could be substituted for נתן, due to a conflation with Jer 32:41, a new covenant text that speaks of God planting (נטע) Israel in the land.

or deepened, this disparity is probably best accounted for by the antiquity of 4Q504. As a pre-sectarian text, these words were penned before the *Yahad* developed the conviction that its members had experienced heart-circumcision. Even still, given that 4Q504 seems to have been used by the *Yahad* for a long time, it is likely that 4Q504 played a significant role in informing the *Yahad's* own self-understanding as the heart-circumcised embodied of a new covenant.

5.2.2.4 Pseudo-Ezekiel

There is a question over the relationship between Pseudo-Ezekiel (sometimes called Second Ezekiel) and the *Yahad*. On the one hand, Dimant says that the text has ‘no overt connection to the sectarian literature of Qumran, while its literary profile displays important links with non-Qumran works’.⁹⁶ Monica Brady, however, believes the text manifests sectarian tendencies, not least of which is its obsession with the themes of sin, exile and restoration:⁹⁷

¹[that I am the YHWH,] who rescued my people, giving them the covenant. (vacat) ²[And I said, ‘YHWH,] I have seen many in Israel who love Your name and walk ³on the paths [of Righteousness,⁽⁹⁸⁾] when will [the] se things happen? And how will they be rewarded for their loyalty?’ And YHWH said ⁴to me: ‘I will make the children of Israel see,⁽⁹⁹⁾ and they shall know that I am YHWH’. (vacat) ⁵[And He said,] ‘Son of man, prophecy over these bones and say: “May a bone [connect] with its bone and a joint [with its joint.”]’ ⁶And s[o it happe]ned. And he said a second time: ‘Prophecy, and sinews will grow on them and they will be covered with skin ⁷[all over]. And so it happened.] And He s[ai]d, ‘Prophecy over the four winds of the sky, and the wind[s] [of the sky] will blow ⁸[upon them

96 Devorah Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4, XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-prophetic Texts*, DJD 30 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 13; however compare Strugnell and Dimant, ‘4Qsecond Ezekiel’, 46, who state that Pseudo-Ezekiel contains ‘ideas and terminology occurring also in the sectarian writings’ while drawing on literary forms and styles found in the Jewish apocalyptic literature.

97 Monica Brady, ‘Biblical Interpretation in the “Pseudo-Ezekiel” Fragments (4Q383–391) from Cave Four’, in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, ed. Matthias Henze, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 108.

98 Wise has: ‘Your heart’.

99 Wise has: ‘I see the Children of Israel’. Kister and Qimron propose: ‘I will make [it] manifest to the children of Israel’ (‘Observations on 4Qsecond Ezekiel [4Q385 2–3]’, *RevQ* 15 [1992], 596).

and they will live] and a large crowd of men will [ri]se and bless YHWH Sabaoth wh[o] ⁹[caused them to live'. (4Q385 f2:1–9=4Q386 f1=4Q388 f8)

While there can be little doubt that these lines utilise Ezekiel 37 to retell the vision of the dry bones, Pseudo-Ezekiel comes to that vision with very different questions. This fragment, as Brady notes, is set ‘within a different framework, creating a new interpretation intended for a different time and context’.¹⁰⁰ The framing question in the scriptural account is from YHWH to Ezekiel: ‘Can these bones live (37:3)?’ This question assumes Ezekiel’s anthropological pessimism.

A new question has arisen by the time of Pseudo-Ezekiel. Instead of a pedagogically purposed interrogative from YHWH intended to reaffirm his sovereign power, we find Pseudo-Ezekiel’s complaint: ‘How will they be rewarded for their loyalty?’¹⁰¹ This question is not simply new, *it stands on completely different anthropological premises*.¹⁰² Pseudo-Ezekiel’s intercession, ‘I have seen many in Israel who love your name and walk on the paths [of righteousness]’ (2–3), runs counter to the scriptural account. As Brady puts it, ‘a vision originally intended to describe the return of the people to the land of Israel is reinterpreted to deal with the question of reward for the faithful at the end time’.¹⁰³ But it is hardly conceivable from the scriptural account that Ezekiel would be concerned with rewards for obedience.¹⁰⁴ Until God implants his Spirit (36:26–27), there are no faithful. For the author of Pseudo-Ezekiel, the question was not a matter of *how* faithfulness could occur but of *when* these things will take place. Assuming faithfulness, the author and his community awaited vindication.

5.2.3 Summary and Conclusion

5.2.3.1 Reading the Restoration

Whether of sectarian origin or not, the Dead Sea literature demonstrates how Deuteronomy 29–30 could be read alongside Jeremiah’s new covenant (31–32)

¹⁰⁰ Brady, ‘Biblical Interpretation’, 96.

¹⁰¹ So Brady, ‘Biblical Interpretation’, 96.

¹⁰² Strugnell and Dimant note how *ישתלמו חסדם* is ‘a Hebrew formulation of the concept of the reward of the Righteous’ (‘4Qsecond Ezekiel’, 55).

¹⁰³ Brady, ‘Biblical Interpretation’, 96; so also Kister and Qimron, ‘Observations’, 596. This is in some senses true even if the text does not, as Johannes Tromp argues, envision individual resurrection from the dead; see Johannes Tromp, “‘Can these Bones Live?’ Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Eschatological Resurrection”, in *The Book of Ezekiel and its Influence*, ed. H.J. de Jonge and Johannes Tromp (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 72–75.

¹⁰⁴ Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, 70.

and Ezekiel promised spirit (36–37), and had a profound influence on the identity of ancient Jews who utilised these texts.¹⁰⁵ For the sectarians, Deuteronomy 29 gives language to describe and understand the downfall of pre-exilic Israel. Those outside of and especially in opposition to the righteous community, along with those who apostatise from it (1QS 7:22–24), remain in this hopeless state. The community, however, are the faithful continuation of the remnant, those who remained steadfast in seeking Torah (CD 3:12b), in whom the restoration is finding its fulfilment. Deuteronomy 30 paints the picture of their renewal. One thing that enables their obedience is that they have circumcised their hearts. In the community's interpretation, this metaphor denotes a removal of impediments from the will, is closely connected with the revelation of and reflection on the proper interpretation of Torah, and results in an obedient life (1QS 5:5–9; CD 1:10–11, 3:12b–16).¹⁰⁶

The various scrolls witness to the range of ways in which divine and human agency could be construed in the restoration. Texts like Pseudo-Ezekiel assume and assert the moral competence of the human agent. In texts like 4Q504, however, human transformation is the sole result of divine initiative and agency. Significantly, the clearest witnesses to divine initiative and agency reside in those texts which most likely originated outside the sectarian community (*Words of the Luminaries* and *Barki Nafshi*). Among the texts of clear sectarian origin, the *Hodoyat* alone highlights divine agency. The non-liturgical, sectarian material paints the consistent picture that those who are now members of the community had some capacity for obedience prior to initiation. Even though stifled by ignorance, they are able to seek God to a degree by seeking Torah, understood in terms of the interpretation of and obedience to its details (4QMMT C23, C28; CD 3:12b). The apostle Paul's characterisation of 'those who had zeal, but not according to knowledge' fittingly describes the community's self-perception of their previous lives (cf. Rom 10:2). And, importantly, it was

105 4Q509 f287:1 is too corrupt to consider.

106 This conclusion supports Nitzan's proposal that 'it was the Community's aim to realize the eschatological repentance expected in the historiographic and prophetic biblical books' ('Repentance', 146). 1QpHab 11:8b–14a is not an interpretation of Deut 30 but also supports this conclusion. The Hab commentator believes the woes in Hab 2 are aimed at the Wicked Priest. As elsewhere, the enemies of the sect are described as uncircumcised and this state is closely associated with their actions. It is reasonable to assume that the uncircumcision of the Wicked Priest can be juxtaposed with the community who have both circumcised their hearts and live upright lives (Le Déaut 'la circoncision', 195). Two additional fragments which seem to refer to 'heart-circumcision' through a human agent's 'turning the foreskin of the heart' are 4Q177 f7:6 and 4Q177 f9:8. Unfortunately, the condition of these texts renders the context unintelligible.

just such a zeal which qualified them for reception of the divine gift. In this material, God's gifts are not given to anyone, but precisely to those who, though ignorant, still seek God to the best of their ability.

By raising up a teacher of righteousness who imparted the insight needed for Torah-interpretation and practice, God sent this group a gift that would enable them to obey to a degree sufficient for eschatological blessing. That is not to say that community members have no sin; only that they thought themselves sufficiently capable of a self-determination that effects obedience. Neither does this self-determination imply that the moral agent is fully competent to bring about obedience irrespective of the divine agent's continual action. With a world-scene that is invaded by supra-human agents, wilful determination is not the only factor; God must assist the community and protect them from anti-God powers (4QMMT C28–29). It is only by seeking God to make space for human action that the community's choices can come to fruition.

The divine gift serves a similar function in the *Hodayot*, only there the focus is on God's actions. Moral competence is neither highlighted nor put forward as a condition for gift-reception. While stark, the variance between the liturgical and non-liturgical literature is not without explanation. By definition, liturgical material is meant to praise God. One would then expect that God's agency would be fore-grounded in hymns. But that does not necessarily deny human competence. Similarly, in historical material, ethical material, or in material outlining requirements for covenant-initiation, one can see how there would be reasons for emphasising human agency. But this neither denies the divine gift nor nullifies divine agency. While different genres serve different functions,¹⁰⁷ both witness to true and important aspects of the community's understanding of the dynamics underlying gift and agency.¹⁰⁸ Assumptions about human initiative and agency outside the *Hodayot* nevertheless suggest that the sectarians prefer an Israel-priority reading of the restoration.

5.2.3.2 Grace, Gift, and Qualifications

The scrolls have been pointed to as the definitive demonstration that grace was present in Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰⁹ Some might understand the evidence presented here, especially regarding the qualifications for gift-reception and the partial competence of moral agents, to suggest either that grace is not as pervasive as others have made out or that while grace is present in the

107 Similarly, Garnet, *Salvation*, 59. See also Sanders, *Paul*, 292, 328.

108 So D.A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension*, Marshalls Theological Library (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 82.

109 Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 3–4.

presectarian material, it is not present in the community's theology. If possessing 'intellect and knowledge' or 'wholehearted seeking' qualified a person for the salvific gift, does that not undermine the sectarian community's theology of grace?

Importantly, behind such an objection stands an assumption about grace that is somewhat foreign to antiquity, namely that grace is incompatible with either conditions or human agency. Rather than making these texts conform to some abstract (or Protestant) notion of 'grace', the approach here seeks to allow the phenomena of the divine gifts themselves shape how we define and understand grace to function for the *Yahad*. As it happens, God's salvific gifts permeate the sectarian texts even while human agency is accented and qualifications are involved. Though in the non-liturgical material it is clear that Israel must turn in obedience to receive God's gifts, God still answers that obedience through a salvific act which he is not obliged to perform. Here grace takes the form of an undeserved response to repentance.¹¹⁰ In CD grace is also apparent in the divine causation of the remnant's growth (ויצמח, 1:7), though 3:12–14 indicates that even this might find its basis in, or at least correlate with, the remnant's Torah-faithfulness.¹¹¹

Throughout the corpus of literature surveyed here, grace is most prominently and fundamentally exhibited in the revelation of the proper interpretation of Torah. It is through this act that one becomes enlightened to Torah's true meaning and practice. Since God revealed the hidden things by raising up a teacher, or group of teachers, the enlightenment this revelatory act brings can be attributed to God both *proximately* in his act of raising up teachers, and *ultimately* as through those teachers he enlightens the community. Nevertheless, by its very nature the revelation of the hidden things assumes an exegetical process that engages human faculties and requires reflecting, remembering,

110 Compare 11QT 59:10–11; 1:11–12; 3:13–14.

111 By assuming that the author of CD 'shared the general view represented in 4Q504', Hultgren (*Damascus Covenant*, 111) surmises a divine initiative reading in CD. In support, he cites CD 1:3–5. While I can agree that 'it is inaccurate to say that the (new) covenant of D [Damascus] comes *solely* by human initiative' (112, emphasis his), I also believe that Hultgren's argument fails to distinguish between the perspectives of CD and 4Q504. Unlike 4Q504, all CD 1:3–5 tells us is that God saved a remnant 'when he remembered his covenant with the forefathers'. But this says nothing as to whether the remnant's seeking was within their power or somehow spurred by God; it only tells us that the previous covenant was a necessary condition for God's redeeming act. Likewise, Sanders (*Paul*, 269) believes that in CD 3:13 it is God's initiative which establishes the covenant. Yet God is said to have done this 'with those who remained steadfast', their steadfastness being prior to, and perhaps a reason for, the covenant.

and seeking to understand.¹¹² In this way, it is only as an individual participates in the knowledgeable community that enlightenment occurs.¹¹³ As Newsom summarises:

Knowledge of the ‘hidden things’ is thus a gracious divine response to the initial and continuing commitment of its members to life in a life of perfect obedience. . . . Both obedience to commandments already known and the further understanding of the commandments of God embedded in scripture require an extraordinary discipline, one that can only be undertaken within the community.¹¹⁴

For the sectarians, the remnant’s greatest problem is ignorance and God’s gift opens their eyes. Before this event the remnant groped about blindly; after, their eyes were opened and darkness turned to light.¹¹⁵ The relationship between the divine gift and the faithful’s obedience, therefore, cannot be comprehended without attention to the particular *form* and *function* of the gift. This conclusion, based on the community’s reading of Scripture, needs to be placed inside the broader framework of their theology. Especially important in

112 Joseph M. Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4, XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266–273)*, DJD 13 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 16. See Shemesh and Werman, ‘Hidden Things’, 418, who note regarding CD that humans are not mere passive recipients. And that ‘while God indeed “opened before them” it is the sect’s members who must dig in order to extract the well’s waters’. This theme is prominent in 4QInstruction, see further Torleif Elgvin, ‘The Mystery to Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation’, in *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 131–33. See also M.J. Goff, ‘Reading Wisdom at Qumran: 4QInstruction and the Hodayot’, *DSD* 11 (2004), 266–67. Compare Philo’s description of the Essenes’ study habits (*Prob.* 80–83).

113 CD can therefore speak of God revealing hidden things (3:13–14) and of humans opening their own eyes (4Q266 f2i:5, פתחו עיניכם [...]).

114 Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 71.

115 This is precisely what we find in 4Q306, which speaks of those who, ‘[...]... their heart [...] [and] they sought the Torah and the co[mmandment]... with all their heart] and with all their soul. And they will be like those who grope for a p[ath]...] eyes, and the law going forth and... [...] until (their eyes) are opened and they see’ (f22–6= col 1:10–14). Even in its fragmentary state, we can still detect a description of people who seek Torah. But this seeking can be described only as groping until something happens which opens their eyes; cf. Michael O. Wise, ‘The Concept of a New Covenant in the Teacher Hymns from Qumran (1QH^a X–XVII)’, in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C.R. De Roo, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 101.

this regard is their concept of predestination, along with their beliefs about apocalyptic dualities.

5.3 The Sectarian Community: Larger Considerations

5.3.1 *Predestination*

It has long been held that one of the defining characteristics of sectarian scrolls is the attribution of all things to the predestining purposes of God. As unabashed monotheists, the *Yahad* believed everything had its source of origin in an all-supreme Being (1QH^a 9:7–15; 18:1–2; 1QS 10:12). That Being, who relinquishes no sovereignty, continues to sustain all he created (1QH^a 9:19–20; 1QS 3:15–16): without him ‘nothing is done’ and ‘nothing is known apart from’ his will (1QH^a 9:8; 1QS 11:11). As such, the community’s predestinarian theology interrelates with its creational theology (e.g., 4Q180 1:1–5).¹¹⁶ At the most general level, predestination functions to secure history as an outworking of the divine will (1QH^a 9:23–24; 9:10–20).¹¹⁷

Predestination also operates in more particular and direct ways for the community. This is especially true where humanity is concerned:

¹⁵But I, I know, thanks to your intellect, that [...] is not by the hand of flesh, and that a man [cannot choose] ¹⁶his way, nor can a human being establish his steps. I know that the inclination of every spirit is in your hand, [and all] its [task] ¹⁷you have established even before creating him. How can anyone change your words? You, you alone, have cr[eated] ¹⁸the righteous, and from the womb you determined him from the period of approval, to keep your covenant, and to walk on all (your paths), and to ... on him ¹⁹with the abundance of your compassion, to open all the narrowness of his soul to eternal salvation and endless peace, without

¹¹⁶ So Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 16; Jürgen Becker, *Das Heil Gottes: Heils und Sündenbegriffe in den Qumrantexten und im Neuen Testament*, SUNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 138. Gerhard Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille. Nach den jüdischen Religionsparteien zwischen Ben Sira und Paulus*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 205; Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 90; Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination*, 80; Armin Lange, ‘Wisdom and Predestination in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, *DSD* 2/3 (1995), 340–54, esp. at 335. For the wisdom background to these concepts, see Armin Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination: weisheitliche Ordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

¹¹⁷ Goff (‘Reading’, 264) notes how 4QInstruction and the *Hodayot* narrate the creation event ‘to assert that reality unfolds according to a deterministic framework’.

want. And you have raised ²⁰his glory above flesh. (Vacat) But the wicked you have created for [the time] of your wrath, from the womb you have predestined them for the day of slaughter. ²¹For they walk on a path that is not good, they reject your covenant, their soul loathes your [...], and they take no pleasure in what ²²you command, but choose what you hate. (1QH^a 7:15–22)

Not only do these lines state that for human decisions to come to fruition they must be ratified by divine establishment,¹¹⁸ they also claim that God ‘creates’ (ברא) both the righteous for ‘eternal salvation’ and the wicked for ‘wrath’. Closely related to God’s creating both righteous and wicked individuals is his assigning them a specific ‘lot’ (גורל). The various uses of גורל in the scrolls reinforce the predetermination of all things.¹¹⁹ Often גורל is grammatically linked to a specific group: the righteous and wicked are placed into ‘the lot of God’ and ‘the lot of Belial’ respectively (1QS 2:1–5; 1QM 1:5; cf. 1QS 11:7–8; 1QH^a 11:20–23; 1QM 13:5; CD 13:12, 20:3–4). The predetermined fate of humans is therefore distinctly manifest through corporate realities (cf. 1Q34 3ii:6),¹²⁰ and those realities are specifically bound up with God’s creative purposes.¹²¹

Though divine determination relates to more than the destiny of the individual, individuals cannot be excluded. As the logic of line 16 suggests, the יצר is also under divine influence: ‘I know that the inclination (יצר) of every spirit is in your hand’. As the surrounding lines show, ‘spirit’ (רוח) is used to designate a person and יצר that person’s fundamental disposition. Thus a person’s will and, indirectly, actions are under divine control. So the hymn goes on to say that God has predestined the righteous ‘to keep your covenant and to walk on

118 See also 1QH^a 18:5–7: ‘I am dust and ashes, what can I plan if you do not wish it? What can I devise without your will? How can I be strong, if you do not make me stand? How can I be learned if you do not mould me? What can I say if you do not open my mouth? And how can I answer if you do not give me insight?’

119 P.S. Alexander, ‘Predestination and Free Will in the Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 44–46.

120 It is debated whether or not the Prayers for Festivals are *yahadic*, though there seems to be some reason for thinking they are. See James H. Charlesworth and Frank Moore Cross, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts with English Translations* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 46; Johann Maier, ‘Zu Kult und Liturgie der Qumrangemeinde’, *RevQ* 14 (1990), 577; however see Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 157; Newsom, ‘Sectually Explicit’, 177–78.

121 Alexander, ‘Predestination and Free Will’, 46; Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 22–23.

all (your paths)' (1QH^a 7:18). 1QH^a 7:16 is not an isolated incidence. As E.H. Merrill observes:

Throughout 1QH ... there is the teaching that the creative act by which God formed all things, especially their energizing spirits, is more than just a static work of bringing all things into being—it is also the time and means employed by the Creator to give 'inclination' of will to every part of the universe.¹²²

While probably the clearest example, such a theology is not limited to the *Hodayot*. CD notes how God is actively involved in causing the reprobate to stray (2:13).¹²³ The *Treatise on the Two Spirits* opens by observing that God has determined the works of all generations (1QS 3:14).¹²⁴ The hymn closing the *Community Rule* credits God for the perfection of behaviour and uprightness of heart (11:2). God steadies a man's steps in obedience (11:13). Since apart from him 'no behaviour is perfect' and apart from the divine will 'nothing comes to be', God is beseeched to establish works in righteousness (11:16–17). While some of these references could be attributed to the 'general' predestining purposes of God discussed above, other references serve to communicate that in the final account the righteous cannot take credit for their works and ultimate destiny. Works are not, as Sanders might be understood to mean, a human's autonomous fulfilment of a condition for remaining elect;¹²⁵ rather works are a consequence of being elect.¹²⁶ In sectarian texts, a discourse that localises predestination functions to secure the priority of divine agency in the lives of the righteous.¹²⁷

122 Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 19.

123 See also 4Q266 f11:9–11.

124 The relationship between the *Treatise* and the community is discussed below.

125 Sanders, *Paul*, 312. While works might be a necessary condition for retaining membership in the sect, to be a member of the sect and to be predestined as righteous, though correlating, are not exactly the same.

126 So Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, 77–78.

127 My distinction between 'general' and 'localised' or 'particular' predestination finds some correlation with Dimant's distinction between the predestination of 'human history' and 'personal biography'. See 'Qumran Sectarian Literature', in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, *Compendia rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*; Section 2, Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 536.

This survey would seem to suggest a theology of absolute predestination with respect to the individual. Some, however, have questioned this conclusion. T. Eskola, for instance, tends to downplay the idea of predestination for the *Yahad* because of its insistence that people must obey God.¹²⁸ He fails, however, to consider how predestinarian outlooks might also incorporate conditions, all the while maintaining that God himself predestines all things, including those human actions which fulfil conditions. Predestination need not contradict the necessity of human action, especially when those actions are accounted for in the predestinarian schema. For a clear example of this, note 1QH^a 7, where the righteous are not only predestined for eternal life, but also *to keep the covenant* (18). On one level, the righteous gain eternal life solely on account of their election. And yet, as a necessary and instrumental condition, it is equally valid to say that the righteous must keep the covenant to enter that life.

Other scholars believe absolute predestination is softened in 1QH^a 7:20–21:

But the wicked you have created for [the time] of your wrath, from the womb you have predestined them for the day of slaughter. For (כִּי) they walk on a path that is not good, they reject your covenant.

Brownlee understands the כִּי-particle to be the hermeneutical ‘key’ that unlocks the sect’s understanding of the predestination of the wicked: ‘It is “BECAUSE” these people “have walked in the way not good/and have rejected” God’s “covenant,” that they are consigned at birth “to the day of slaughter.”’¹²⁹ God predestines the wicked *on the basis* of the works they would eventually perform. Merrill, who calls 7:20 the ‘*crux interpretum*’, takes this line of reasoning a step further by applying it to the righteous.¹³⁰ Is it correct to view predestination as a response to human action?

First, it must be pointed out that both Brownlee and Merrill take the כִּי-clause as a direct causal clause. While a כִּי-particle can function this way, it can also function indirectly. In other words, the clause could easily be translated ‘for . . .’ and give the evidence that God has *indeed* created the wicked for

¹²⁸ Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination*, 82–83.

¹²⁹ William H. Brownlee, ‘Anthropology and Soteriology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament’, in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays; Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. J.M. Efrid (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972), 236, his emphasis.

¹³⁰ Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 50.

wrath.¹³¹ I, however, tend to agree with Brownlee and Merrell's 'direct' reading since the lines before do not speak of God creating the wicked for wicked works but for wrath.¹³² But regardless of how one takes the כִּי-clause, it is striking how the structure of lines 20–22 differs from the structure of those lines which describe the righteous (15–19). While the same themes are apparent by antithesis, in lines 15–19 the righteous are established and appointed for favour not 'because' (כִּי), but 'in order to be kept/keep themselves in your covenant' (להשמר בבְרִיתְךָ). What the alternative structures suggest is that while the actions of the wicked may well be the reason for their assignment to wrath, one cannot say the same about the righteous.¹³³ Whatever led the author to this construction, we have to allow for the possibility of asymmetrical attribution in discourse involving predestination.¹³⁴ It seems highly probable that the predestination of the righteous and wicked, respectively, perform different functions in the sect's theological discourse. With respect to the righteous, predestination safeguards the priority and reign of God's creative initiative.¹³⁵ But with respect to the wicked, predestination solidifies the severity of the consequences brought on by human rebellion.¹³⁶

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- 131 Interestingly, CD 2:6–7 speaks of those who rebel against the proper way . . . 'for/because (כִּי) God had not chosen them'. On their own logic, Brownlee and Merrill must affirm that here rebellion is a result of a divine decree!
- 132 A similar view might be put forward in CD 2:2–13, where predestination is framed in the language of 'knowing' beforehand. Yet if God's foreknowing is, as Merrill (*Qumran and Predestination*, 15) suggests, concomitant to the decrees of God, there is little difference to be seen between the concepts of predestination and foreknowledge. For an argument that CD does not soften predestination in terms of 'prior-awareness', see Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 43.
- 133 We have noted how CD attributes the wicked's straying to the active agency of God (CD 2:13, 4Q266 f11:9–11). While this might represent a different theology from that of the hymns, it is possible to harmonise the two by understanding this divine act as judgement for prior disobedience. The context of the latter, however, makes this option difficult.
- 134 See Philo, who suggests that the Essenes have an imbalanced view of divine causation (*Prob.* 84).
- 135 So Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 90–91, 93; contra VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 118–19.
- 136 Compare Sanders *Paul*, 268, who comes close to this position, but departs when he says, 'man's destiny was really in his own hands' (267; cf. 294). If so, Sanders is unhelpful when he calls election the 'irresistible grace of God' (261). On Sanders' understanding, election is based upon membership in the sect (294). One wonders, then, in what sense election is irresistible.

5.3.2 *Apocalyptic Dualities*

Another important aspect to consider when thinking about agency in the Scrolls is what scholars frequently label ‘dualism’. J. Duhaime, following U. Bianchi, defines dualism as a worldview that assumes two irreducible principles as the cause of all that exists in the world. Formally, it should be found only when ‘the principles responsible for bringing the world and man into existence’ are opposites.¹³⁷ From this starting point the universe is understood in the terms of opposite principles and can often be broken down into sub-categories: metaphysical; cosmic; spatial; eschatological; ethical; soteriological; theological; physical; anthropological; and psychological.¹³⁸ All or any of these could be apparent in any given system and related to one another in various ways.

Not all these categories concern us, and to discuss them thoroughly would take us far afield. Besides, the closer we look at the Dead Sea literature the more ‘dualism’ requires significant qualification. Since God alone is sovereign over all things, dualism is absent from these works at the most fundamental level. But it is not simply at the foundational level that the description ‘dualism’ breaks down. Take, for example, the most characteristic of all dualistic texts: *The Treatise on the Two Spirits* (1QS 3:13–4:26).¹³⁹ In the *Treatise*, God is the unrivalled sovereign of the universe (1QS 3:15). Moreover, while there is Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, a Prince of Light and an Angel of Darkness (3:18–4:1), Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness, and even paths of light and paths of darkness (3:20–21), not all is balanced. When the Spirits are introduced in juxtaposition, they are labelled Truth and Iniquity (האמת והעול).¹⁴⁰ In fact, there is an inequality of terms throughout the section: a מעין of Light and a מקור of Darkness; a שר of Lights (plural) and a מלאך of Darkness. There is a host associated with the Angel of Darkness but no corresponding host

137 J. Duhaime, ‘Dualism’, in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 216.

138 On these categories, see J. Frey, ‘Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on their Background and History’, in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge, 1995: Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten*, ed. Moshe J. Bernstein, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 282–85.

139 John Joseph Collins, ‘Powers in Heaven: God, Gods, and Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John Joseph Collins and Robert A. Kugler, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 17.

140 Unfortunately, English translations often render עול as ‘Deceit’ or ‘Falsehood’, suggesting more dualistic vocabulary than is present.

mentioned with the Prince of Lights (1QS 3:24–25).¹⁴¹ In the discussion of ethical actions associated with each Spirit, there is a slight emphasis on the deeds of light: seven lines (4:2–8) to the dark deeds' five lines (4:9–14). Furthermore, whereas the Sons of Light are influenced to sin by the Angel of Darkness, there is no such discussion of the Sons of Darkness. We are not given any indication that the Angel of Light influences the Sons of Darkness for good. Finally, the conflict is not eternal. And so, while there are reasons for utilising categories associated with dualism to describe this literature, perhaps a more accurate description of what we have in the Dead Sea literature is a worldview containing *apocalyptic dualities*—how humans are associated with transcendent and opposing realities which influence humans and their actions.¹⁴² It is under the influence of these opposing realities that the possibility for, and nature of, human agency must be understood. I now turn primarily to the *Treatise on the Two Spirits* to show the particular shape human agency takes in such a worldview.

5.3.2.1 Apocalyptic Dualities in the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*

The *Treatise on the Two Spirits* was most likely an independent pre-sectarian sapiential text that was only later incorporated by the sectarians. There is no consensus among scholars on whether or not this was a late or early incorporation. The *Treatise* is preserved for us in 1QS, parts of 4QSc, and perhaps 4QSa, but is not found in 4Qsb and 4Qsd. While the manuscript evidence could suggest a late incorporation as a development to the *Rule*,¹⁴³ the dates of these

141 Loren T. Stuckenbruck, 'The Interiorization of Dualism within the Human Being in Second Temple Judaism: the Treatise of the Two Spirits (1QS 111: 13–14: 26) in its Tradition-Historical Context', in *Light Against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World*, ed. Armin Lange and Eric M. Meyers (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 162n47. P. Alexander is certain that we should assume a host belongs to the Angel of Truth ('Predestination and Free Will', 32). If so, it passes mention.

142 On the association between humans and cosmic realities, see now Mladen Popovic, 'Anthropology, Pneumatology and Demonology in Early Judaism: The Two Spirits Treatise (1QS 3:13–4:26) and Other Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls', in "*And God Breathed into Man the Breath of Life*"—*Dust of the Ground and Breath of Life (Gen 2.7): The Development of a Dualistic Anthropology in Early Judaism & Christianity, and their Umwelts*," ed. J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and George H. van Kooten (Leiden: Brill, Forthcoming), 1–41, accessed July 18, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/2374108/Anthropology_Pneumatology_and_Demonology_in_Early_Judaism_The_Two_Spirits_Treatise_1QS_III_13-IV_26_and_Other_Texts_from_the_Dead_Sea_Scrolls. Popovic picks up on some early observations made by Shaul Shaked, 'Qumran and Iran: Further Considerations', *IOS* 2 (1972), 433–36.

143 So Metso, *Textual Development*, 89–90, 106, 137.

manuscripts favour a very early inclusion.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the case, as Charlotte Hempel has recently argued, the *Treatise* is both distinctive from and shares much in common with the rest of the *Rule* at a thematic and linguistic level.¹⁴⁵ Thus while some form of the *Treatise* predates the *Rule*, the *Treatise* has been thoroughly redacted and incorporated into 1QS and can be interpreted as such.¹⁴⁶ Our concern is to ask how the *Treatise* may have functioned for the sectarians who used the versions of the *Rule* into which the redacted *Treatise* was incorporated.

The opening lines set out the purpose of the *Treatise*:

¹³For the Instructor to instruct and teach all the Sons of Light about the nature of all the sons of man: ¹⁴all the varieties of their spirits, in accordance with their signs, concerning their deeds in their generations, and concerning the visitation of their punishments and ¹⁵the times of their reward.

This heading provides the structure for the rest of the *Treatise* and states that its goal is to inform the Sons of Light about the nature of humanity.¹⁴⁷ The text is concerned with anthropology.¹⁴⁸ Since anthropology and soteriology stand

144 See Devorah Dimant, 'The Composite Character of the Qumran Sectarian Literature as an Indication of its Date and Provenance', *RevQ* 22 (2006), 619–20; Philip S. Alexander and Geza Vermes, *Qumran Cave 4, XIX: Serekh Ha-Yahad and Two Related Texts*, DJD 26 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 15.

145 Charlotte Hempel, 'The Treatise on the Two Spirits and the Literary History of the Rule of the Community', in *Dualism in Qumran*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 105–20.

146 While arguing for thorough redaction and incorporation Hempel, nevertheless, insists that the ideas in the *Treatise* are not central to the sect's beliefs as has commonly been assumed ('Treatise on the Two Spirits', 119). Compare Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 37–47; Albert L.A. Hogeterp, 'The Eschatology of the Two Spirits Treatise Revisited', *RevQ* 23 (2007), 247–259; Lange, *Weisheit*, 165–67. See also Frey, 'Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 301–07, who argues that the cosmic dualism of the *Treatise* was strengthened in its new setting.

147 Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 28–29; Frey, 'Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 290; J. Licht, 'An Analysis of the Treatise of the Two Spirits in DSD', in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin, ScrHier (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1958), 93. On the structure of the *Treatise*, see Lange, *Weisheit*, 140–43. On understanding תולדות as nature, see Licht, 'Two Spirits', 89–90n5; Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 341n59.

148 Frey, 'Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 291; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, 'Wisdom and Holiness at Qumran: Strategies for Dealing with Sin in the Community Rule', in *Where Shall Wisdom*

together,¹⁴⁹ it is reasonable to make this our primary concern. Importantly, the first note sounded in the instruction is a declaration that God is the sovereign creator and preserver of the universe (3:15–17). Predestination serves as the bedrock of anthropology, which also corresponds to sectarian thought.¹⁵⁰ And yet God's predestining purposes are worked out by other mediating agents. Set within this larger creational framework, God has established transcendent and opposing powers that influence humans for a designated period of time (3:18; 4:25). On the one hand is a Spirit of Truth (3:18–19), on the other is a Spirit of Iniquity (3:19). So while God created humans 'to rule' (לממשלת, 3:17)—agents who exert influence on the world—human agency does not operate irrespective of more powerful agents. The anthropology of the *Treatise* cannot be understood apart from these higher powers.¹⁵¹ This is true whether or not the 'spirits' are cosmological principles, since they are embodied by spiritual beings.¹⁵² The Spirit of Truth is associated with the Prince of Lights or the Angel of God's Truth (3:18–19; 20; 24), who exercises influence on the 'rule' (ממשלת) of the Sons of Righteousness (3:20). The Spirit of Iniquity is associated with the Angel of Darkness (3:20–21), who exercises his influence on 'the complete rule' (כול ממשלת) of the Sons of Iniquity (3:19–20). The repetition of ממשלת is hardly coincidental: human agency is subject to cosmic powers.¹⁵³ The spirits, therefore, play an 'ancillary role' in humanity's mission.¹⁵⁴

Under the sway of the two spirits, humanity is divided into two distinct groups: Sons of Light/Righteousness and Sons of Darkness/Iniquity. An

Be Found?: Wisdom in the Bible, the Church and the Contemporary World, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 57.

- 149 Brownlee, 'Anthropology and Soteriology', 219.
- 150 Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. 1 (London: SCM, 1974), 1:219, 2:143n699, notes how אל הדעות is 'always connected with the idea of predestination', referencing 1QH 1:26; 12:10; fr. 4:15.
- 151 Even if one takes 3:18 to be a reference to anthropological spirits, this does not negate the fact that these 'spirits' are closely associated with corporate realities and higher agents (3:20–21). It seems that P. Wernberg-Møller does not take this adequately enough into account; see 'A Reconsideration of the Two Spirits in the Rule of the Community (1Q Serek III, 13–14, 26)', *RevQ* 3 (1961), 414–41.
- 152 Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 31–32.
- 153 García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Study Edition* translate ביד שר אורים ממשלת כול בני צדק as 'in the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice', thus understanding ממשלת verbally: *The angel exercises dominion over*. I prefer to translate the phrase: 'In the hand of the Prince of Lights is the rule of all the sons of justice', since ממשלת is a noun in construct and since we were already introduced to humanity's 'rule' in line 17. Compare the translation in Wise, et al., *Scrolls*, which has its own difficulties.
- 154 Duhaime, 'Dualism', 216.

individual lives in accordance with whatever spirit that person is associated (3:20–21).¹⁵⁵ Catalogues of virtues and vices distinguish the actions of the righteous from the wicked (4:2–6; 9–11). Such actions provide visible manifestations, ‘signs’ or ‘markers’ of identity (3:14; 4:2–6, 9–11).¹⁵⁶ Of course these tokens are only temporal and should not be equated with the ultimate manifestation that will occur at the eschatological judgement.¹⁵⁷ The reason for provisionality is that the Sons of Righteousness are not immune from the operations of the Spirit of Iniquity. One of the ‘mysteries of God’ is that the Sons of Light can be corrupted by the Angel of Darkness, ‘all their sins, iniquities, guilt and offensive deeds’ being attributed to him or the ‘spirits of his lot’ (3:22–24). These dark agents do not simply impose their power from without, but the Spirit of Iniquity also works within the Sons of Righteousness (4:20).

Some have taken the influence of the Spirit of Iniquity within the Sons of Righteousness as a reason for locating *psychological* dualism in ‘every single person’.¹⁵⁸ The claim that God created ‘man (אנוש) . . . and placed within him two spirits’ in 1QS 3:18 might lend support to this notion. So also when 4:23–24 states, ‘Until now the Spirits of Truth and Iniquity feud ‘in the heart of man’ (בלבב גבר), it could suggest that the two spirits contend over an individual’s heart.¹⁵⁹ A closer reading complicates this initial suggestion, however.

155 Frey, ‘Patterns of Dualistic Thought’, 293, notes how ‘[p]articipation in the two spirits and subjection to their influence is expressed by metaphors of source (3:19) and foundation (3:25), terms of dominion (“in the hand” ביד 3:20; cf. 3:16); spatial interiority (“walk in” הלך ב 3:18; 4:6, 12, 15; “be in” 4:15) and spiritual participation (4:17, 20–22, 24–26)’. See Popovic, ‘Anthropology, Pneumatology and Demonology’, II: ‘The human spirit should not be understood as a secluded entity in itself—the isolated core of the human self—but as an element of human nature that is open to and influenced by other spirits. The boundary between the human spirit and these other spirits, in terms of their ontological status and their effects on human beings, was not fixed, but permeable.’

156 So Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 346.

157 Frey, ‘Patterns of Dualistic Thought’, 293.

158 Frey, ‘Patterns of Dualistic Thought’, 294; Duhaime, ‘Dualism’, 216; Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 344–45, 349n67; Stuckenbruck, ‘Wisdom’, 57; Hermann Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in Texten der Qumrangemeinde*, SUNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1980), 137, 140; Wernberg-Møller, ‘Reconsideration’, 425; R.W. Kvalvaag, ‘The Spirit in Human Beings in Some Qumran Non-Biblical Text’, in *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 161.

159 Lichtenberger, *Menschenbild*, 140, is stronger: ‘Die beiden Geister sind zugleich im Menschen.’

First, the *Treatise* seems to view the identity of the human Self and its character qualities as bound up with larger powers within the cosmic order.¹⁶⁰ Given that many spirits can be said to operate within a human, Popovic has rightly argued that it is indeed unlikely that the text refers to two spirits that are constitutive of humanity's created framework.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the distinction between psychological dispositions of the human spirit and external spirits is rather blurry. Thus, what we find in the *Treatise* does not appear to be quite the same as psychological dualism.¹⁶²

Another problem with locating psychological dualism in every individual is simply that the *Treatise* never specifically states that every individual has a share in both S/spirits. Coming in a discussion about the origin of humankind, אנוש in 3:18 is a reference to humanity in general, not to each individual specifically.¹⁶³ Likewise גבר in 4:23 is specified as humanity in general by the 3MP verb that immediately follows: יתהלכו (4:24).¹⁶⁴ R.W. Kvalvaag and P. Wernberg-Møller both take 3:13–14 to be a reference to humankind, and yet maintain that the two spirits concern every individual.¹⁶⁵ While this is not impossible, a reference to humanity in general leaves the meaning indeterminate. The basis for such a view must be sought elsewhere. Importantly, the only places in the *Treatise* which unambiguously teach that an individual participates in both spirits are 3:20–24 and 4:20–22, where the righteous are specifically in view. To be sure, the author maintains that the righteous are influenced by the Angel of Darkness, giving an explanation for their sin; yet he gives no corresponding account of good deeds done by the Sons of Iniquity.¹⁶⁶

H. Lichtenberger has argued that we should not infer from this silence that the Prince of Lights is not in a position to influence the Wicked, since his title indicates that he has sovereignty over the Angel of Darkness.¹⁶⁷ Without quibbling over the comparative powers of the Prince and the Angel, if Lichtenberger is suggesting that the Prince actually does influence the wicked then I

160 Popovic, 'Anthropology, Pneumatology and Demonology', 11.

161 Popovic, 'Anthropology, Pneumatology and Demonology', 25.

162 Or as Popovic concludes: 'notions of cosmological and ethical dualism in the Two Spirits Treatise are intricately connected and that these also exert their influence at an anthropological level, expressed in human behaviour. However, this is not a dualistic anthropology' ('Anthropology, Pneumatology and Demonology', 41).

163 Licht, 'Two Spirits', 9In13.

164 The lexical choice of גבר might also indicate a reference to the righteous. Further, the Sons of Iniquity have not been mentioned explicitly since 3:21.

165 Kvalvaag, 'The Spirit in Human Beings', 160–61 and Wernberg-Møller, 'Reconsideration', 419–20.

166 Lichtenberger, *Menschenbild*, 129.

167 Lichtenberger, *Menschenbild*, 129.

remain sceptical. Capacity does not assume action. Furthermore, the Sons of Iniquity are said to be completely under the powers of darkness. The placement of כּוֹל in lines 3:20–21 is significant.¹⁶⁸ Whereas line 20 states that in the hand of the Prince of Lights is ‘the rule of *all the Sons of Righteousness*’ (ממשלת כּוֹל בני צדק), line 21 states that in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is ‘*the complete rule of the Sons of Iniquity*’ (כּוֹל ממשלת בני עוֹל). Brownlee suggests that the differing location of כּוֹל ‘indicates that the “Sons of Righteousness” . . . are at times under the sway of the angel of darkness.’¹⁶⁹ But that would be communicated only negatively. Positively, the lines deny the Sons of Iniquity any favourable influence.¹⁷⁰ So while a kind of apocalyptic battle can be located in the Sons of Righteousness, the same cannot be said of the Sons of Iniquity.¹⁷¹

5.3.2.2 Apocalyptic Dualities in other Manuscripts

Can this conclusion be sustained if we move outside the *Treatise* to other Dead Sea manuscripts? 4Q186, frequently referred to as one of the ‘Horoscope Texts’, is purported to contain a detailed account of psychological dualism. It puts forward the idea that a person’s visible features, their basic disposition, and the positioning of the stars at the person’s birth are directly related.¹⁷² An individual’s disposition seems to be made up of a combination of light and darkness. Having five or more parts in either direction on a nine-part scale determines that individual’s status. So, for instance, if a person’s toes are thick and short, they are eight parts in darkness and one part in light (4Q186 fl 3:5–6) and, thus, a son of darkness. If these texts are of sectarian ilk, as P.S. Alexander argues,¹⁷³

168 So Wernberg-Møller, ‘Reconsideration’, 413–41, followed by Brownlee, ‘Anthropology and Soteriology’, 214. Lichtenberger (*Menschenbild*, 128n24) believes this gives too much weight to the placement of כּוֹל, but without further explanation.

169 Brownlee, ‘Anthropology and Soteriology’, 214.

170 Cf. Licht, ‘Two Spirits’, 92.

171 See 1QM 13:12 (4Q495 f2:4), where the messengers/angels of Darkness are described as desiring *only* to walk in darkness.

172 On 4Q186, see Mladen Popovic, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 17–54. See also Matthias Albani, ‘Horoscopes in the Qumran Scrolls’, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 279–330; cf. P.S. Alexander, ‘Physiognomy, Initiation, and Rank in the Qumran Community’, in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 385–94 and the initial proposals by J.M. Allegro, ‘An Astrological Cryptic Document from Qumran’, *JSS* 9 (1964), 291–94.

173 Alexander, ‘Physiognomy, Initiation, and Rank’, 390–94.

then the general understanding of this text suggests that 'Sons of Darkness' are influenced by the dominion of Light.

Yet it remains unclear that the divisions actually refer to individuals. It was Gordis who initially suggested understanding רוח as 'space': It has a space in the House of Light of six (units).¹⁷⁴ And though Popovic does not follow Gordis here, his work nevertheless casts serious doubt on understanding רוח as a reference to the human spirit.¹⁷⁵ Instead, he argues that רוח refers to spirits related to zodiacal signs.¹⁷⁶ On his interpretation, the spirit's division between the house of light and house of darkness concerns the exact zodiacal position above and below the horizon at birth.¹⁷⁷ His argument suggests that it would be dubious to let conclusions drawn from 4Q186 dictate our understanding of sectarian anthropology. In fact, there is some doubt as to whether or not this text is of sectarian origin in the first place.¹⁷⁸ It thus seems prudent to maintain our initial conclusion that only the righteous participate in both spirits.

5.3.2.3 Identity, Transference, and Sin

By stating that the the forces of darkness are at work within the righteous I by no means wish to suggest it is as though the righteous are both Sons of Righteousness and Iniquity.¹⁷⁹ Nor am I asserting that the spirits have an equal influence over the righteous; much less that their status is in constant jeopardy or flux depending on which spirit is 'winning out' or in which spirit an individual is participating at any given moment.¹⁸⁰ On the contrary, a son of

174 On this rendering, see R.A. Gordis, 'Document in Code From Qumran', *JSS* 11 (1966), 38, furthered by R. Bergmeier, *Glaube als Gabe nach Johannes. Religions und theologische geschichtliche Studien zum prädestinationischen Dualismus im vierten Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980), 78–81. Albani ('Horoscopes', 284–294, 313–315) sets out the difficulties of the anthropological interpretation.

175 Popovic, *Reading the Human Body*, 186–94.

176 Popovic, *Reading the Human Body*, 195.

177 Popovic, *Reading the Human Body*, 206.

178 See Popovic, *Reading the Human Body*, 9–11; Dimant, 'Sectarian Literature', 531; Dimant, 'The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance', 34, 51.

179 Contra Kvalvaag, 'The Spirit in Human Beings', 161, and as Wernberg-Møller ('Reconsideration', 428) seems to suggest.

180 Lichtenberger (*Menschenbild*, 137) correctly notes how 4:15–18 is not a fight for humans. In 4Q544 1:10–14, a man awakens from a dream to find two angels fighting over him. But this struggle does not mean that the man's identity was 'neutral' or that his status was not secure. In fact, he addresses the Angel of Light familiarly as 'my lord' (מֵרָאִי), suggesting that he was a son of light.

righteousness is always and ever a son of righteousness. While human nature might leave the righteous vulnerable to humanity's sinful tendencies and the influence of the Dark Angel, the righteous are also fundamentally different from the wicked. These texts seem to allow for the possibility of the righteous being 'influenced' or 'ruled' by both spirits, even participating at the very core of their existence, without asserting that they belong to both.¹⁸¹ From the world's foundation, one's inheritance and 'spirit' are predestined (1QS 4:26)¹⁸² and therefore unchangeable (1QS 4:24). Importantly, in line 26 a person is judged at the visitation according to 'his spirit' (רוחו). The singular suggests that at a fundamental level the *Treatise* associates a person with only one spirit. Furthermore, the *Treatise* gives no indication that a person would ever move from a state of wickedness to righteousness.¹⁸³ So whilst the Angel of Darkness causes the righteous to stray and even corrupts their inmost parts, the righteous are never *identified* with the Angel of Darkness, Spirit of Iniquity, or Sons of Darkness (and vice-versa). At most, a person who is created as a son of righteousness is made manifest upon joining 'The Sons of Righteousness,'¹⁸⁴ demonstrates the signs of the Spirit of Truth, and has his or her eyes opened by the truth.¹⁸⁵ In terms of identity and ontology, however, there is no transfer from darkness to light.¹⁸⁶

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- 181 Contra Kvalvaag, 'The Spirit in Human Beings', 161, who conflates influence and nature with identity.
- 182 Again, Lichtenberger (*Menschenbild*, 137) correctly links the certainty of a person's status to divine 'Festlegung'. Yet he also believes every individual has a portion of both spirits.
- 183 The same can be said of the 'horoscope texts'. Regardless of the anthropological questions, if the divisions refer to people, then a person's destiny is determined from birth and the nine-part scale ensures that they fall into one of two lots (Alexander, 'Physiognomy, Initiation, and Rank', 388).
- 184 Frey ('Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 304) argues that the levels of opposition found in the *Treatise* differ significantly from CD. Whereas in the *Treatise* opposition is between the righteous and the wicked, in CD it is between members and non-members. Further, in CD there is no struggle 'within' the righteous, and ethical criteria is now related to social boundaries. But since CD allows for members who apostatise secretly (e.g. CD 20:1–4a, 8–10; see Davies, *Damascus Covenant*, 183–85) and since in the context of the *Rule* the Sons of Light are associated with a group defined by a social boundary (1QS 3:12; *pace* Stuckenbruck, 'Wisdom', 57), the difference here is not as drastic as Frey makes out. Compare Stuckenbruck's assessment of the *Treatise* in 'The Interiorization of Dualism', 164–66; cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:222–223.
- 185 On the relationship between knowledge and election, compare Sanders, *Paul*, 259–60, 318.
- 186 Compare Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 23; VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 114; Maston, *Divine and Human Agency*, 87–88.

5.3.2.4 Eschatological Renewal

The anomalous state of affairs in which the Sons of Righteousness sin will not last forever. At the eschaton God will show his love for the Prince of Light and hatred for the Angel of Darkness (1QS 3:26–4:1) by obliterating all things associated with the Angel (4:18–19), therein establishing a new creation (4:25). Since the Spirit of Iniquity is found within the Sons of Righteousness, it will not suffice for God to defeat sin at a cosmic level only;¹⁸⁷ he must also cleanse the Sons of Righteousness by irradiating the Spirit of Iniquity from their inmost being (4:20).¹⁸⁸ This victory, both cosmic and personal, frees the Sons of Light from the dominion of Darkness.¹⁸⁹ It is at this point in the *Treatise's* schema when a complete transformation occurs. Those identified with and characterised as Sons of Light from the earth's foundation will become undefiled Sons of Light in every sphere of existence. Until then, the Sons of Righteousness have the aid of God and the Angel of Truth to assist them (3:24–25),¹⁹⁰ but the *Treatise* is silent regarding any fundamental reconstitution of the Self in the present age.¹⁹¹

When evil is finally eradicated, it is done 'with truth' (באמת, 4:20), sprinkling the righteous with the 'Spirit of Truth' (רוח אמת, 4:21), instructing them 'in knowledge' (בדעת), 'to make them wise' (להשכיל, 4:22). Eschatological salvation, then, accomplishes the same goal that was set forth in the introduction: to provide the Sons of Righteousness with 'insight' (1QS 3:13–15), which, no doubt, has the purpose of enabling them to live in accordance with the divine will (4:24–26).¹⁹²

From the fact that when the opposition between the Spirits is first raised it is posed in ethical terms (*Truth* and *Iniquity*), Alexander notes how the author is primarily concerned with the moral universe of human action and that his lexical choices dress an ethical discussion in specifically intellectual vocabulary.¹⁹³ The cerebral language fits with an emphasis we saw in the sectarian reading of Scripture, namely, that sin results from ignorance or dismissal

187 Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 348.

188 That this description refers to the Sons of Righteousness is clear from 4:13–14. See further Licht, 'Two Spirits', 96–97.

189 Lichtenberger, *Menschenbild*, 140.

190 On divine 'assistance' and human participation, see below on p. 129.

191 Rightly, Sanders, *Paul*, 278–79, though his downplaying of predestination makes him construe the righteous and the wicked as in exactly the same anthropological states. As will be discussed below, elsewhere this process of transformation is anticipated by the study of Torah within the community.

192 Frey, 'Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 295, 300.

193 Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 29.

of the truth, obedience from knowing the truth.¹⁹⁴ One can see how '[i]mplicit here . . . is a whole practical scheme of salvation based on study of Torah and the words of the teacher of Righteousness'.¹⁹⁵ For all its cosmological language, the *Treatise* still construes salvation primarily in cognitive terms.

It would be natural for a community to conceive of eschatological salvation in light of its previous experiences, and the defining experience of salvation for the *Yahad* is the revelation of the proper interpretation of Torah.¹⁹⁶ The *Treatise* explains the moral life on these terms, situating it first within the closely connected concepts of creation and predestination, then under the structure of apocalyptic dualities, and finally in the light of its eschatological telos.¹⁹⁷ Predestination, then, represents the first stage of a three stage soteriological process, followed by entrance into the community and culminating in eschatological purification.¹⁹⁸ It is from within this framework that a distinctly sectarian understanding of agency and obedience must be worked out.

5.3.3 *The Question of Transference in the Hodayat*

At least one passage from the *Hodayot* might lead one to believe that either the sectarians had an inconsistent understanding of transference, or that the reading proposed here is invalid.¹⁹⁹

²⁰I thank You, Lord, because you saved my life from the pit and from Sheol of Abaddon have lifted me up to an everlasting height, so that I can walk on a boundless plain. And I know that there is hope for a person ²¹you formed from the dust for the Eternal Council. The perverse spirit you have cleansed from great transgression so that he can take a place with ²²the host of the holy ones, and enter in communion (or in the *Yahad*) with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven. And for man, you

194 Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 29–30. On the vocabulary used, see Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 345–49.

195 Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will', 30.

196 See Wernberg-Møller, 'Reconsideration', 440, who makes this point with regard to purification rituals. In 4:20–22 the language used to describe eschatological salvation combines concepts from Torah-study with concepts from the purification rituals.

197 Cf. Frey, 'Patterns of Dualistic Thought', 290.

198 See Klein, 'Right Spirit', 183. While Sanders (*Paul*, 311) notes the association between enabling grace and predestination, he overlooks it in his discussion on transference into the sect. This underemphasis on the sect's predestinarian theology leads Sanders to detect only a two-stage process. As a result, he puts more weight on a person's entrance into the sect than is warranted (275, 283–284).

199 See, for instance, VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 114. See also Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 203, who ignores the influence of predestination altogether.

cast an eternal lot with the spirits of ²³knowledge, so that he praises your name together with shouts of joy, and recounts your wonders before all your creatures. But I, a creature of ²⁴clay, what am I? Mixed with water, as whom shall I be considered? What is my strength? For I find myself at the boundary of wickedness ²⁵and share the lot of the scoundrels, for I have taken my stand within the border of wickedness, and with those who are wretched by lot. The soul of the poor lives with great tumults, and the calamities of hardships are with my footsteps. ²⁶When all the traps of the pit open, all the snares of wickedness are spread and the net of the scoundrels are upon the surface of the sea. (1QH^a 11:20–26)

In 11:20 the psalmist praises God for saving his life from the pit. He also claims in line 25 that he once stood ‘*within the border of wickedness and with those who are wretched by lot*’. Does this not indicate that the psalmist has been brought out from the lot of the wretched and into the congregation of the Sons of Heaven? Indeed, it appears so. But this raises two related questions: How was the psalmist saved from ‘the pit’ and in what way was he ever *within* the border of those wretched by lot? Lines 25–26 help us answer the first question when they associate ‘the pit’ with hardships and traps set by ‘the scoundrels’. While the psalmist could be thinking of a time when his life was in physical danger, such danger might also be that of deception (10:31). In any case, when the psalmist confesses that he has taken his stand ‘within the border of wickedness and with those who are wretched by lot’, there is reason to believe that he simply refers to his physical locale during this period of hostility.

Column 10, connected to column 11 in content and theme, supports this reading. As the psalmist recounts the responses to his teaching, he notes how he was a medicine for those who turn from offence, but a ‘trap’, ‘reproach’, ‘mockery’, ‘target of slander’ and ‘laughing stock’ for offenders and traitors (10:8–12). The ‘traps of the pit’ from which he was saved (10:20; cf. 11:20, 26) are the zealous attacks ‘of the interpreters of deception’ (10:31). The result of God’s preservation is that he praises God ‘*from their assembly*’ (מקהלם)—the assembly of false interpreters (10:30). If we read 11:20–26 in light of column 10, it seems clear that what we have is a prayer of thanksgiving, not for being brought out of a state of wickedness and into a state of righteousness, but for God’s preserving and protecting mercy during a time when the psalmist was surrounded by the wicked community.²⁰⁰

200 This correlates with the reading of Wise (‘Concept of a New Covenant’, 110), who finds here an allusion to Mal 1:4. Compare Goff, ‘Reading’, 271–72, who takes these lines to be referring to tensions within the sect. If so, then by the time the lines were composed the author could no longer conceptualise ‘the sect’ as ‘the righteous’.

Of course the psalmist never denies his participation in the actions of the wicked community, and throughout these hymns the psalmist both acknowledges his sins (e.g., 5:21–22; 9:22, 25–27; 17:13; 22:7, 14) and praises God for cleansing those sins (e.g., 4:11, 18–19; 5:23–24; 12:38; 19:11, 30; cf. 1QS 11:15; 4Q370 f11i:3; 4Q511 f20i:1, f36:2). Indeed, since the purity of the community must be upheld, upon entering the community God purges the righteous from previous sins and from an iniquitous spirit (1QH^a 11:21).

Stronger statements appear when the psalmist refers to himself with terms such as ‘flesh’ (בשר, 7:24) and a ‘spirit of flesh’ (רוח בשר, 5:19). Taken on their own, such descriptions are hardly striking since in these contexts they merely denote someone born of a woman. Nor is it striking that he refers to himself as ‘dust’ (עפר, 5:21) and a vessel of clay (יצר החמר, 9:21; 11:23–24). What is striking is that he goes on to link his frailty with being full of sin, impurity, and ruled by ‘a perverse spirit’ (רוח נעוה, 5:21). Likewise, the hymn writer at the end of 1QS says not only that he belongs ‘to wicked humanity’ (לאדם רשעה) and ‘to the assembly of iniquitous flesh’ (לסוד בשר עול), but also that he either belongs to or should belong to ‘the assembly of worms and those who walk in darkness’ (לסוד רמה והולכי חושך, 11:9–10).²⁰¹ It is simply assumed that the righteous will be plagued by sin until the end of the present age; they are ‘in iniquity’ from the womb and ‘in the guilt of unfaithfulness right to old age’ (12:29–30). What is the function of such statements and what do they tell us about sectarian anthropology?

While it might appear that these adjectives communicate a debased anthropology, the incompetence of the moral agent within the created causal nexus, this is not the case. These depictions come from sections with characteristics that H.W. Kuhn has dubbed *Niedrigkeitsdoxologie*.²⁰² *Niedrigkeitsdoxologie* is a specific form of praise in which the addressee utilises a humble discourse with the intention of exalting God’s sovereign character and grace. As such, statements about human frailty and sinfulness rhetorically serve as foil to accentuate the praise of God. Importantly, in passages like 5:19–23, 7:24, and 9:21 the stress is actually not on sinfulness so much as on the incapacity to comprehend God’s truth apart from the divine gift of an understanding S/spirit.²⁰³ As several of these texts show, praising God for creating a disposition to comprehend truth is connected with enthroning God as the only perfecter

201 The verb must be supplied, which makes it unclear whether the psalmist believes he is among these people, or is rhetorically suggesting that he should be.

202 Kuhn, *Enderwartung*, 27.

203 J. Frey, ‘Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition and the Qumran Texts: An Inquiry into the Background of Pauline Usage’, in *The Wisdom Texts from*

of 'the path of the sons of Adam', who makes known 'the strength of his power . . . on the sons of his approval' (12:31–32; cf. 7:25–26; 11:22–23).²⁰⁴ The ability to comprehend truth and the ability to walk in perfection are closely related. Even still, there is no indication that 'the sons of his approval' were ever anything other than sons of his approval. These statements do not describe a state from which a person is rescued so much as communicate that, vis-à-vis their creator, people are dependent, sinful, and *Nichtigkeit*, and as such, always in need of God's salvific gifts.²⁰⁵ Nor are these statements intended to suggest that the sons of his approval are *only* sin, impurity, and ruled by a spirit of depravity.²⁰⁶ Rather, as the conclusion of the section in column 12 states, God 'created the righteous and the wicked' (12:38). It would appear as though the Thanksgiving Hymns maintain the idea that while as part of humanity the righteous participate in humanity's sin, this does not mean that the righteous are to be identified with wicked humanity; rather the Sons of Righteousness are to understand themselves as the paradigmatic psalmist does, as those made 'for the Eternal Council' and whose lot is with 'the Sons of Heaven' (11:22–23), not 'in the Congregation of Vanity' (7:34).²⁰⁷

Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought, ed. C. Hempel, et al., BETL (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 379–80. See also Maier, *Mensch*, 205.

204 Garnet, *Salvation*, 25. Kvalvaag ('The Spirit in Human Beings', 174) argues that since 'spirit' is never the object of God's creating activity, this disposition was given upon entering the community; so also Arthur Everett Sekki, *The Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 127. Yet we know that elsewhere God does 'create' the righteous from the womb along with their יצר (1QH^a 7:16–18), which is closely connected to their spirit. Kuhn (*Enderwartung*, 117–39), followed by Smith (*What Must I Do?*, 235), distinguishes between *two* types of anthropological spirits/dispositions: one given at creation and another upon initiation, citing 12:31 as an example of the latter. Yet 12:38 says that God 'creates' the righteous. With 12:38's similarity to 7:16–18, 12:31 would also seem to be situated in a creational context.

205 See Becker, *Das Heil Gottes*, 139; Sanders, *Paul*, 278.

206 So also Lichtenberger, *Menschenbild*, 130; VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 121–22.

207 VanLandingham (*Judgment & Justification*, 113) asserts that 1QH^a 4:21–25 'provides a statement that logically excludes determinism', because '[p]rayers of this nature . . . make no sense unless humans can choose their own path'. And yet the psalmist confesses that God 'establishes the path' of those whom he chooses; that God 'prevents' the elect from sinning through the gift of divine insight; and that God 'restores his humility'. That the Psalmist then asks God to 'prevent' him from sinning in no way denies divine agency, since even the asking is part and parcel of God's preservation.

5.4 Summary and Conclusions

5.4.1 *God's Gift and Enlightenment*

By looking at sectarian predestinarian theology and apocalyptic worldview, I have argued that in the present age transformation is primarily understood as a cognitive process of becoming more aware of who one is, of what God requires, and of God's control of history.²⁰⁸ Until God eradicates darkness at the end of the age, a fundamental reconstitution of the person does not take place.²⁰⁹ Concomitantly, it does not seem that Sons of Light are ever to think of themselves as having been Sons of Darkness because the most important event in the righteous' existence happens at creation. Thus the concept of transference does not factor into the identity formation of the *Yahad*.

This does not mean that God's gifts were not thought to bring any renewal in the present age. Significantly, many of the qualities listed in association with the Spirit of Iniquity (1QS 4:11) are the very things which God removes in the Psalms (1QH^a 20:33–34; cf. 4Q434 li:4; 4Q436 li:10, lii:1–3) and things which the community removes themselves (1QS 5:5).²¹⁰ Primarily, these dark characteristics are displaced through the cognitive appropriation of freshly revealed truths. The salvific value of this process is fully understood only when we take into account that it was God's wrath that removed the human capacity for 'knowledge' in the first place (CD 10:7b–10a).²¹¹ Enlightenment, then, constitutes the reversal of divine judgement. This is why the refrain 'I thank you, Lord', which is dispersed throughout the *Hodayot*, is often followed by some explanation of the illumination attained through revelation:

I thank you, Lord, because you have enlightened (האירותה) my face for your covenant. (12:5)

I thank [you], [Lord,] because you have taught me your truth, you have made me know your wonderful mysteries. (15:25–27a)

²⁰⁸ Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 72.

²⁰⁹ So Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, 50–51.

²¹⁰ Seely, 'Implanting Pious Qualities', 330.

²¹¹ Beyond this consequence, CD 10:7b–10a says that humans' lives were shortened. The thoroughgoing connection between enlightenment and 'life' must be understood as undoing this judgement (cd 3:12b–16; 1QH^a 15:13–15; 4Q481 81:10;). See further Ben Zion Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Reconstruction, Translation and Commentary*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 125–27.

Blessed are you, Lord... because you have made [me] know [these] th[ings]. (18:14)

I thank you, my God, because you have made me know the foundation of truth, you have revealed [yo]ur [wonder]s to me. (19:15–17)

So also in the *Community Rule*:

Blessed are you, O my God, who opens the heart of your servant to knowledge. (1QS 11:15–16)

Among all the things for which the psalmist praises God, the revelation of truth is pre-eminent. And it is not truth in general or even the giving of Torah at Sinai that is being referenced, but the revelation of mysteries (רזים) and hidden things (נסתרות) to the psalmist and his community through a ‘vision of glory’ (במראת כב[ו]ד), 1Q34bis 3ii:6–7; cf. 1QM 10:9–11) communicated by the holy S/spirit:

I, the Instructor, have known you, my God, through the spirit which you put in me, and I have listened loyally to your wonderful secret through your holy spirit. You have [op]ened within me knowledge of the mystery of your wisdom. (1QH^a 20:11–13)²¹²

The gift of revelation is a demonstration of God’s mercy: ‘Your compassion [is] for all the sons of your approval, for you have taught them the secret of your truth and have instructed them in your wonderful mysteries’ (1QH^a 19:9–10). Similarly, mercy is demonstrated in his raising up men of *insight* (CD 6:2). From the use of the *hiphil* האיר (to enlighten) and *hiphil* participle משכיל (to be made wise), it is clear that this instructive process actually effects real change in the community. They move from a place of ignorance to a place of knowledge, from those who grope for a path to those whose eyes are opened (4Q306 f2 2–6=col 1:10–14).

But this process is not one-sided. Those who have been enlightened are those who love learning (1QH^a 10:14) and who contemplate the revealed things (14:11–12). The maturation of salvation comes through drinking the milk of the

²¹² See also 1QH^a 26:14–15. On the role of רז and סתר in sectarian thought, see Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 53–56. See further Martin G. Abegg, ‘The Covenant of the Qumran Sectarials’, in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C.R. De Roo, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 85–88.

leaders' instruction (15:20–22).²¹³ Likewise, in CD it is only by attentive listening that understanding is gained (2:14–16). So corresponding to what we saw in the *Yahad's* reading of Scripture, while God's gift enlightens the community with the secret things, the enlightening process assumes a degree of initial insight and participation. Put alternatively, the gift is met by a willing reception on the part of moral agents who are sufficiently capable of apprehending it.²¹⁴ Otherwise, the gift might be given capriciously.

5.4.2 *The Divine Gift and Obedience*

It seems evident that in order to obey God one must know his requirements. So 1QS^a 1:4–5 says that people are to be indoctrinated in all the laws, lest they otherwise fall into sin. But as we have seen, making someone wise reverses the judgement brought on by sin and thus has salvific value that allows for obedience. This process is described in 1QH^a 6:8–9, where the psalmist thanks God for putting wisdom in the heart, an act that leads to knowledge and results in the ability to resist wicked deeds. Likewise, 1QH^a 4:21–22 notes how God keeps the human agent from sin by granting insight: 'I have understood that [you smooth] the path of the one whom you choose and by the insight [of your knowledge, you pre]vent him from sinning against you'. Since prior disobedience results from deficient insight (CD 5:15–17), the divine gift is necessary to abstain from sin.²¹⁵

Alongside helping to curb sin, the divine gift positively produces works of righteousness. In CD 2:14–16 the opening of the eyes to see and understand is meant to result in walking 'perfectly on all his [God's] paths'.²¹⁶ In 1QH^a 15:13–15, it is through divine instruction that the psalmist is strengthened to live righteously, a journey that has its conclusion in the reward of eternal peace (cf. 4Q491 11ii:18).²¹⁷ So the priests bless the people with a rewritten version of Numbers 6:24–26: 'And may he illuminate your heart with the discernment

213 Garnet, *Salvation*, 21. On the prominence of teaching as the means of salvation in the Thanksgiving Hymns, see his helpful charts on pp. 31–35.

214 See the quote by Newsom on p. 106 above.

215 See also 4Q504 f1–2ii:16, where the statement 'You freed us from sinning against you' is matched in the next line by 'you make us to understand testimonies'.

216 In 4Q436 God gives 'knowledge to the wise', so that the upright increase in insight (1i:2). This process strengthens them to walk on God's path (1i:4–5). Note also that God has 'given a pure heart' and removed the evil inclination (1i:10).

217 B. Nitzan, 'Prayers for Peace in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Traditional Jewish Liturgy', in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19–23 January, 2000*, ed. E.G. Chazon, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 131.

of life' (שכל חיים, 1QS 2:3). שכל חיים should probably be taken as a genitive of result: 'the discernment that brings life'. This brings us closer to what 1QS 3:24–25 means when it says that God and the Angel of his Truth assist the Sons of Righteousness: God's aid is demonstrated when he, both directly and through intermediate agents, enlightens the community with the wisdom of the mysteries so that they might live righteous lives. The divine gift is thus necessary for obedience, and any power that members possess to fight the cosmic battle in which they are engaged is dependent upon the divine gift rather than being sourced in humans themselves (1QH^a 11:4–5).²¹⁸

5.4.2.1 Divine Agency and Obedience

As we have seen above, the gift-act of God is a prerequisite for the community's informed obedience. Human obedience is thus dependent on divine gifting. God protects the community so that they do not forsake his service (1QH^a 10:25, 35–36) and puts them in secure places so that they walk in paths which he has chosen (12:3). He strengthens those with knocking knees (1QM 14:6). And yet here divine and human agency could be conceived of separately from one another: divine assistance creates the possibility of the human agent's independent acts.

The sectarian writings also speak of God's playing a prominent and direct role in their obedience, however. Thus the psalmist confesses that his life is maintained and guided by God (1QH^a 10:22–23), and through the gift of a holy S/spirit, God enables the community to adhere to truth and love so that they might not desert his covenant (1QH^a 8:15; 15:7–8; 20:11–13).²¹⁹ The perfection of the community's walk is 'in his hands' (1QS 11:2). After confessing that he is made of clay, the psalmist attributes his responsiveness to God (1QH^a 18:3–7). The community can even go so far as to say that God gives vitality to all human action (1QH^a 20:33–35). It would thus appear that human obedience should not be conceived of independently from but in intimate relation with divine agency.

5.4.2.2 Human Agency and Obedience

This is not to suggest that human agency is inconsequential, made obsolete by higher agents. The significance of the human agent is evident in the way these

²¹⁸ See Becker, *Das Heil Gottes*, 124.

²¹⁹ Garnet, *Salvation*, 56; cf. Smith, *What Must I Do?*, 230–37. While I agree with Smith's conclusion that 'a human being cannot obey God unless God first imparts to him a principle of obedience' (237), I am less convinced that רוח קודש always means 'principle of obedience' or that it is clearly given at the time of community initiation.

texts attribute eternal consequences to human actions. In CD 7:4–9 those who live by the laws receive life, while those who reject the laws perish.²²⁰ Abraham is put forward as a model since he chose not to follow the preference of his spirit, but observed the commandments and was deemed a friend of God (CD 3:2–3). On the other hand, an earlier generation of Israel perished because they did not make the same choice (3:7). In the hymn at the end of the *Community Rule* we find a resolution not to give refuge in the heart to Belial (1QS 10:21). So while earlier we saw how God protects the Sons from Belial, here the psalmist is able to refuse Belial. In the same vein, CD 16:5 claims that on the day that a man promises to return to the law of Moses, the Angel of Obstruction will leave him, if he keeps his words (CD 16:4–5). This statement is followed with the example of Abraham who was circumcised on the day that *he knew* (16:6). Through knowledge and community initiation the righteous play their part in staying evil spirits.²²¹ In the cosmic battle between light and darkness, truth and iniquity, humans are not viewed as helpless victims, but as active contributors. 1QS^a uses military language to describe their roles: they are to strengthen their loins and fulfil their assignments in proportion to their intelligence and the perfection of their walk (1:17–18). In short, even while humans are influenced and captive to higher agents, their integrity as active agents is undamaged.

But it is not only that human agency can exist alongside higher agents in complementary fashion; it is often that human agency is affirmed *at the very point* when the divine agent is engaged in human affairs. It is precisely as God wills that the psalmist is able to will (1QH^a 18:5); it is as God cuts off the wicked and causes the righteous to stand (12:18–21) that the psalmist stands against the wicked (12:22; cf. 10:23–25).²²² Most of all, it is as the community is granted knowledge that they are invested with the potential to be effective agents. Thus the psalmist confesses: ‘You have favoured me with the spirit of knowledge [to love tr]uth [and justice,] and to loath all the paths of injustice, *therefore I love you freely* (נדרבה), and with (my) whole heart’ (1QH^a 6:25–26). This claim, ‘to love freely’, is repeated in 7:13 alongside the averment that he has purified his heart and not turned aside from the commandments (7:13–14). The notion of

220 See also CD 12:21–23; 14:1–2.

221 This is not irrespective of God’s agency, however. See further James C. VanderKam, ‘Apocalyptic Tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Religion of Qumran’, in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John Joseph Collins and Robert A. Kugler, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 127–28.

222 Garnet, *Salvation*, 24–25. See also Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 106–07.

נִדְבָה in these lines is associated with free-will offerings and suggests that these acts were performed in a voluntary and unconstrained manner. And yet the psalmist then turns around in 7:15 to say that, thanks to divine illumination, he knows that these things did *not* come by the hand of flesh and that humans *cannot* establish their steps (7:15–16). Within the same breath, the psalmist affirms the free agency of humanity and denies the possibility of a human agent working (in any productive way) apart from the divine agent. And so he can affirm in lines 19–20 both that 1) God has appointed him for the covenant and 2) that he, himself, clings to the truth (וְאִתְּמוּכָה). A stronger statement is made in 19:10: ‘For the sake of your glory, you have purified man from offence, so that he can make himself holy (לְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ). The *hithpael* suggests that the one who has been purified by God is therein established to act on him or herself to accomplish purification.²²³

In light of such cases, it is hard to imagine that the sectarians did not conceive of an intimate relationship existing between agencies, human and divine.²²⁴ There is a coexistence and coinherence of divine and human agencies, wherein the human remains in direct dependence on the divine. This phenomenon can be detected in other sectarian manuscripts as well. The same document that includes the *Treatise* and describes people being appointed for the community also repeatedly speaks of members as those who ‘volunteer’ (נִדְבָה).²²⁵ This is as true of covenant initiation (1QS 5:6, 8, 22) as it is of covenant continuation (1QS 1:7, 11; 5:1, 10). Likewise, the Sons of Aaron are described as those who volunteer (1QS 5:21) and as those whom God raises up (CD 6:2). Such propositions can be explained only if the covenanters conceived of divine and human agency existing in some sort of non-contrastive relationship. Our

223 This might also suggest that purification has transformative value for the *Yahad*, empowering obedience. If so, it seems to me that this line must be understood in light of the previous one: ‘you have taught them the basis of your truth, and have instructed them in your wonderful mysteries’. Here purification is still closely connected with learning mysteries. Furthermore, it is possible that the issue here is purification at the eschaton, since he goes on to describe this person being ‘united wi[th] the sons of your truth in the lot with your holy ones, to raise the worms of the dead from the dust, to an ever[lasting] community and from a depraved spirit, to [your] knowledge, so that he can take his place in your presence with the perpetual host and the spirits [...], to renew him with everything that will exist, and with those who know in a community of jubilation’ (1QH^a 19:11–14).

224 Contra Sanders, *Paul*, 265–66n67.

225 On the cultic background of נִדְבָה in 1QS, see Devorah Dimant, ‘The Volunteers in the Rule of the Community: A Biblical Notion in Sectarian Garb’, *RevQ* 23 (2007), 233–45.

conclusion must be that the divine operations do not deny human freedom, but establish and enhance it.²²⁶

In sum, studying larger structures within sectarian theology has supplemented our initial investigation based on the *Yahad's* reading of Scripture. From the community's scriptural interpretation, I argued that on the whole the sectarians prefer an Israel-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30, the *Hodayot* being the exception. Nevertheless, this liturgical text still witnesses to an aspect of the community's understanding of gift and agency. Yet even where God's agency is highlighted, it is only those predisposed to seek out the knowledge of the hidden things who will eventually enter the community and have their hearts circumcised through the exegetical process. Becoming knowledgeable is in many ways the 'gracious divine response' to a whole-hearted longing for truth.²²⁷

If members were forced to explain how it is that out of the rest of apostate Israel they ended up in the community, illumined under the Teacher's instruction, and on route to eschatological purification, the answer must be that they eagerly searched for the hidden things while others did not (CD 3:12–16; 1QS 5:11–12). But this is hardly the whole of the matter. By looking at predestination we have seen how, with respect to the righteous, God created them with a good inclination. Thus any good attributable to the righteous, especially their desire for the hidden things, must ultimately be attributed to God. Their communal identity was thus formed by pushing back the most fundamental event in every member's individual story to creation itself.²²⁸ Fashioned with an upright disposition, the righteous are initially made manifest by joining the community and searching out the hidden things. Devorah Dimant summaries well how part of the goal of this process is to be enlightened as to who one truly is:

Man himself is incapable of deciphering that mystery, which embraces both this personal biography and history at large. His lot is to search all his life, by his own action, and by divine illuminating grace, in order to discover to which part he belongs, Light or Darkness. . . . The freedom given to man is not to choose where to go but to discover where he is. This can be done only with the aid of divinely-inspired knowledge of the true

226 Studies that conceive of divine and human agencies in contrast deny either predestination (e.g., M. Treves, 'The Two Spirits of the Rule of the Community', *RevQ* 3 [1961], 449–52; Sanders, *Paul*, 262–68), or human agency (e.g., Maier, *Mensch*, 204, 208). On some methodological problems here, see Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, 81.

227 Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 71.

228 See Newsom, *Self as Symbolic Space*, 133–34.

meaning of the world, of man and of history. This is why the starting point of man is ignorance, while the final election is marked by a gift of knowledge.²²⁹

Importantly, the fact that the righteous were created as righteous and in distinction from the wicked means that terms like 'conversion', 'salvation', and even 'grace' which hold certain connotations in the Christian tradition turn out to be less than helpful here. Unless we take care to understand these and like terms in light of the particular and concrete ways in which these concepts take shape and function in various communities, 'common' terms may easily mislead comparisons of the sectarians with other Jews.²³⁰

Beyond this important insight, this larger study has also pointed out how the community's apocalyptic worldview does not allow for a single-dimensional, flat, conception of agency where humans are able to make choices irrespective of outside influences. Persons are always under the sway of and bound up with higher, ancillary agents. While this does not diminish their ability to talk about human agency, it does qualify the sectarian discourse: there are no independently 'free' agents save God himself. The essence of true freedom is to be fully and finally liberated from the oppression of dark forces at the eschaton. Such a conception of freedom does not dislocate humans from divine influence, for it is precisely as that influence is felt most acutely that human potential is realised. Living under this influence constitutes all the glory of Adam and grants one the ability to rule rightly.

In conclusion, we might then say that the community's particular understanding of God's 'salvific' gifts locates divine grace primarily in creation, but also in the raising up of a teacher to reveal hidden things, in preserving and protecting the righteous from evil, in the moral enablement and empowerment of the righteous by those truths, and in eschatological transformation. Especially with respect to the present age, God's gifts predominantly take the form of the revelation of truth which is cognitively appropriated, and in every case save creation these gifts come to those who are righteous and exercise a degree of moral competence within the created order.

229 Dimant, 'Sectarian Literature', 538.

230 And this is all the more true when great similarities exist between the community associated with Qumran and other Jews. Again, while such terms might appear to be common property in ancient Judaism, as Newsom astutely points out, they are better seen 'as common space within which many different intentions and socially charged meanings meet together' (*Self as Symbolic Space*, 11).

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

6.1 Baruch

In its literary setting, Baruch was composed by Jeremiah's scribe during the Babylonian captivity (1:1–2). Exile provides the metaphorical backdrop for presenting a confession of the sins that warranted God's wrath (1:13).¹ To account for these atrocities and to stir the people's hope, Baruch draws inspiration from the writings of Moses.² More specifically, the logic of 1:15–3:8 follows the final chapters of Deuteronomy.³ If Watson is correct in believing that the narrative of Deuteronomy 30:1–10 serves as Baruch's hermeneutical focal point,⁴ then we need to explore just how that text has been read.

6.1.1 *Deuteronomy 30 and the Narrative of Israel*

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses pronounces a blessing upon Israel and is quick to stress how it comes on certain terms: 'May the Lord send the blessing upon you . . . if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God and walk in his ways'

1 So S.L. Michael, 'Barouch', in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 925, from which all translations are taken and slightly revised only where necessary. Whether exile is metaphorical or actual in our author's perspective matters little for our purposes. On the historical function of the literary perspective employed, see Odil Hannes Steck, *Das Buch Baruch, der Brief des Jeremia, Zusätze zu Ester und Daniel*, ATD (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 25. There are substantial arguments for dating the original compilation of the book during the Maccabean period; however, its similarity with Daniel-Theodotion suggests at least a 1st century BCE dating. Compare Shannon Burkes, 'Wisdom and Law: Choosing Life in Ben Sira and Baruch', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 30 (1999), 269n42 with the recent proposal by Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 457–58.

2 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 461.

3 G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone, Compendia rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum Section 2, Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 140; James M. Scott, 'For as Many as are of Works of the Law are Under a Curse', in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 203.

4 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 470.

(ἐὰν εἰσακούσῃς τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου καὶ πορευθῆς ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ, 28:8–9). Baruch surveys Israel's history and concludes that the people have 'not listened to the voice of the Lord, our God, to walk by the decrees' (οὐκ ἠκούσαμεν τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου θεοῦ ἡμῶν πορεύεσθαι τοῖς προστάγμασιν, 1:18). By reshaping Moses' conditional appeal into a negative description, Baruch establishes Israel's guilt and roots it in her scriptural heritage.⁵ Accentuating Israel's culpability is that her rebellion has been on display since the exodus: 'From the day when the Lord brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt even until this day . . . [we did] not listen to his voice' (ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἐξήγαγεν κύριος τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἤμεθα . . . τὸ μὴ ἀκούειν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ, 1:19). While it is impossible for Baruch to establish his case empirically, Scripture's unique vantage point authorises his claim: 'From the day that their fathers came out of the land of Egypt even until this day . . . they did not listen to me' (ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἐξήλθοσαν οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης . . . οὐκ ἠκουσάν μου, Jer 7:25–26).⁶ But the relationship between history and text works both ways. For instance, the reason why 'the curse' (ἡ ἀρά) 'clung' (ἐκολλήθη) to Israel (Bar 1:20) is precisely because Moses declared that if a person serves the nation's gods, all 'the curses' (αἱ ἀραι) would 'cling' (κολληθήσονται) to that person (Deut 29:19).⁷ Since 'each went off in the intent of his evil heart to work for other gods' (Bar 1:22),⁸ the full extent of the curse has been unleashed—even down to parents eating their own children (2:3–5; cf. Deut 28:53–57; Jer 19:9). History thus serves to substantiate the scriptural witness, fully establishing Moses' authority.⁹

In order to offer his readers hope, Baruch continues to rely on Moses' authority as he petitions God for deliverance (2:11–35). While much of his prayer utilises Daniel 9,¹⁰ its conclusion reminds God of promises that came 'by the hand of . . . Moses' (v. 28):

5 It is also possible that Bar 1:18 is echoing LXX Jer 39:23 (Steck, *Das Buch Baruch*, 40). Though missing the phrase κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου and inverting verb-object order, Bar 1:18 contains a direct verbal correspondence to προστάγμασιν in LXX Jer 39:23. Additionally, Bar 1:16 echoes LXX Jer 39:32.

6 So Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 92. Cf. Deut 9:7. See also Deut 29:3–4 which has the following correspondences with Bar 1:18–19: διδωμι; κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν; ἀκούω; ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης; ἄγω.

7 Werline (*Penitential Prayer*, 94) suggests Deut 28:21, 60 as the referent; yet LXX 29:19 offers a verbal parallel with both subject and verb.

8 Cf. Jer 7:24, 16:12, 18:12; Gen 6:5.

9 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 461.

10 On the use of Dan 9, see Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten', 145–145. On Daniel-Theodotion specifically, see Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 457n74, 459–460.

³⁰For I knew that they would not obey me, because the people are stiff-necked. And they will return to their heart in the land of their exile, ³¹and they will know that I am the Lord their God. And I will give them a heart and hearing ears, ³²and they will praise me in the land of their exile, and they will remember my name, ³³and they will turn away from their hard back and from their wicked deeds, because they will remember the way of their fathers who sinned before the Lord. ³⁴And I will return them to the land, which I swore to their fathers, to Abram and to Isaac and to Jacob, and they will rule over it, and I will multiply them, and they will not diminish. ³⁵I will establish with them an everlasting covenant, that I be God to them and they be a people to me, and I will not disturb again my people Israel from the land that I have given them. (Bar 2:30–35)

With a turn back to the words of Moses our author directs his readers to the pages of Deuteronomy. By alluding to Deuteronomy 9:13 where God declares that he knows how the ‘people are stiff-necked’ (λαὸς σκληροτράχηλός ἐστιν), Baruch further grounds Israel’s incompetence in the scriptural witness: Israel could do nothing other than disobey precisely ‘because the people are stiff-necked’ (ὅτι λαὸς σκληροτράχηλός ἐστιν, Bar 2:30). The beginning of verse 29 most likely recalls Deuteronomy 28:62,¹¹ while ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν οὐ διασπερῶ αὐτούς ἐκεῖ at the end of the verse resembles Deuteronomy 30:3. Interestingly, however, stronger verbal parallels to this phrase are found in Ezekiel, the most prominent being 12:15:¹²

καὶ γνώσονται διότι ἐγὼ κύριος ἐν τῷ διασκορπίσαι με αὐτούς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
καὶ διασπερῶ αὐτούς

The connection between the end of Baruch’s prayer and Ezekiel becomes more pronounced if we consider Baruch 2:31:

καὶ γνώσονται ὅτι ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν

The highlighted portion is a near exact verbal parallel to LXX Ezekiel 12:15.¹³ Of course the phrase καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν echoes the previous chapter of

11 Both portray how the nation will go from numerical notoriety to insignificance.

12 Cf. Ezek 20:23; 22:15; 29:12; 30:23; 36:19.

13 D.E. Gowen, ‘Wisdom’, in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 223; Werline (*Penitential Prayer*, 98); and Steck (*Das Buch Baruch*, 43) all locate Jer 24:7 as the referent. While conceptually these texts are very similar, Bar 2:31 contains verbal parallels that nearly replicate LXX Ezekiel.

Ezekiel where YHWH promises that while his people are still in exile he will ‘give them another heart’ (καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν ἑτέραν, 11:19; cf. 36:26, Jer 24:7).¹⁴ One begins to wonder just how or even if Moses is still speaking. Yet as Watson notes, all the main themes of Deuteronomy 30:1–10 are present and it is best to understand that passage as the primary influence, even though Baruch draws on other material.¹⁵

6.1.1.1 Ezekiel’s Influence

Baruch places a description of the people returning to their heart in exile immediately before the gift of a new heart: καὶ ἐπιστρέψουσιν ἐπὶ καρδίαν αὐτῶν ἐν γῆ ἀποικισμοῦ αὐτῶν (Bar 2:30c). While LXX Deuteronomy 30:1 only speaks of ‘taking (δέχομαι) to heart’, the MT reads: ‘you will turn to your heart in all the nations’ (והשבת אל־לבבך בכל־הגוים). Baruch echoes the MT at this point, confirming that the restoration is initially set forth according to Deuteronomy 30. Why then does Baruch use language from Ezekiel to describe the divine gift?

In Ezekiel a new heart is given because the old one is no longer responsive; it is stone (11:19; cf. 36:26). On one reading, the circumcision (MT)/purification (LXX) of the heart in Deuteronomy 30:6 has the effect of reconstituting Israel as a responsive agent, who up until that point has been ‘given’ (δίδωμι) neither a heart to know, eyes to see, nor ‘ears to hear’ (ὠτα ἀκούειν, Deut 29:3; cf. Jer 5:21). It is no coincidence that Baruch foresees ‘ears that hear’ (ὠτα ἀκούοντα) accompanying God’s gift of a heart (2:31). Utilising language from Ezekiel in combination with the motif of ‘hearing ears’ helps Baruch communicate exactly how God’s salvific act in Deuteronomy 30:6 solves the deficiency posed in Deuteronomy 29:3.¹⁶ Thus while Moses provides the form of the restoration narrative, Ezekiel helps to interpret its content.

6.1.1.2 Jeremiah’s Influence

Ezekiel is not Baruch’s only counsellor. Jeremiah also assists him in discerning the meaning of Deuteronomy 30. Before mentioning heart-circumcision, Deuteronomy describes how YHWH will gather people, return them to the land, and multiply them (Deut 30:3–5). Our author, however, places these

14 Cf. Martyn, ‘Epilogue’, 178n15; Odil Hannes Steck, *Das apokryphe Baruchbuch: Studien zu Rezeption und Konzentration ‘kanonischer’ Überlieferung*, FRLANT 160 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 109.

15 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 461. See also Steck, *Das Buch Baruch*, 43.

16 If this work was intended for Greek-speaking audiences, then heart-circumcision might have been an unfamiliar metaphor and Ezekiel’s language avoids this.

things after the promise of reconstitution and does so employing language from Jeremiah 36–37.¹⁷ He also believes that God's deliverance establishes an 'eternal covenant' (διαθήκην αἰώνιον). While an eternal covenant is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁸ the reference here is to LXX Jeremiah 39:40, where it is linked with the promise that God 'will give fear of him into the heart' (τὸν φόβον μου δώσω εἰς τὴν καρδίαν) of the people so they might not turn away. We can be sure that Baruch echoes LXX Jeremiah 39:40, as this verse reverberates through a prayer in the following chapter:¹⁹

6For you are the Lord, our God, and we will praise you, O Lord. 7For because of this you have given your fear in our heart (ἔδωκας τὸν φόβον σου ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἡμῶν) in order that we call upon your name, and we will praise you in our exile, for we have put away from our heart all the injustice of our fathers who sinned before you. (Bar 3:6–7)

Baruch's reference to fear being placed in the heart communicates that Jeremiah's promised new and eternal covenant is now realised. Importantly, for both Jeremiah and Baruch the divine gift stimulates human action. The logical relationship between divine and human agency is explicated through two distinct grammatical constructions. First, as in Jeremiah, an infinitive of purpose (ἐπικαλεῖσθαι) demonstrates how a divine gift was given in order that they might call upon and offer praise to God. Following this clause is another statement of human action introduced by ὅτι. In the first of these clauses divine gifting makes human action possible; in the second, human action offers the evidence whereby the reception of the gift might be inferred (Baruch's own prayer being exemplary).²⁰ Both clauses relate the two agencies in a way that makes human action dependent on the divine gift.²¹

17 Compare Bar 2:34 (καὶ ἀποστρέψω αὐτούς εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ᾤμοσα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν . . . καὶ κυριεύσουσιν αὐτῆς) with Jer 37:3 (καὶ ἀποστρέψω αὐτούς εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἔδωκα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν καὶ κυριεύσουσιν αὐτῆς). Also compare Bar 2:34 (καὶ πληθυνῶ αὐτούς καὶ οὐ μὴ σμικρυνθῶσιν) with Jer 36:6 (καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ μὴ σμικρυνθῆτε).

18 Gen 9:16, 17:7, 13, 19; Ex 31:16; Lev 24:8; 2Sam 23:5; 1 Chr 16:17; Ps 105:10; Is 24:5; Is 55:3; Is 61:8; Jer 32:40; Ezek 16:60, 37:26.

19 This is the only place in the LXX which combines δίδωμι, φόβος, and καρδία.

20 Steck, *Das Buch Baruch*, 44.

21 Contra Werline (*Penitential Prayer*, 105), who asserts that v. 5 'requests that God free the present generation from the sins of the past because the present generation is repentant'. V5 asks not that God free them on the basis of repentance, but for his namesake.

6.1.1.3 Conclusion

By reading Deuteronomy 30:1–10 through the bifocals of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, Baruch has assured us that God's act of reconstitution happens 'in exile' and prior to any calling, praise, or reform on the people's part.²² Against this, it could be argued that since the people are said 'to turn to their heart' prior to the divine gift, human action is still foundational and initiates the restoration. Three factors dispute this reading, however.

First, as R.A. Werline has shown, the idiomatic Hebrew expression behind this phrase (והשבת אל-לִבְבְךָ) denotes mental recognition or reflection; in this context, it describes Israel's consideration of her situation and guilt and not her 'return to law'.²³ Certainly a renewed commitment to Torah was to arise from this reflection, and thus one would expect such a description to follow. Importantly, however, this is precisely where Baruch proclaims the divine gift, suggesting its priority over law-observance.

Second, a similar expression can be found in Isaiah 44:19, where the prophet protests how 'no one turns to his heart' (וְלֹא-יָשִׁיב אֶל-לִבּוֹ). It is significant that prior to this phrase we read how '[God] besmeared their eyes so they could not see and their hearts so they could not understand'. Baruch paints Israel in a similar condition. It would seem reasonable to assume that in Baruch, too, receptive eyes and hearts are necessary to 'turn to the heart'. In fact, verses 32–33 present statements of reflection (μυμνήσασθαι) and turning (ἀποστρέφω) *after* the gift-event. In light of this, I suggest that we take verses 31b–36 as a detailed exposition of verses 30–31a, the latter functioning as a summary statement for the restoration.

Finally, it is important that Baruch does not make use of any conditional causes. Our author does not pen εἰ, ἐάν, or even ὅταν, but simply uses a string of καί + future indicative verbs. The placement of a statement about God's intimate knowledge of Israel's unresponsive condition—λαὸς σκληροτράχηλός ἐστιν (2:30)—immediately before Israel's turning even sharpens the point that her turning is a result of divine compassion. In fact, the beginning of the section attributes the whole sequence to God's ἐπιείκεια and οἰκτιρμός (2:27; cf. Deut 30:3). What we have, therefore, is an interpretation of the restoration that is divinely initiated. To label this new situation an 'eternal covenant' implies its abiding nature: God acts in such a way so as to secure sustainability on the part of human agents.²⁴ And in language reminiscent of Ezekiel 36, salvation is put

22 So Gowan, 'Wisdom', 223; Cf. Steck, *Das Buch Baruch*, 43. Contra Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 99.

23 Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 16.

24 Rightly, Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 203.

forward as being accomplished emphatically for the sake of divine glory (2:14, 17; 3:5) over against human achievement (2:19).²⁵

6.1.2 Deuteronomy 30 and Baruch's Wisdom Hymn (3:9–4:4)

Abruptly concluding the former section is a call for Israel to 'hear the commandments of life'. This call introduces a sapiential poem in the form of a hymn (3:9–4:4).²⁶ Using an ancient metaphor for curse and exile, Israel is described as 'among those in Hades' (3:11).²⁷ Her destitution is the result of abandoning 'the spring of wisdom' (3:12). As verse 13 emphatically states, living in accordance with 'wisdom' or 'insight' is a condition for life. Israel is admonished 'to learn where there is insight' because to know that is simultaneously (ἄμα) to locate life (3:14). Wisdom and life are closely related, as possessing the former is a sufficient condition for possessing the latter.

Much of this applies to Torah since it is 'the source of wisdom', 'the way of knowledge', or 'the way of God'. As with chapters 1–2, the curse is the result of Israel's forsaking Torah. Just as those who have forsaken (ἐγκαταλείπω) the spring of wisdom end up in Hades (3:12), so 'those who forsake' (οἱ...καταλείποντες) Torah will die (4:1). But those who hold on to Torah are headed 'toward life' (εἰς ζωὴν, 4:1). Accordingly, Torah is 'the spring of wisdom' spoken about in 3:12 and heeding it is the condition for life.²⁸

This helps to interpret the genitive ἐντολὰς ζωῆς in 3:9: The commandments are commandments which *lead to life*; that is, they have the purpose and expected result of life.²⁹ The goal of 'hearing' the commandment of life is 'to learn insight' (γινῶναι φρόνησιν, 3:9).³⁰ Assumed is the association between 'insight' and 'life' noted above, both of which have Torah as their source. Whereas in the Shema to 'hear' means to 'obey' or to 'do', here it has the connotation of 'find' and 'learn'.³¹ Baruch thus presents us with a chain of associated concepts:

25 On this motif, see Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 103–04, though he seems unaware of Ezekiel's influence.

26 David G. Burke, *The Poetry of Baruch: A Reconstruction and Analysis of the Original Hebrew Text of Baruch 3:9–5:9*, scs (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 4–5.

27 Cf. Deut 30:19 and Ezek 37, both of which equate the curse with death.

28 Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 98–99.

29 Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom*, 99.

30 Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament*, BZAW (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 84.

31 Cf. ἄκουε Ἰσραὴλ in the *Shema* (LXX Deut 6:4).

Knowing Torah > *leads to* insight which = Life.
 Forsaking Torah > *cuts off the means to* insight and therefore > *leads to* death.³²

Note that presupposed in these correlations is the premise that Torah is available to be known.

6.1.2.1 Inaccessibility of Torah

Right after admonishing his readers to seek Torah, Baruch presents the endeavour as futile. With the question, ‘Who has found her place?’ our author ‘raises the frightening possibility that the one thing that gives life is also not accessible to humans’.³³ The most powerful people in society demonstrate that everyone perishes without wisdom (vv. 16–28). And in the search for wisdom, human striving is futile:

²⁹Who has gone up into the sky and taken
 her and brought her down from the clouds?
³⁰Who has crossed over the sea and found
 her and will bring her as choice gold?³⁴
³¹There is no one who is familiar with her way,
 nor one who thinks much about her path. (3:29–31)

6.1.2.2 Rewriting Deuteronomy 30:11–14

Torah’s Gift Character: The questions in 3:29–31 take us back once again to Deuteronomy 30,³⁵ which along with the theme of exile links this section with the previous one. After presenting the narrative of restoration, Moses insists:

¹¹this commandment that I command you today is not excessive nor is it far from you. ¹²It is not in the sky, saying, ‘Who will go up to the sky and get it for us? And when we hear it, we shall do it’. ¹³Neither is it beyond the sea, saying, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and get it for us and make us hear it and do it?’ ¹⁴The word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart and in your hands, to do it. (LXX Deut 30:11–14)

³² On the relationship between wisdom and life, compare Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom*, 99.

³³ Burkes, ‘Wisdom and Law’, 272–73.

³⁴ Or possibly ‘acquire her for’ choice gold. The textual issue here is quite complex. See Burke, *Poetry of Baruch*, 102–103 esp., n105; cf. Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 92–93.

³⁵ For an examination of Baruch’s replication of LXX Deut 30:12–13, see Waters, *The End*, 73. On the verbal parallels specifically, see Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 90–91.

The rhetorical questions in verses 12–13 stress the *accessibility* of Torah, possession of which leaves Israel without an excuse. There is no need to search in some distant place since the word is near. Baruch, it would seem, utilises these questions to make the very opposite point about wisdom's source, the Torah; namely, that human power is unable to procure it.³⁶ Torah's inaccessibility is a qualified inaccessibility, however:

³²But he who knows all things is familiar with her; he discovered her by his intelligence . . . ³⁶This is our God; no other will be reckoned with him. ³⁷He discovered the whole way of knowledge and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel who was loved by him. (3:32, 36–37)

As these verses stress, what is unattainable by human resources can be acquired as a gift. God has furnished Israel with that which human power could never obtain on its own. Baruch, therefore, does not deny Israel the fountain of wisdom, but only insists that her possession of it is the result of a divine gift and not human achievement.³⁷ The entire section begins with a juxtaposition between the powerful whom God did not choose and gift (οὐ τούτους ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲ . . . ἔδωκεν, 3:27), and Israel whom God has chosen to gift. Accordingly, Israel's uniqueness vis-à-vis the nations is a result of electing love.³⁸ Once again in his reading of Deuteronomy 30, Baruch prioritises divine agency and gift over against human agency and achievement.

To Hear and to Do? Another important adaptation in Baruch's presentation is that he edits out the repeated phrase 'to hear and to do'. The first appearance of this phrase is taken up by the notion of bringing wisdom down from the clouds; the second appearance is replaced with the idea of 'finding' her and 'bringing' her as choice gold. A passage originally dealing with Torah-obedience has been

³⁶ So Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 91.

³⁷ Walter Harrelson, 'Wisdom Hidden and Revealed According to Baruch (Baruch 3.9–4.4)', in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Joseph Blenkinsopp and Eugene Charles Ulrich, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 164.

³⁸ Bekken, *The Word is Near You: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul's Letter to the Romans in a Jewish Context* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 148, 170–171, and to a lesser extent Garlington (*Obedience of Faith*, 207–08) focus here on Jewish exclusivity. While this might be an implication of election, the more fundamental question here concerns agency. Garlington's (210) conclusion that Baruch does not put forward a 'doctrine of "legalistic" acquisition of merits', but 'the proud consciousness of the Jews of their superiority to the Gentiles' suggests a dichotomy that distracts us from agency-questions so apparent in the text.

coloured with the theme of seeking wisdom.³⁹ Consequently, Deuteronomy's emphasis on human law-keeping becomes an emphasis on Torah-possession.

It is difficult to determine the reason for this shift in focus. It might simply be assumed that the gift of Torah sufficiently entails its accomplishment. In fact, verses 32–35 paint an analogy between God's creative power in furnishing the universe and God's giving of Torah-wisdom: God equipped the earth for all time; when he 'sends the light', 'it goes'; he 'summoned light' and 'it obeyed' (ὕπῆχουσεν). In other words, creation demonstrates how God's sending incites a response. It would seem natural to assume the same about the gift of Torah, making it unnecessary to mention 'doing' explicitly.

More likely is that referring to Torah as wisdom necessitated an adjustment in descriptions about responsiveness. It is not as if responsiveness is excluded or automatic in this section. The people are to seize wisdom, to take hold of her, and 'pass through' to stand in the presence of her light, all probably describing the process and results of learning Torah. Israel is obliged to cherish wisdom as her most prized possession (4:1–4).

Nickelsburg is probably correct to detect in 4:4 an echo of LXX Deuteronomy 33:29, as this is the only other place in the LXX which contains the combination of μακάριος and Ἰσραήλ.⁴⁰ Interestingly, in Deuteronomy Israel is happy because she is 'a people who are saved by the Lord'. In Baruch, happiness derives from knowing what pleases the Lord. It appears that Baruch has glossed salvation as Torah-possession. This makes better sense of Harrelson's suggestion that the purpose of the poem was 'to underscore . . . that the Torah offers to an embattled community all the guidance for life that the community needs'.⁴¹ Yet if this is true, then Torah-possession needs to be accompanied by Torah-fulfilment. Happiness comes not just because what is pleasing to God is known (4:4), but because following what is known will bring Israel out of her situation. The section calls Israel to obedience.⁴² Consequently, Baruch's gloss focuses salvation in the giving of Torah. Those who appropriate it are μακάριος.

39 Cf. Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 93.

40 G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Torah and the Deuteronomical Scheme in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: Variations on a Theme and Some Noteworthy Examples of its Absence', in *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament: Festschrift für Christoph Burchard zum 75 Geburtstag*, ed. Dieter Sänger, et al., *Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 229.

41 Harrelson, 'Wisdom Hidden and Revealed', 159; see also Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 210.

42 Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 171.

6.1.3 *Zion Poem*

More briefly we turn to see how these themes play out in the final section of Baruch. The book closes with a poem of lament and comfort modelled on sections of Isaiah (4:5–5:9). Its final word is a resolution that the people will be shown mercy (5:9). Initially, such confidence is based on an emphasis that redemption is YHWH's work:⁴³ 'But I [i.e., Jerusalem], how am I able to help you? For (γάρ) he who brought these bad things upon you will deliver (ἐξελείπει) you' (4:17–18). The reason anthropomorphised Jerusalem cannot help is that salvation belongs to the Lord. Hope and joy come 'on the basis of' (ἐπί) God's promised rescue (4:22). Israel is to take courage; to cry out; to seek God because 'just as your intention became to go astray from God, multiply by ten when you return to seek him. For the one who brought these bad things upon you will bring you everlasting merriment with your salvation' (4:21, 28–29). In such statements, it would be wrong to understand salvation as a response to Israel's repentance; rather, imperatives to seek God are rooted and grounded in the confidence that God will bring salvation. Salvation motivates obedience without resulting from it. And yet even though the basis for comfort is divine deliverance, such deliverance is not meant to leave Israel passive.⁴⁴ God gathers Israel by his 'word', brings mountains low and fills valleys, but does so 'that Israel may walk' (ἵνα βαδίσῃ, 5:5–7). Founded upon the firm hope that God will save, this passage conveys a certainty throughout that Israel will obey, her obedience established on the divine promise.⁴⁵

6.1.4 *Summary and Conclusion*

This investigation confirms Watson's identification of the 'deuteronomic scheme' in Baruch. In chapters 1:1–3:9 we might even see how Deuteronomy 30:1–10 provides a 'hermeneutical key'.⁴⁶ For this reason, it is important to consider which reading of the 'deuteronomic scheme' Baruch elaborates so clearly.⁴⁷ Watson begins to uncover Baruch's particular reading when he observes how exile, transformation, and return appear as distinctly marked phases and also how God's heart-cleansing work 'ensures continued obedience and therefore

43 Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 204.

44 Cf. Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 204–05.

45 From the section's focus on the past, Watson (*Hermeneutics of Faith*, 470) deduces an 'unspoken anxiety about the hoped-for-future'. This conclusion is not necessary, however, and it seems better to concentrate on the spoken rather than the unspoken.

46 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 470.

47 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 455.

life'.⁴⁸ Yet Watson still proposes an unrelenting antithesis between Paul and Baruch with respect to conditionality:

The deuteronomic ideology that shapes Baruch's confession has no room for an unconditional promise; for, in both the old and the new histories [i.e., before and after restoration], possession of the land promised to the fathers is dependent on faithful observance of the law. In one case, the turning-point between the old and new is a matter of appropriate *human* action, beginning with confession and determined by the law. In the other case, the turning-point is a matter of definitive, unsurpassable *divine* saving action, which reorients human action toward itself and so represents a breach with the law.⁴⁹

Leaving aside for a moment the relationship between Paul's gospel, conditionality, and law-observance, it is worth asking whether Baruch's 'turning point' consists in an 'appropriate human action'.⁵⁰ Since in Baruch's reading of Deuteronomy 30 the divine gift of a new heart stands prior to and supportive of human action, it does not seem entirely accurate to say that neither Baruch nor Deuteronomy leaves room for an unconditional promise.⁵¹ While the acquirement of land could be construed as conditional, God's pledge to reorient the will is not. Watson goes on to soften his statement, noting how the

antithesis between human and divine action is by no means absolute. The return to the laws is a human action inspired by God (Bar.2.31–33; 3.7), and the divine action in Christ intends the human action of faith that corresponds to it and acknowledges it. Yet, although the return to the law is achieved only with divine assistance, the law's basic premise, that the divine blessing is conditional on human obedience, remains intact. . . . In Deuteronomy 30, Moses announces that the problem posed by the old history can be solved by the offer of a second chance to secure

48 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 462, 455.

49 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 464, emphasis his.

50 See also Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 105. The critique which follows applies to Werline *mutatis mutandis*.

51 Watson (*Hermeneutics of Faith*, 462) might respond that 'Baruch's confession . . . enacts the transformation of which it speaks', and thus human agency initiates transformation. Nevertheless, (1) he fails to give adequate reasons for why this is; (2) if 'confession' is defined as 'calling upon the name' or 'recalling the way of their fathers' then this is a consequence of God's gifting (3:7; 2:32–33); and at any rate, (3) Watson also calls confession 'the fulfilment' of God's promise (462).

life under what is still essentially the old regime. Baruch follows him in this.⁵²

But if God's saving action in some way ensures law-observance, as Watson states, then this would seem to require a reconceptualisation of law-observance's conditionality. True, law-shaped obedience is still a necessary, instrumental condition for continued blessing. But this condition's fulfilment is dependent on and guaranteed by a divine gift-act.⁵³ In 2:30b–35, Moses offers a new way of existing as much as a 'second chance'. The condition of obedience has been transformed by and encompassed within the promised deliverance.

In 3:9–4:4, Baruch maintains his emphasis on divine agency, but the focus shifts from the divine gift of a new heart to the divine gift of Torah. Torah is given as something to be obeyed, and obedience has life-securing value. In this section, there is no immediate interplay between divine and human agency. Rather than reconstituting the human agent, the divine gift of Torah simply provides the opportunity for Israel to gain insight and life. The final section implores Israel to take comfort, call upon God, rejoice and seek after him in the light of the coming salvation (4:36).

If allowed to correlate the sections, I would propose we understand Baruch as follows: Dead in exile, incompetent Israel will be reconstituted by God as a competent moral agent. The gift of a new heart along with the gift of Torah allows Israel to respond to God and obey unto life.

While Baruch seems to indicate that the divine gift not only enables but *establishes* human reciprocity, there is no discussion about whether or not divine agency and recreated human agency coinhere or coincide. Divine agency appears to cease once the recreated heart has been established. As the text stands, we might say that although Israel's competency is brought into existence by the divine gift, a gift that even secures her responsiveness, her

52 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 464–65.

53 This is what I find so puzzling about Watson's belaboured point in *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 470: 'If the experience of violence at the hands of a foreign conqueror is interpreted as divine retribution for transgression, what guarantee can there be that the cycle of law, transgression and judgment will not be repeated? And how can there be any real confidence in the Isaianic vision of Jerusalem's glory when it remains subject to the condition: *if you keep my commandments*? Again: '[H]ow can Jerusalem be so confident that, this time at least, the return to the law will be sufficient? If the Isaianic vision is subjected to a deuteronomic condition, it threatens to become a groundless fantasy'. All these questions revolve around the question: How can Baruch really give any assurance concerning life? I would suggest that the answer lies in a divine saving act which establishes obedient agents. Martyn, 'Epilogue', 178n15, 179n18, appears to agree.

newly created efficacy does not coincide with divine agency in producing the response of praise.

6.2 Jubilees

The book of Jubilees, usually classified as ‘rewritten Bible’, presents itself as dictated to Moses by an ‘angel of presence’ on Mount Sinai (1:4–6, 27). Although Genesis 1 to Exodus 24 provide the foundation for the content of the book,⁵⁴ the author’s exegetical strategies utilise sections from the end of Deuteronomy that are pertinent to this study. For instance, B.Z. Wachholder sees Deuteronomy 31 lurking behind the author’s portrayal of Israel’s apostasy.⁵⁵ In an independent inquiry, G.J. Brooke noted more specific allusions to Deuteronomy 29:11, 13; 30:1; 31:6, 17, 19–21, 26–27.⁵⁶ As we look into the prologue, it may be possible to detect further influences from Deuteronomy 29–31 in the background.

According to Jubilees, the revelation Moses was given at Sinai provides a window into Israel’s past and future. This revelation was to be stored away so that after her history played out, Israel would know God’s faithfulness vis-à-vis her unfaithfulness (1:4–6). God knew that Israel was defiant and ‘stiff-necked’ (ערפם הקשה) before entering the Land (1:7) and would inevitably turn after other gods and apostatise (1:9–14).⁵⁷ It is only after bearing the punishment of exile and returning to her covenant Lord that she will be restored: ‘Afterwards

54 Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 62.

55 Ben Zion Wacholder, ‘Jubilees as the Super Canon: Torah-Admonition versus Torah-Commandment’, in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, Cambridge, 1995. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten, ed. Moshe J. Bernstein, et al., STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 204–05.

56 G.J. Brooke, ‘Exegetical Strategies in Jubilees 1–2: New Light from 4QJubilees^a’, in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, et al., TSAJ (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 43, 49–52. See also G.W.E. Nickelsburg, ‘The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents’, in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, et al., STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 103.

57 Where available, reconstructions of the Hebrew and translations are taken from James C. VanderKam and J.T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 4, VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1*, DJD 13 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); otherwise, translations come from James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 2 vols., (Lovanii: In aedibus E. Peeters, 1989). Versification follows the latter. For a discussion of the text critical issues, see Christoph Berner, *Jahre*,

they will return (אהרי כן ישובו) to me from among the nations with all their heart. Then I will gather them from among all the nations, and they will search for me so that I may be found by them when they have searched for me with all their minds and with all their souls' (1:15).

Because of the allusions noted above, it is sensible to hear a faint echo of Deuteronomy 30:1–2. And yet the idea that Israel will 'find' YHWH because she seeks with her whole being could also signal the influence of either Deuteronomy 4:29 or Jeremiah 29:13. While the frequency of allusions to Deuteronomy might lead one to assume the former, explicit verbal resonances actually demonstrate that the latter text reverberates here. Based on 1:15a, which is attested in 4Q216 ii:17,⁵⁸ the phrase 'Then I will gather them from among all the nations' in 1:15b is plausibly reconstructed: וקבצתי מן כל־הגוים. While nothing like this appears in Deuteronomy 4, Jeremiah 29:14 contains a near verbal correspondence: וקבצתי אתכם מכל־הגוים. The differences in Jubilees are only minor: The new setting has required a 3MP pronominal suffix rather than the original 2MP, and instead of מכל we find כל. It is reasonable to assume that 1:15 has read Deuteronomy 30:1–2 with Jeremiah 29:13–14, perhaps associated on the basis of common themes and the key roots שוב and קבץ.⁵⁹ Consequently, both texts are utilised in 1:15 to predict the sin-exile-repentance-restoration narrative.

Upon hearing the horror of these circumstances, Moses pleads with God:

¹⁹Lord my God, do not allow your people and your heritage to go along in the error of their minds, and do not deliver them into the control of the nations with the result that they rule over them lest they make them sin against you. ²⁰May your mercy, Lord, be lifted over your people. Create for them a just spirit. May the spirit of Belial not rule them so as to bring charges against them before you and to trap them away from every proper path so that they may be destroyed from your presence. ²¹... Create for them a pure mind and a holy spirit. May they not be trapped in their sins from now to eternity. (1:19–21)

Moses—terrified by the vision of his people banished to a foreign land, enslaved by foreign rule, and participating in foreign practices—prays that God would prevent these things from happening. First he asks that God, out of

Jahrwochen und Jubiläen: heptadische Geschichtskonzeptionen im Antiken Judentum, BZAW 363 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 234–54.

⁵⁸ 4Q216 ii:17 reads אלי מתוך הגוים.

⁵⁹ קבץ appears twice in Deut 30:3–4.

mercy, would create a righteous spirit for the people (1:20), further developed as a pure mind and a holy spirit (1:21). All three phrases denote a new disposition toward obedience.⁶⁰ He also pleads that the spirit of Belial would not rule the people (1:20). His intercession suggests two things about Israel's state: 1) she was constitutionally unwell—hence the need for a new mind and spirit; 2) she could be enslaved by both Belial and her sin.

And yet it would appear that Moses' prayer availed little.⁶¹ God agrees that the Israelites have a 'contrary nature' (1:22) and in the language of Deuteronomy 30:6 reassures Moses that he 'will cut away the foreskins of their minds' (1:23). Further, he 'will create a holy spirit for them and will purify them' (1:23). While this last phrase could echo Ezekiel 36:24–27 where God promises to 'cleanse/purify' (טהר) Israel from her impurities and 'give' (נתן) her a new heart and a 'new spirit' (רוח חדשה), the original Hebrew of 'create a holy spirit' would probably come closer to Psalm 51:12, where David asks God to 'create' (ברא) for him a 'clean heart' (לב טהור) and 'steadfast spirit' (רוח נכון).⁶² In the parallel line, he asks that God's 'holy Spirit' (רוח קדש) not be taken from him.⁶³ Even so, this is not a conclusive case for dismissing Ezekiel 36's influence. In the first place, the underlying verbal form of 'purify' in Jubilees probably comes closer to Ezekiel's 'cleanse/purify' than to Psalm 51's 'clean' heart. More important is that in Jubilees a purpose clause—'in order that they may not turn away from me from that time forever' (1:23)—follows God's work. This purpose is further explained in 1:24: 'their souls will adhere to me and to all my commandments'. While there is no such explicit purpose in Psalm 51, in Ezekiel 36 God's action causes people to perform his statutes and keep his laws (36:27), and in both Jubilees and Ezekiel this result is followed by variations of the covenant formula (1:24; Ezek 36:28).

Without the Hebrew, any hypothesis is tentative and should be held loosely. What we can affirm with certainty is that in describing the narrative of restoration, Jubilees combines the notions of mind/heart-circumcision, the creation of a holy spirit, and purification. Jubilees also sees these components as the

60 Barry D. Smith, 'The Spirit of Holiness as an Eschatological Principle of Obedience in Second-Temple Judaism', in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John Joseph Collins and Craig A. Evans, Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 77.

61 Betsy Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible: Land and Covenant in Postbiblical Literature* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 50.

62 On the similarities between Ps 51 and Ezek 36, see Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch*, 106–10.

63 Le Déaut, 'la circoncision', 196.

solution to Israel's 'contrary nature', with a resulting obedience (1:23). What we have, therefore, is a re-established moral competence on the basis of a reconstituted disposition. Nevertheless, it is still only after the people 'acknowledge their sins and the sins of their ancestors' that they will return in an upright manner, which, it is implied, requires the pain of exile (1:22).⁶⁴

6.2.1 *Agency and the Prologue: Lambert's Proposal*

D. Lambert has deemed this passage to be of 'pivotal importance' for our concerns 'because it suggests a nuanced distinction regarding the role of human agency in redemption'.⁶⁵ Lambert finds here a creative solution to an exegetical conundrum posed by an inconsistency within Deuteronomy.⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 4:29–31 represents the standard Deuteronomistic paradigm, sin-exile-repentance-redemption, which suggests 'the efficacy of human agency'.⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 30:1–10, on the other hand, represents a divinely initiated restoration, which places a priority on heart-circumcision.⁶⁸ God's initial declaration to Moses in 1:15–18 conforms to 'the standard Deuteronomistic paradigm', that is, to Deuteronomy 4:29–31.⁶⁹ Moses' request for the transformation of human nature has the function of altering this drama. Thus in 1:22–25 God revises the program according to Deuteronomy 30, promising that *he* will launch the restoration by intervening to recreate Israel.⁷⁰ Lambert's conclusion: '*Jubilees* anticipates a dramatic, *divinely* initiated transformation of human nature . . . rather than *humanly* initiated repentance'.⁷¹

Lambert's study helpfully highlights how agency issues surface in both Deuteronomy and *Jubilees*. He is right to understand the circumcision of the mind in 1:23 as repairing Israel's 'contrary nature'. When *Jubilees* describes Israel as stiff-necked, it is not simply asserting that she acts in corrupt ways; it is making a larger point about her constitution. Such anthropological claims have important implications for agency, since God's merciful acts are intended to release Israel from sin's bondage and establish covenant allegiance. In spite of these valuable observations, Lambert's innovative proposal that *Jubilees*

64 See David Lambert, 'Did Israel Believe that Redemption Awaited its Repentance? The Case of *Jubilees* I', *CBQ* 68 (2006), 645.

65 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 633.

66 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 634–35.

67 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 632.

68 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 634–35.

69 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 637.

70 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 637–38.

71 Lambert, '*Jubilees* I', 633, emphasis his.

works out an exegetical problem in Deuteronomy contains critical difficulties that caution against its acceptance.

First, Lambert assumes that Deuteronomy 4:29–31 underpins Jubilees 1:15; but as my analysis has shown, Jeremiah 29:13–14 is echoed there. Even if the similarities between Jeremiah 29:13–14 and Deuteronomy 4:29–31 are intertextually related, the question needs to be asked whether or not the respective contexts give the related phrases different meanings. It could be argued that in Jeremiah 29:13–14 Israel's seeking is not so much a pre-condition to restoration as part of God's promise to restore.⁷² This understanding opens up the possibility that Jubilees 1:15 is emphasising divine agency and initiative as well. At least it is not clear that the prologue solves a discrepancy between two passages in Deuteronomy.

Second, the concept of transformation is not as foreign to God's first declaration as Lambert assumes. In 1:16, God transforms Israel 'into a righteous plant' with all his mind and soul. Interestingly, the only place in the Hebrew Bible where God acts with all his mind/heart and soul is in Jeremiah 32:41, a few chapters after the aforementioned allusion: I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, *with all my heart and all my soul*. In this new covenant passage Israel is promised a new disposition that results in obedience.⁷³ Unfortunately, the missing Hebrew in Jubilees 1:16 prevents us from firmly establishing whether or not Jeremiah 32:41 is being echoed, but there is reason to believe it is, especially since 'plant' in 1:16 was probably a form of *טָבַעַ*.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the very fact that God will transform Israel into a 'righteous plant' assumes some sort of renewal that enables righteousness.⁷⁵ Undoubtedly the transformational terminology is more prevalent in Moses' prayer and in God's response (vv. 19–23), but that is hardly grounds for thinking that Moses has altered a plan that hitherto did not include transformation.

The third major difficulty with Lambert's thesis lies in his assumption that human transformation generally, or heart-circumcision specifically, *necessarily* entails divine initiative. Could heart-circumcision not be an effect of Israel's turning? Many have read Deuteronomy 30:1–10 this way. J.C. Vanderkam, for

72 By rooting the promise in the divine decree (note יְבִי), Jer 29:11 assures Judah that YHWH intends her good and ultimate serenity, which includes her seeking and finding him (v. 13). See Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 404; Gowan, *Eschatology*, 63.

73 See the discussion above (pp. 43–45; 50–53).

74 Also noted by Charles, *The Book of Jubilees, or, The Little Genesis* (London: A&C Black, 1902), 5, and Halpern-Amaru (*Rewriting the Bible*, 29).

75 James C. VanderKam, 'Recent Scholarship on the Book on Jubilees', *Currents in Biblical Research* 6 (2008), 425.

instance, assumes this reading in his critique of Lambert: '[I]t is . . . clear that the "returning" of the people in exile *precedes* the divine transformation of their nature, just as it does in Deut. 30.1–10'.⁷⁶ Putting aside whether or not Vanderkam's construal is *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, he demonstrates the possibility of reading these texts without assuming a divinely initiated restoration.

To be fair, Lambert's argument seems to evolve when he later contends that while human nature is renewed only *after* the remnant turns, its turning is all the while foreordained, and thus a product of 'divine grace'.⁷⁷ What is confusing, however, is why this reasoning would not also apply to 1:15. Presumably, it would:

The process of שׁוּב described in the two so-called repentance passages found in . . . Deuteronomy, 4:29–31; 30:1–10, appears to have been understood at Qumran as divinely foreordained . . . Similarly, *Jubilees*, both in the passage discussed above⁷⁸ and in the so-called Jubilees Apocalypse, ties שׁוּב to the foreordained rediscovery of the forgotten, correct interpretation of the Torah. . . . In light of this interpretation of Deuteronomy, it seems difficult to maintain that the author of *Jubilees* and the Dead Sea sect believed that Israel's redemption depends on its repentance; rather, the turn to sectarian law . . . and the consequent re-creation of human nature were part of the divinely ordained plan for a remnant's redemption.⁷⁹

Assumed here is that if something is divinely foreordained, it is divinely initiated. On this logic, *Jubilees* 1:15 would also put forward a divinely initiated restoration, since the author understood שׁוּב as foreordained in Deuteronomy 4:29–31.⁸⁰ Again, it is difficult to see a major shift from 1:15–18 to 1:22–25.

But even the conflation of foreordination with divine initiation and grace is somewhat questionable. Though it is certainly conceivable that the two work together, this is not demanded since each functions at a different level of

76 VanderKam, 'Recent Scholarship', 425, emphasis his. See also John C. Endres, 'Eschatological Impulses in *Jubilees*', in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibbá (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 328, 335.

77 Lambert, 'Jubilees I', 649–50, esp. n41. He lists 1:22–25, 23:26 as examples. Unfortunately, Vanderkam does not interact with this.

78 From the context, it is difficult to tell which 'passage' is in mind. I assume 1:22–25.

79 Lambert, 'Jubilees I', 649–50, emphasis mine.

80 Assuming, for the sake of argument, Lambert's understanding of the allusion.

discourse. It is possible that under the direct determination and foreordination of God, creatures possess the capacity as effective agents to perform acts which influence God.⁸¹ So even taking into account God's foreordination of all things, we are still left with the question of whether humans are constituted with an agency sufficiently capable of performing an act to which God has freely determined to respond; or whether as a result of either anthropological corruption or creation, created efficacy is either partially or totally absent. It is with these questions in mind that we continue our investigation.

6.2.2 *Agency and Initiative in the Prologue's Restoration Narrative*

The issue of divine initiative in the restoration narrative is a delicate one. The statement in 1:15 'after this they will return' (ואחר־כֵּן ישובוּ) functions as neither a promise nor a condition, but as a simple prediction about how the future will play out. The purpose of writing down 'all these things' is for Israel to recognise that God has been 'more faithful than they' (1:6). Since 'all these things' appears to include the restoration, the restoration reveals divine faithfulness. And yet it is probably over-reading 1:6 to make it the grounds for a divinely initiated restoration since faithfulness could be expressed by God responding to Israel's turning. Put differently, it is simply unclear on grammatical grounds whether God's faithfulness is a faithful initiative or response.

When God answers Moses' prayer, he states that Israel's stubbornness will keep them from listening 'until they acknowledge their sins and the sins of their ancestors' (1:22). It is 'after this' that proper turning happens (1:23). Since it is most plausible that 'this' refers to what has just been stated (acknowledging sin) rather than what follows (personal transformation), it would appear that more emphasis is being placed on acknowledging sin than on divine transformation: 'direct divine intervention' follows human recognition.⁸²

While it is possible that God supports human agents in this act, since verse 23 goes on to describe an anthropological transformation to the tune of Deuteronomy 30, and since this renewal corrects Israel's 'contrary nature', God's response in verses 22–25 simply replays ambiguities already present in Deuteronomy 30. It is therefore difficult to tell whether or not re-creation is a prerequisite for turning. But this ambiguity presents itself most forcefully only when we isolate God's response to Moses' prayer from the initial narration. When verses 15–18 describe the restoration, human agency assumes a more emphatic role:

81 See Tanner, *God and Creation*, 96–98.

82 James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 137.

After this they will return to me from among the nations with all their minds, all their souls, and all their strength. Then I will gather them from among all the nations, and they will search for me so that I may be found by them when they have searched for me with all their minds and with all their souls. (1:15)

It is only after fulfilling the *shema* that God gathers Israel from the nations. Even in describing God's act of gathering, the text reinforces the fact that the exclusive reason the people find God is that they search intently. Subsequent to declaring that God will impart peace is the notion of transformation (v. 16).

If, as I argued earlier, it is improper to drive a wedge between the two portrayals of restoration, then both depictions should be looked at together and as mutually interpreting. While ambiguities remain in this prior account, it stresses human agency and creates more distance between Israel's seeking and God's transformational act. Furthermore, to say that God will '*rightly* disclose' peace suggests that God's gift of peace is commensurate with their whole-hearted searching. The prologue thus seems to foreground human agency as the mechanism which brings about restoration. While the possibility for the divine agent's contribution remains, our author appears to assume that *under God's own determination, humans in their present state are at least partially capable of inciting God to bring restoration and that this deliverance corresponds to an exertion of their wills*. It will be helpful to see if the rest of Jubilees upholds these conclusions.

6.2.3 *Agency and Initiative in Other Restoration Narratives*

The prologue is not Jubilees' only extended treatment of the restoration; 23:8–31 also reflects on these issues. The death of Abraham raises a discussion about the shortening of human life. After the flood people no longer live for 19 jubilees—they grow old quickly, their knowledge departs, and most of their lives are characterised by toil and distress (23:12). The generations grow progressively worse until 'all are evil' (23:15, 17–21).⁸³ 'Complete disobedience' will result in the earth's ruin (23:18) and other nations will carry out the divine judgement (23:22–23). Verse 24 introduces what appears to be a change in the people's actions: 'They will cry out and call and pray to be rescued'. But they will not be rescued until the children 'begin to study the laws, to seek the commands, and to return to the right way' (23:26). The restoration assumes

83 Human longevity and sinfulness are correlated. See Scott, *On Earth*, 107–13.

the discipline of rigorously searching the Scriptures to find God's will.⁸⁴ As Nickelsburg notes, 'The return of blessing is catalyzed by the study of the Torah, the identification of right halakhah, which facilitates true obedience'.⁸⁵ The pendulum then swings upward as human life grows progressively longer.⁸⁶ Interestingly, God does not explicitly step into the drama until the time when '[t]here will be neither a satan nor any evil' and the world is a place of 'blessing and peace' (23:29). 'Then the Lord will heal his servants' (23:30). The text goes on to note how the people would enjoy peace, all the curses would be transferred to their enemies, and God's enemies would become nonexistent (23:30). Since it has already been said that the people are living 'peacefully', without 'satan' or 'evil one', it is hard to see exactly whom God will destroy or how he will add to the peace that is already experienced.

G.L. Davenport seeks to solve the problem by understanding verses 30–31 as happening concurrently with verses 24 and 26 so that verses 24–31 do not provide a rigid timeline.⁸⁷ While this may be, it seems difficult to conceive of the time when distressed people cry out without a response and children look old (v. 24) as the very same time when days increase (v. 27), no one outlives her lifetime (v. 28), and lives are joyful (v. 29).⁸⁸ While this does not rule out the possibility that verses 26–29 and 30–31 are simultaneous, the majority opinion is that those who rise and see great peace—who offer praise, whose bones rest in the earth and spirits are happy (vv. 30–31)—are the righteous who died before the tranquil era. Their rising and happy resting fits better with renewal's consummation than with its inauguration. In any case, it is striking how divine activity is not mentioned until verse 30, as an afterthought of sorts. To be sure, the symmetrical view of history would already assume, as would the heavenly tablets,⁸⁹ a concept of divine governance. While it might be argued from this

84 On taking שרר as 'interpret', see James Kugel, 'The Jubilees Apocalypse', *DSD* 1–2 (1994), 333n13; Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 111–12.

85 Nickelsburg, 'Revelation', 105; 'Torah and the Deuteronomic Scheme', 225. See also Endres, 'Eschatological Impulses', 335.

86 James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 58–59: 'This group which is not further defined is somehow able, within God's sovereign plan, to reverse a process that even Abraham could not retard'.

87 Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees*, SFB (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 39.

88 See Scott, *On Earth*, 73–158, who argues for a tripartite division of world history in Jubilees. For a critique of Scott's position, see Berner, *Jahre, Jahrwochen und Jubiläen*, 318–23.

89 García Martínez discusses 23:32 under the category 'The Book of Destiny', in 'The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees', in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, TSAJ (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 249. See also VanderKam, *The Book*, 90.

that the children's 'turn' in 23:26 is divinely ordained,⁹⁰ divine agency has been submerged to such a subterraneous level that one must strain to see it. The same could be said of Jubilees 50:5: 'The Jubilees will pass by until Israel is pure of every sexual evil, impurity, contamination, sin, and error'. Here, the divine orchestration of time purifies Israel. But neither chapter 23 nor 50 give the sense that the restoration required a special act of divine intervention which granted an otherwise incompetent moral agent creative efficacy.

One other pertinent passage for our consideration comes from the flood narrative. Recounting the tragic event whereby angels take women and sire giants leads to a discussion of the world's depravity (5:1). The very fabric of creation was altered by this incident.⁹¹ Animate beings—human and otherwise—are so wicked that God must obliterate them (5:2–4). Noah and his family were spared, however, on account of Noah's exceptional righteousness (5:5, 19). The flood represents the just judgement of everything that did not follow its ordained path (5:13–16). But judgement is not the final word. After the flood, God demonstrates his mercy by making it possible for Israel to amend her ways:

If they turn to him in the right way, he will forgive all their wickedness and will pardon all their sins. It has been written and ordained that he will have mercy on all who turn from all their errors once each year. To all who corrupted their ways and their plan(s) before the flood no favour was shown except to Noah alone because favour was shown to him for the sake of his children whom he saved from the flood waters for his sake because his mind was righteous . . . He did not transgress from anything that had been ordained for him. (5:17–19)

These verses provide the rationale for the covenant-renewal ceremony on the Day of Atonement. If Israel turned to God 'in the right way', God would forgive wickedness and pardon sin. As it is presented, this ceremony offers Israel an opportunity for renewal that did not exist before the flood. The critical focus of such renewal is that the people reform their lifestyles. This 'restoration' ceremony assumes a competency which can enact self-reform.

90 Lambert, 'Jubilees I', 649, lists 23:26 as proof that repentance was divinely caused, but this claim, based on an equivocation between ordination and causation, is by no means explicit.

91 VanderKam, *The Book*, 35.

6.2.4 *Incompetent Moral Agents in Jubilees*

If Jubilees prioritises human agency in the restoration, it is not because it conceives of humans as uninhibited agents, free from internal deficiency or external constraint. God knows Israel to be defiant and stiff-necked (1:7). Likewise, 15:33 states that Israel will 'prove false' by not circumcising their sons (15:33). They have a contrary nature, are trapped in sins (1:21–22), and thus in need of renewal in order to live righteously (1:20–21, 23–24). As the flood narrative demonstrates, this problem is not confined to Israel: 'Every thought' of human knowledge 'was evil . . . all the time' (5:2). And human depravity is accentuated at Babel (10:18). As the years pass, moreover, generations grow worse until 'all are evil', 'everything they do is impure and something detestable' (23:15, 17; cf. 18–21).

Not only are humans constrained by the sins which altered the fabric of the universe; the very event by which the universe was altered demonstrates that humans are influenced by mediatory agents (5:1–2). The story of the watchers makes explicit a worldview where '[u]nder the ultimate control of God is a populous world of spirits'.⁹² While demonic influence apparently decreases by 90 percent after a petition by Noah (10:3–11), this is hardly seen in the narrative. The strongest statements about the influence of demons on Noah's children and grandchildren are made *after* his prayer (11:4–5; cf. 7:27, 10:1). Despite Jacob's upright disposition, his blessing still includes protection from evil spirits (19:28; cf. 35:17). Spirits rule over the nations (15:31) and play a role in the Exodus narrative as well (48:2–4, 8–10; 49:2). If the demonic host was limited to 10 percent of its previous capacity, that 10 percent remains formidable.⁹³

We gain important insight into how demons influence human action in 11:5, which notes how 'Prince Mastema was exerting his power in effecting all these [sinful] actions . . . sending to those under his control the ability to commit . . . sin'. Demonic agency here extends to human agents' abilities, as well as the efficacy of their actions. The agencies of human and supra-human powers thus coincide and are set in a direct, positive relationship.

The influence of angelic beings in human affairs does not diminish human culpability, however.⁹⁴ After detailing the watcher tragedy, the text charges

⁹² VanderKam, *The Book*, 126.

⁹³ Compare Annette Yoshiko Reed, 'Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees: The Evidence of Angelology and Demonology', in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 357–58, who sees demonic influence diminishing.

⁹⁴ See Stuckenbruck, 'The Book of Jubilees and the Origin of Evil', in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 300–307, here 303:

humanity with corrupting their own way (5:2). If Noah's sons are led by demons to shed blood, the sons will be punished (7:27–28). Even demoniac actively is itself a meting out of divine justice.⁹⁵ In Jubilees, it is not a prerequisite that one must be an autonomous and competent agent to be held responsible. People are even held responsible for things that were supposed to happen to them: If a person is not circumcised on the 8th day, he is destroyed 'because *he* has violated the covenant' (15:26). If this seems odd to modern conceptuality, then that is precisely why many current assumptions must be unlearned to make sense of these texts. In Jubilees humans are morally corrupt and externally coerced, yet responsible agents.

6.2.4.1 Exceptions to Moral Incompetence

The lives of the patriarchs testify to the fact that there can be exceptions to the moral abnormality of the universe. From an early age Abram 'began to realise the errors of the earth' (11:16). He separates from his father to abstain from idolatry (cf. Josh 24:2) and stands alone as a worshipper of YHWH (12:16–20). B. Halpern-Amaru notes how, unlike the scriptural story, Abram's prayer and inquiry 'transfer the initiative from God to Abraham, and diminish the dramatic impact of a "context-free" divine command to migrate. Consequently, the promise that follows appears as a reward for Abraham's knowledge of and fidelity to God, rather than as a gratuitous gift'.⁹⁶ The story of Jacob and Esau communicates a similar notion. Jubilees consistently presents Jacob as morally upright and Esau as morally inept. The only reason Isaac favoured Esau at first is that he was blind to this reality: 'At first I did love Esau more than Jacob, after he was born; but now I love Jacob more than Esau because he has done so many bad things and lacks (the ability to do) what is right' (35:13). Esau so lacks the constitution to be virtuous that even if he promises something he 'will not do what is virtuous but rather what is evil' (35:16), which is confirmed when Esau swears against attacking Jacob (36:6–14, 37:4) and then lapses (37:13–24). Jacob on the other hand (and in spite of the witness of Genesis) has a righteous

'The writer of Jubilees thus attempts to steer a fine line between human responsibility, on the one hand, and demonic cause, on the other'. See further James C. VanderKam, 'The Angel Story in the Book of Jubilees', in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, et al., STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 153–55; Reed, 'Enochic and Mosaic Traditions', 359.

95 Reed, 'Enochic and Mosaic Traditions', 358.

96 Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, 31–32.

disposition from birth (19:13). He did no perceivable wrong (35:6, 12–13) and is utterly upright in his own self-perception (which is apparently not a problem for the narrator) (35:3). In distinction from Esau, Jacob is a righteous figure whose actions demonstrate his superior nature. And so while Jubilees can depict humanity as ‘trapped by sins’ and as having a ‘contrary nature’ this holds true for some more than others. Particularly exceptional are the patriarchs—including Adam, Enoch, Shem, Noah, and Joseph. Might Israel show exceptional qualities as well, or does she enter too late on the downward spiral of human history to exert moral efficacy?

6.2.4.2 Israel and the Question of Moral Competence

There are indications that Israel also maintained some degree of competency as moral agents. For instance, Abraham’s final words to Isaac note how ‘all actions of mankind are sin and wickedness . . . with them there is nothing that is right’ (21:21). Abraham then goes on to distinguish ‘them’ from ‘us’ by warning Isaac: ‘[B]e careful not to walk in their ways or to tread in their paths so that you may not commit a mortal sin’; for committing a mortal sin results in being handed over to the ‘power’ of one’s sins (21:22). By following the commandments, Israel’s patriarchs were able to elude this power under which the rest of humanity was enslaved. Coming as it does after an explanation of the laws, our author encourages his audience to emulate Isaac.

Indeed, Israel is distinct from the nations, set apart for the very purpose of keeping the Sabbath (2:18–21). When asked why Israel was chosen, the answer is: ‘There were twenty-two heads of humanity from Adam until him [Jacob]; and twenty-two kinds of work were made until the seventh day’. (2:23). In Jubilees, Israel’s election is not so much based on moral achievement as on suitability: Her patriarch was born in the right sequence. To be sure, Israel is in need of divine mercy; God had to remove from Israel the impurity and error of the nations (22:19). Nevertheless, God’s choice is not random, but reasonable and coheres with the very structure of creation.

An explanation of the rite of circumcision also distinguishes Israel from the nations:

For the Lord did not draw near to himself either Ishmael, his sons, his brothers, or Esau. He did not choose them (simply) because they were among Abraham’s children, for he knew them. But he chose Israel to be his people. He sanctified them and gathered (them) from all mankind. For there are many nations and many peoples and all belong to him. He made spirits rule over all in order to lead them astray from following him. But over Israel he made no angel or spirit rule because he alone is their ruler. (Jub 15:30–32)

Our author equates Ishmael, his family, and Esau with the many nations whom the Lord did not choose 'because he knew them'. Something about these nations made them unsuitable to be his people. Israel, however, was chosen. A distinguishing factor between Israel and the nations is that whereas the nations were ruled by spirits, keeping them from following the Lord, Israel was not so constrained. The juxtaposition of rulers is, in turn, a juxtaposition between two moral competencies. Yet the contrast is not absolute, for the next verse foresees Israel as proving false to the circumcision ordinance.

In Jubilees, the constitution of Israel is an obscure reality: she is an ambiguously competent moral agent. She has a 'contrary nature' and can be influenced by evil spirits and nations, all the while retaining the ability to obey God.⁹⁷ In order to overcome these hindrances, Israel is given things to enable or empower her obedience. For instance, Israel's obedience is made possible through the communication of the laws. The reason Jacob gives for being able to resist sin is 'because Father Abraham gave many orders' (25:7). The angel instructs Moses 'to tell the Israelites not to sin or transgress the statutes . . . so that they should perform' the covenant (30:21).⁹⁸ Writing accomplishes the same function (33:18). Similarly, Joseph was enabled to resist temptation by remembering what was written down and what he had studied (39:6). But for no other reason than that evil spirits could meddle in affairs of the righteous, Israel required more than acquaintance with God's commandments.

Thus we also see that God is invoked to help the righteous. Abram prays that God would save him from evil spirits who would mislead him, would guard him from the error of his mind, and would straighten his path (12:20–21). When Abram blesses Isaac and Jacob, he asks God to strengthen them to do the divine will (21:25; 22:10, 14). Isaac is confident that the Lord will 'guard' Jacob from every evil (27:15). Here 'evil' is external to Jacob since he was 'just in his way . . . perfect . . . a true man' (27:17). Nevertheless, as Abram's prayer indicates, evil is not always external to the individual and sometimes even the righteous must be protected from themselves.

A prominent way that Israel is kept from sin and enabled to obey is through separation. Throughout its retelling, Jubilees maintains a concern for purity. Separation from the nations is an absolute necessity:⁹⁹

Separate from the nations, and do not eat with them. Do not act as they do, and do not become their companion, for their actions are something

97 Stuckenbruck, 'Enochic and Mosaic Traditions', 307–08.

98 Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, 43, observes that Jubilees 'evidences a clear predilection for a covenant defined in terms of adherence to stipulated law'.

99 VanderKam, 'Recent Scholarship', 416.

that is impure, and all their ways are defiled As for you, my son Jacob, may the most high God help you and the God of heaven bless you. May he remove you from their impurity and from all their error. (22:16, 19)

The logic of this section is that if Israel does not segregate, she will mimic the nations.¹⁰⁰ Marrying outside Israel is strictly forbidden, because 'there is no hope . . . for all who worship idols' (22:20–22). Here non-separation and the sin of idolatry are strictly correlated.¹⁰¹ Behind the assumption that Israel will take on gentile practices when she mixes with gentiles stands a particular anthropology. Separation was needed precisely because of a deficiency in Israel's ability to resist sin. Nevertheless, the very fact that she could resist sin by separating also suggests that she was not completely incompetent.

6.2.5 Conclusion

The book of Jubilees sets forth a fairly complex portrayal of human competence. At the most basic level humans are responsible moral agents with a progressively diminishing ability to obey, since the very sins humanity commits have the power to ensnare. Secondly, humans are coerced by demonic powers, with whom their agencies coincide.¹⁰² They are thus in continual need of God's protection from these powers.

Complexity arises when individual cases of human competence are considered. While most of humanity, like Esau, is incapable of virtue, Israel's patriarchs remain relatively unscathed by the corrupt world and thus are able to obey God. The portrayal of Israel is more nuanced still. She has a corrupt nature, is prone toward evil, and is often depicted as doomed to fail; yet she also has the distinct possibility of obeying God. She is what I have labelled an ambiguously competent moral agent. For this reason, she needs to be continually reminded of the law and of the necessity of strict adherence to it. With that, she must remain separate from other nations, lest her weakness be exploited and she fall prey to those nations' sins. Eventually, however, pessimism wins out: Israel will indeed turn after other gods.

Restoration is on offer and must begin with Israel's turning. While it is true that Israel has a 'contrary nature', nothing in the book compels an interpretation of this statement that would deny Israel the ability to return 'in a fully

100 Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47.

101 Concurring with the assumption of Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 48.

102 In this respect, Jubilees shares a conception of divine and human agency with the *Yahad* that is not apparent in Baruch.

upright manner' (1:23) or 'to study the laws' and 'seek out the commands' (23:26). It is assumed throughout that Israel's created efficacy extends to these actions, that following the law is achievable, albeit difficult.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, it will take going through the pain of exile before she realises the gravity of her sin and turns back to her Lord with appropriate obedience.¹⁰⁴

At this point, Jubilees reads Deuteronomy 30:6 as speaking of a gift-act of God which transforms Israel from an ambiguously competent agent into a competent one. What she gains is not so much a new moral efficacy as a constitution that is now directed toward obedience. Unfortunately, we are not given any specificity as to how mind-circumcision would occur or exactly what the author thought the metaphor conveys. Details are overridden by a pre-occupation with the chronological system of time. Whatever the case, Jubilees anticipates a humanly initiated restoration that leads to a dramatic, divinely enacted transformation of human nature.¹⁰⁵ And while the absolute flourishing of humanity is dependent upon the gift of God, that gift is appropriately distributed to those who obey.

The importance of this conclusion should not be overlooked. E.P. Sanders has demonstrated how obedience is a necessary condition for retaining salvation in Jubilees, since 'obedience *preserves* salvation'.¹⁰⁶ Failure to obey compromises membership in the salvific community and disqualifies a person for ultimate salvation.¹⁰⁷ But where does that leave the human agent prior to God's transformational act? What was to empower her? It would seem that before this act obedience was most fundamentally up to human agents, who were themselves competent enough to obey, even if not predisposed towards obedience. It is precisely those who exercise such competence who would be transformed and inherit eternal life.

It is worth noting that the broad framework and the general theology of Jubilees supports this conclusion. Jubilees' focus on the 364-day calendar and its cycled history present a world that conforms to a very meticulous system. History's 'ultimate goal' is the restoration of sacred time and space, so that what occurs on earth matches heaven's pattern.¹⁰⁸ The secret revelation Moses passes down gives the indication that the strict operations of the world reflect the character of God. He does not operate, it would seem, contrary to the order

103 Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, 50.

104 So also Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, 64.

105 To modify the conclusion of Lambert, 'Jubilees I', 633; cf. Sanders, *Paul*, 383.

106 See Sanders, *Paul*, 368–71, here 371, emphasis original.

107 E.g. 2:27; 6:12; 21:22; 26:34; 30:7–16; 33:13–18; 36:8–11; 49:8–9.

108 Scott, *On Earth*, 8.

he has established, and this operation would include not acting in a way that is out of sync with moral conformity to his Law. Thus while humans are in need of divine gifts, it is in keeping with the ordained or natural order of the universe to bestow those gifts on those who comply with that order to some degree.

6.3 Second Baruch

2 Baruch is a text that utilises the fictive setting of the aftermath of the first temple's destruction to explain a post-70 C.E. world.¹⁰⁹ Here we find another author who takes on the persona of Jeremiah's faithful companion and explains his situation in the light of Deuteronomy's curse. As in the epistle of Baruch, his message of hope stems from Deuteronomy 30.¹¹⁰ And yet, as we shall see, their respective readings of that text are by no means homogeneous.

6.3.1 *The Use of Deuteronomy 30 in Second Baruch*

While Deuteronomy's influence appears throughout the book,¹¹¹ perhaps it is most prevalent in Baruch's final speech (77) and letter to the exiles (78–87).¹¹²

109 Though 2 Baruch is thought to date after 4 Ezra, it is analysed before 4 Ezra as it manifests a clearer engagement with the scriptural texts we are considering.

110 The influence and reading of Deut 30:1–10 has received scant attention, though several scholars have detected a 'Deuteronomistic scheme' in the book; see, e.g., Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), 180–84; Frederick J. Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 117–33; Matthias Henze, 'Torah and Eschatology in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch', in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. G. Brooke, et al., Themes in Biblical Narrative (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 203–06.

111 For instance, chapters 55–74 interpret a vision detailing the cycles of history. The period of the exile is told in light of Deuteronomy's curses. As a consequence of idolatry, a famine comes and women are forced to eat their children (64:4, cf. Deut 28:22–24, 53–57). YHWH 'scatters' his people amongst the nations, where they experience shame (67:5; cf. Deut 28:36–7, 64). In the period just before the new age, God will cause 'confusion of spirit' and 'stupor of heart' (70:2), similar to Deut 28:28: **יְהוָה בְּשִׁגְעוֹן וּבְעוֹרוֹן וּבְתַמְהוֹן לֵב**. Israel must recognise the God who 'brought [them] out of Egypt' or history will repeat itself (75:7–8). Similarly the curse becomes a certainty by the end of Deut 29 because the people abandon the covenant YHWH made when he 'brought them out of Egypt' (29:25; see also 29:2, 16). For further similarities, see Murphy, *Second Baruch*, 120–28.

112 So Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick*, 181–82. Several authors believe the epistle functions as a summary of the book's primary themes; see, e.g., Murphy, *Second Baruch*,

The command to 'go up to the top of that mountain' after 40 days to see 'all the regions of this land' (76:3–4) frames Baruch as a second Moses (cf. Deut 32:48–52).¹¹³ Then, like Moses on the plains of Moab, he assembles the people to give his final instructions (77:1).¹¹⁴

Baruch insists that, as opposed to mere happenstance, the current devastation transpired because people 'transgressed the commandments' (77:4, 9; cf. 79:1–2, 44:5–6). Yet the wicked are not the only ones who bear the consequences; the curse fell upon the righteous as well (77:10). Deuteronomy 29 could give a similar impression when it warns of either an individual, clan, or tribe turning from YHWH (29:17–18), and then foresees the curse as devastating the entire nation (29:21–27). Later in Deuteronomy, Moses calls this period the 'end days', a time when 'evil will encounter the people' (וקראת אתכם הרעה, 31:29).¹¹⁵ In 30:1 he simply says that 'all these things will happen/befall' (כִּי־יבֹאוּ) (עליך כל־הדברים האלה). As was pointed out, 4QMMT demonstrates how these verses could be read together (C12–16).¹¹⁶ A comparable tradition might appear in 2 Baruch, where the post-Temple juncture is considered the 'consummation of time'¹¹⁷ in which 'evils . . . have come upon' the people so they might 'justify/

25; Richard Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, et al., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 176; Pierre Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 2 vols., sc 144–145 (Paris: Cerf, 1969), 1:76. I assume that the epistle belongs with chapters 1–77, as it appears in our oldest textual witness. On this question, see further Mark F. Whitters, *The Epistle of Second Baruch: A Study in Form and Message*, JSPSup 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 3–14; Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 1:67–78; cf. Gwendolyn B. Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed?: A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1984), 11–39, esp. 38n25.

113 See Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165–66. Unless otherwise noted, translations from 2 Baruch follow Daniel M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text with Greek and Latin Fragments, English Translation, Introduction, and Concordances*, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

114 See Matthias Henze, 'From Jeremiah to Baruch: Pseudepigraphy in the Syriac Apocalypse', in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Micheal A. Knibb*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith M. Lieu, Supplements to the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 157–77. Mark F. Whitters, 'Testament and Canon in the Letter of Second Baruch (2 Baruch 78–87)', *JSP* 12 (2001), 149–63, argues that among other things, this puts the epistle in the genre of a testament.

115 The LXX reads *καὶ συναντήσεται ὑμῖν τὰ κακά*.

116 See pp. 76–80 above.

117 Matthias Henze, 'Qoheleth and the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch', *VT* 58 (2008), 35. See 19:5: 'Now is the consummation of time!' Compare 10:3.

consider his judgements, which he has decreed against you' (78:5; cf., 81:4).¹¹⁸ But God's judgement does not leave the people without hope:

If you reckon that you have now suffered these things for your good, that you may not be condemned at the end and be tormented, then you will receive eternal hope. If, above all, you purge from your heart the idle error for which you were sent away here. For if you do these things, in this way he will continually remember you; he who always promised on our behalf to those who were more excellent than we that he will not forget or forsake our seed. But with much mercy he will assemble again those who were dispersed. (78:6–7)

These words are roughly based on Deuteronomy 30:1–6. Two conditions accompany restoration: First, the people must 'reckon' what has happened. Conceptually, this action corresponds to Deuteronomy 30:1, where the Israelites 'turn to [their] heart' (והשבת אל-לבבך) 'all the things which have happened/befallen' them (יבאו עליך כליהדברים). Secondly, and more particularly, they must 'purge' from their 'heart' the 'idle error' that instigated the curse in the first place. To understand this injunction, it is important to remember that Moses' warning in Deuteronomy 29:18 concerned a person who walked בשררות לב ('in stubbornness of heart'). But in the LXX, בשררות לב becomes ἐν τῇ ἀποπλανήσει τῆς καρδίας ('in the error of the heart'). The reason why the author of 2 Baruch understood βουλ/περιλάθαρζω in 30:6 as the removal of an 'error' is easily discernible:¹¹⁹ since an 'error' (ἀποπλάνησις) of the heart brought the curse, for an individual to be rectified this 'idol error' must be eradicated (78:6).

To encourage his audience to fulfil these conditions Baruch reminds them of the promise that 'with much mercy' God would 'assemble again those who were dispersed' (78:7). The promise borrows concepts from Deuteronomy 30:3–4, which notes how God would 'show compassion/mercy' (רחם/ἐλέω) and 'gather' (קבץ/συνάγω) the people from the places where they were dispersed (נדה/διασπορά). As should now be evident, our author's understanding of restoration has been informed by Deuteronomy 30:1–6. Yet for him restoration is not characterised by a temporal return to a geographic area, but by

¹¹⁸ See the translation in Albertus Frederik Klijn, '2 Baruch', in *OTP*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983).

¹¹⁹ See Jer 4:4 where the injunction to circumcise oneself is explained by a parallel command to 'remove' (סור) foreskin from the heart.

eschatological salvation.¹²⁰ The one who fulfils Baruch's conditions will 'not be condemned at the end and be tormented' but 'will receive eternal hope'.¹²¹ As such, the exiles must 'prepare' their hearts that they might be spared, not only from being excluded in this world (by exile), but also from the world to come (83:8; cf. 46:4–7). So while Baruch attributes Israel's present sufferings to the chastening love of God (78:3), if she remains unresponsive God's loving discipline will give way to eternal condemnation (78:6).

These themes are repeated in chapters 84–85. Chapter 84 begins by reminding the exiles how 'Moses called heaven and earth to witness against you', saying, 'If you trespass the law, you will be dispersed. But if you keep it, you shall be preserved' (84:2). This verse represents an elaboration on either Deuteronomy 4:26–27 or 30:19.¹²² Since the latter is also referenced in 19:1, it is the more likely candidate: 'Because of this at that time he established a covenant for them and said, "Behold, I have set before you life and death." And he summoned heaven and earth as witnesses against them'. As we will see in 4 Ezra, Deuteronomy 30:19 is cited to affirm Torah as the way to life.¹²³ Since Israel has 'forsaken the Law', everything Moses said has come true (84:5). The people can receive what God has prepared for them, however, if and only if they obey Baruch's instructions (84:6). After reiterating his instructions in 78:5–6—to remember their identity as it is enshrined in their national heritage and symbols¹²⁴—Baruch urges the people to pray for God's mercy from 'all [their] soul' (84:8–11). A discussion of the necessity of God's mercy leads to a variation on the scheme found in 78:6–7:

We have departed from our land, and Zion has been taken away from us. We have nothing left at all except for the Mighty One and his Torah. If, therefore, we direct our hearts and set them aright, then we will receive everything that we have lost—indeed, much better things than we have lost, many times over. For what we have lost was subject to corruption, whereas what we are about to receive is incorruptible. (85:3–5)¹²⁵

120 This is not to suggest that 'land' becomes obsolete in Baruch's eschatology; see now Lied, *Other Lands of Israel*.

121 Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 177: 'The restoration of Israel is to be understood in terms of this contrast between two ages'; similarly, Murphy, *Second Baruch*, 124–26.

122 See Murphy, *Second Baruch*, 125.

123 Shannon Burkes, '“Life” Redefined: Wisdom and Law in Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch', *CBQ* 63 (2001), 64.

124 On the identity issues underlying this, see James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other*, JSJSup 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 128–29.

125 Following the translation of Henze, 'Torah and Eschatology', 201.

Again against the backdrop of sin, exile, and covenant curse, a solution is offered in the vein of Deuteronomy 30: God will restore the people far beyond their losses and will even give them an ‘incorruptible’ gift.¹²⁶ Part of what awaits is explicated in verse 15: ‘he will preserve those whom he can forgive.’¹²⁷ Yet in order to be forgiven by God and receive his gift, the people must reorient their hearts.

6.3.2 *Torah-Obedience as the Way to Life*

Of great concern for our author is the question of whether life is still a viable option: Is it possible for Israel to receive life when all that remains is God and Torah (85:3)? The book’s answer is reassuringly positive. Its message, as Bauckham notes, ‘is that, since God has not abandoned his covenant with Israel, it is imperative that Israel keep the Law in order to benefit from the covenant promises.’¹²⁸ The covenant blessing is still on offer, but requires attentiveness to Torah.¹²⁹ This fact, already discernible in our author’s reading of Deuteronomy, can be seen in conditional statements throughout the book. Take 44:7: ‘For if you endure and persevere in his fear and do not forget his Law, the times will change over you for good’. Similarly, 84:2–6: ‘If you trespass the law, you will be dispersed. But if you keep it, you will be preserved . . . if you obey those things which I have said to you, you will receive from the Mighty One everything which has been stored up and preserved . . .’ Included in ‘everything’ are God’s incorruptible gifts (85:5), especially life for those who are preserved in the judgement (85:15).

In 2 Baruch, restoration and life are synonymous and imply eschatological life in the new world. If the people want to experience that life, it is vital that they ‘remember the commandments’ (84:7). In order to obtain that which has been stored away, they must heed Torah-teaching (46:3; 59:2; 84:6). As M.F. Whitters comments, ‘the main message is that the people must get ready for the Age to Come by observing the Law’.¹³⁰ The Torah-instruction Baruch gives is thus able to ‘preserve’ the people through judgement (45:1–2).¹³¹ Since

126 Compare the enigmatic expression ושב יהוה אלהיך את־שבותך in Deut 30:3.

127 Cf. Ezek 37:13–14, 23.

128 Bauckham, ‘Apocalypses’, 176; see also Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 38–39.

129 Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 1:399; Daniel M. Gurtner, ‘On the Other Side of Disaster: Soteriology in 2 Baruch’, in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 124–26; Lied, *Other Lands of Israel*, 165–66.

130 Whitters, *Epistle*, 3.

131 But as 77:15–16 makes clear, Law is not dependent upon teachers but vice-versa.

keeping the Law is a necessary condition for new life, it is even possible to say that the 'Law is life' (38:2).

At one point Baruch even asks God about the relationship between law-observance and eschatological favour: 'For who and for how many will these things be? Or who will be worthy to live in that time' (i.e., after the corrupt world ends) (41:1)? The question arises out of a concern for two groups of people. On the one hand are many apostates, those who spent much of their early lives observing Torah but have now 'thrown off . . . the yoke of your Law' (41:3). On the other hand are proselytes who converted to Torah late in life (41:4). How will these two groups be considered? Will their deeds be 'weighed' as on a scale (41:6)? No: What matters is not so much how one starts, but how one finishes. While the good works of the deserters will count as nothing, the faithful latecomers attain mercy:¹³² 'These are they who have acquired treasures of wisdom for themselves. And with them are found stores of understanding, and they have not withdrawn from mercy and they have preserved the truth of the Law. For to them will be given the world to come' (44:14).¹³³ Thus while not a strict meritocracy irrespective of covenant relationship, final fidelity to the Law still determines if one will be received or rejected in the new world (51:7–13).¹³⁴

6.3.3 *Human Competence and Transformation of the Heart*

As much as our author stresses obedience to Torah, it is not the only condition for 'life'. F.J. Murphy notes how, like Deuteronomy, 2 Baruch also 'lays considerable emphasis upon the disposition of one's heart and soul'.¹³⁵ As such, the people are commanded: 'Prepare your souls for that which is preserved for you, and make ready your souls for the reward which is held for you' (52:7). If they do not guard their hearts from the corrupt world (83:4) and prepare their

¹³² Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 179; Henze, 'Qoheleth', 38.

¹³³ Compare Baruch's earlier view on the reception of blessings: 'What have those who have knowledge before you gained, and have not walked in vanity like the rest of the nations . . . behold, they have been carried off and you did not, on their account, have mercy on Zion. And if others did evil, it was due to Zion that she should be forgiven because of the deeds of those who did good things she should be forgiven, and she should not have been overwhelmed because of the deeds of those who acted wickedly' (14:5–7). On the correlation between Law and Wisdom in 2 Baruch, see Burkes, "'Life" Redefined'.

¹³⁴ See also 14:12: 'The righteous rightly hope for the end. And without fear they leave from this habitation because they have a store of (good) deeds laid up in treasuries. Therefore, they leave this world without fear and are trusting with joy (that) they will receive the world which you have promised to them'.

¹³⁵ Murphy, *Second Baruch*, 126.

hearts for things to come, they will 'be in bondage in both worlds' (83:8), tormented like their enemies (85:9), and condemned (85:11). Receiving the eternal hope and gaining that which is incorruptible is contingent upon removing the 'idol error' from the heart (78:6), reorienting the heart (85:4). Thus heart-preparation is also a necessary condition for 'life'.¹³⁶

Are Torah-observance and heart-preparation simply two unrelated but necessary conditions for eschatological life, or does our author correlate the pair? Two texts show that the two conditions are related and reveal 'heart-preparation' as that which capacitates one for obedience. The first text to mention is 32:1: 'But as for you, if you prepare your hearts, to sow in them the fruits of the Law, it will protect you in that time in which the Mighty One shall shake the whole creation'. Here an agricultural metaphor is used to liken heart-preparation with sowing the seed of Torah into the heart so that the heart might produce Torah's fruit. While as in much of the book this statement could be taken as equating heart-preparation with Torah-obedience,¹³⁷ the relationship is probably better understood as causal: heart-preparation brings forth a Torah-shaped life. The dynamic is more straightforward in 46:5–6:

But only prepare your hearts, that you may obey the Law, and be subject to those who, in fear, are wise and understanding. And prepare your souls that you may not depart from them. For if you do these things, good tidings, about which I told you before, will come to you, and you will not fall into the torment, about which I testified to you before.

Here we see how heart/soul-preparation leads to Torah-obedience.¹³⁸ Importantly, the outcome is 'good-tidings' rather than 'torment', which brings the whole sequence together:

Heart-preparation > leads to obedience > leads to Life.

¹³⁶ Whitters, *Epistle*, 47, observes how pleas to prepare the heart do not occur before the first speech, but fifteen times after, five of which are in the Epistle.

¹³⁷ So G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 283.

¹³⁸ While ι may have less force than 'that', heart-preparation nevertheless precedes and relates to Torah obedience. See R. Payne Smith and J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary, Founded Upon the Thesaurus Sricus of R. Payne Smith, D.D.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903), 81: 'when preceding a verb in the future tense it is often rendered in English by the infinitive'.

Similar to the pattern found in Deuteronomy 30:6, an act on the heart results in a moral constitution that is competent to produce the obedience necessary for life. The reason heart-preparation can be stated as a condition for life without specific reference to Torah-obedience is precisely because our author assumes that those who remove the 'error' from their heart will obey. And yet the reformation of the heart is consistently attributed to human agents. Heart-preparation is in fact the principal act of human obedience—the *sine qua non* of obedience. God neither prepares the heart, removes the error from the heart, nor changes the disposition of the heart. And yet the book is not despondent. Though they are not fully competent moral agents, Adam's sin did not leave people incapable of preparing themselves for glory (54:15–19); they remain 'in the power of liberty' (85:7),¹³⁹ and there is an expectation that Israel will act rightly (1:5). The reordering of the heart, therefore, is committed to human agents and within their power to achieve.¹⁴⁰ God's mercy can take root only in this fertile soul.

6.3.4 *Gift, Grace, and Human Agency*

As with other texts we have surveyed, the onus 2 Baruch places upon human agents to work toward anthropological renewal in no way prohibits our author from reflecting on and attributing salvation to God's gifting. Grace and mercy are fundamental characteristics of God. In a prayer, Baruch confesses that it is only by God's 'gift' that anyone is able to enter the world (48:15). Specifically in this context Baruch is seeking to demonstrate humanity's 'nothingness', which is given as a reason for God not to 'take account of our works' (v. 14). Baruch then pleads: 'Protect us in your compassion, and help us in your mercy' (v. 18). While God's reply is that his Law 'claims its right' (v. 27),¹⁴¹ the book's message is nevertheless: 'He who you worship is merciful, and he in whom you hope is gracious and true' (77:7). God's mercy is expressed in his patience toward the righteous and the wicked (24:2). His grace compensates for human forgetfulness (77:11) and drives him to console Baruch with revelation (81:4). Likewise, eschatological salvation is impossible apart from God's grace: 'If he does not judge us according to the multitude of his mercies, woe to all us who are born'

139 Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 2:159; see further his discussion on pp. 400–401.

140 Note that the creative efficacy of human agents is not incompatible with an extension of divine sovereignty over all creation. God must 'sustain all who exist', which specifically includes the righteous and those who sin (21:9). In non-contrastive fashion, our author assumes both that God must uphold all things and that righteousness and sin are within human potential.

141 Murphy, *Second Baruch*, 58, notes that the opening 'but' of v. 27 is a 'strong adversative'.

(84:11).¹⁴² Because of sin, God must show grace at the judgement by purging the sins of the righteous (85:15). Without grace there can be no salvation.¹⁴³

Benevolence is not only operative at the point of final judgement; all the gifts of the eschaton are attributed to mercy: 'Or who of those who are born can hope to these things unless he is one to whom you are merciful and gracious?' (75:5). It is 'with much mercy' that God restores people (78:7) and after the judgement (50:2) he transforms them:

And it will be after this, when that appointed day has gone by, that the appearance of those who are condemned will be changed, and the glory of those who are righteous. . . . the glory of those who have now been made righteous by my Law, who had understanding in their life, and who have planted the root of wisdom in their heart, then their splendor will be glorified in changes, and the appearance of their face will be turned into the light of their beauty so that they may be able to acquire and receive the world which does not die, which is then promised to them. (51:1–3; cf. 73:1–2, 83:9–21)

Two points are worth highlighting from this survey. First, in 2 Baruch grace is primarily future-oriented; it 'is coming' in the form of mercy (82:2) and will be demonstrated when the righteous receive their inheritance in the new world.¹⁴⁴ In the present age and right through the judgement, grace takes on a primarily retroactive, restorative, and negative character: it does *not* count works; it *cancel*s sins; it *forbears* and *overlooks* ineptitude. In the new world, grace will take a recreative and transformative shape. By restricting the sphere in which God's recreative gifts are bestowed, our author is able to attribute salvation to God's grace without applying grace into the here-and-now reorienting of the human-heart or integrating grace into his understanding of human agency.¹⁴⁵

Second, it is worth noting that again and again the recipients of grace are those who show themselves to be righteous (24:2).¹⁴⁶ The sins of the righteous are purified, while the wicked, who are '*polluted* with sins', are destroyed

¹⁴² Most of 2 Baruch gives the impression that 'all' sin. Compare 75:6, however.

¹⁴³ Gurtner, 'On the Other Side of Disaster', 126.

¹⁴⁴ On glorification in 2 Baruch, see Sprinkle, 'Afterlife', 208–10.

¹⁴⁵ Salvation is also attributed to works in 2 Baruch (51:7). The reason our author can attribute salvation to both grace and works is not because he believes that grace brings forth works, but because they are both necessary, yet *distinguishable* and separate conditions of eschatological salvation.

¹⁴⁶ Klijn, '2 Baruch', 618; Gurtner, 'On the Other Side of Disaster', 126.

(85:15). For all who sinned and are born from Adam ‘their end will convict them. And your Law, which they have transgressed, will repay them on your day’ (48:47): there is ‘no mercy’ for them (44:12). When we inquire about the righteous, however, we find that ‘blessedness’, ‘glory’, and transformation in the new world is reserved for them (48:48–49, 51:1). And ‘righteous’ delineates more than the status of those who will receive eschatological salvation; ‘righteous’ is something one proves oneself to be through obedience (14:7, 12; 21:12; 51:7),¹⁴⁷ making salvation what one is worthy to receive (41:1; cf. 64:7–10).¹⁴⁸ Yet as we have seen throughout, the righteous still sin. But their sins and the sins of the wicked can be distinguished by degree (85:15). So while to live unrighteously is to cut oneself off from God’s beneficence, to live righteously is to qualify for and remain in it (44:14; cf. 61:7).¹⁴⁹ To be sure, God *does* gift the unrighteous—God’s gift of life and his beneficence to the nations are prime examples (13:12)—but *salvific gifts* are reserved for those who observe the Law and are capable of receiving those gifts.¹⁵⁰

6.3.5 Summary

In the light of the final chapters of Deuteronomy, 2 Baruch understands Israel to stand under God’s discipline for sin. The scene in Deuteronomy 29 has played out just as Moses anticipated, with a heart-error leading people astray. As with the epistle of Baruch, then, Israel’s problem is a heart-problem.¹⁵¹ Also like Baruch, 2 Baruch reads Deuteronomy 30:6 as the solution. Yet in stark contrast to Baruch, 2 Baruch has put the onus on Israel to reflect on her actions, pray to God for mercy, remove the error from her heart, and reposition her heart in line with the divine will. By substituting the divine subject of heart-circumcision in Deuteronomy 30:6 for a human subject and by conflating

147 Gurtner, ‘On the Other Side of Disaster’, 125.

148 ‘Worth’, however, does not quite denote desert. Whereas desert implies that the righteous have a claim on recompense, worth here means that the righteous qualify for God’s gifts as fitting recipients, but without a claim on those gifts. So, for instance, while God gives revelation to those who are ‘spotless’, they had no claim on revelation (54:4–5, 9).

149 John Joseph Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 175: ‘Mercy, then, is only for those who convert and obey’; likewise, Bauckham, ‘Apocalypses’, 180–81.

150 It is noteworthy that the nations ‘have always denied the beneficence’ (13:12).

151 While Bauckham is correct in his analysis that 2 Baruch has a more optimistic anthropology than 4 Ezra, he might suggest too much when he claims that ‘2 Baruch does not mention the problem of the evil heart’ (‘Apocalypses’, 181). While Baruch might not use those terms, the concept is certainly present; cf. 78:6–7. On the anthropology of 4 Ezra, see pp. 179–186 below.

‘restoration’ with eschatological salvation, 2 Baruch prioritises human agency in that salvific process. This does not give Baruch a pessimistic tone, however. Israel’s constitution is not so perverted that she cannot take steps to rectify her situation, and from the outset there is the expectation that she will make the right choice and thus become qualified to receive God’s abounding grace and mercy (1:5).

6.4 Fourth Ezra

4 Ezra (2 Esdras 3–14) is another piece of apocalyptic literature composed in the aftermath of the Temple-destruction (70 C.E.). Seven episodes structure the book, with a discussion between the biblical character Ezra and the angel Uriel carrying its content. At first, the discussion takes the form of a penetrating debate over questions about God’s character. How can God’s people lie in ruin while gentiles glory over them (3:2; 4:23; 5:28–30)? Why is the Law ineffectual (4:23)? Why does Israel not possess its promised inheritance (6:59)? Are only a few to be saved (7:48)? These are the pertinent concerns our author seeks to address in his post-70 world. The disillusionment of a war-torn Judaism is not the only factor generating such questions; Ezra’s anxiety also arises out of, and is informed by, a conflict this situation presents with his own scriptural heritage.¹⁵² 4 Ezra thus represents yet another example of an ancient Israelite wrestling with his scriptural heritage in a search for fresh answers.

One of the most fascinating features of 4 Ezra—its dialogical nature—also makes it difficult. The two characters, Ezra and Uriel, personify two opposing perspectives and there is a question as to which one communicates the author’s theological programme. M.E. Stone has explained their opposing viewpoints as the author’s own internal struggle: Ezra represents the author’s feelings of grief and doubt while Uriel represents his faith.¹⁵³ While it seems right to find here something of a spiritual, and even theological, pilgrimage (if not the author’s own, at least the one that he hopes his readers will traverse), it is perhaps better to understand Ezra and Uriel as more akin to two points on that journey rather than an ongoing internal dialectic.¹⁵⁴ As B.W. Longenecker points out, by chapter 10 Ezra ‘internalizes and articulates the sentiments that

¹⁵² Bruce W. Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 94.

¹⁵³ Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 32–33.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Longenecker, *Eschatology*, 154.

Uriel had voiced earlier.¹⁵⁵ In other words, he eventually agrees with Uriel. When taken as a whole, it is clear whose perspective has ‘the upper hand’:¹⁵⁶ Uriel wins out. This should not surprise us, since he is God’s ambassador and as such communicates the divine perspective.¹⁵⁷ In this way, the author’s current perspective has been retrojectively placed in conversation with his older (or simply another) perspective in order to lead readers to the same place.¹⁵⁸ By not rejecting Ezra-type concerns out of hand, he is able to recognise their validity, but without endorsing them.¹⁵⁹ The purpose of this rhetorical move is to guide readers to what he feels is a more orthodox position. We therefore locate our author’s view not in a synthesis of Ezra and Uriel, but rather in Ezra’s theological outlook *after* it has been corrected by Uriel. To understand the fallacy of Ezra’s early attitude and its corrective, we need to consider the characters and their positions in more detail.

6.4.1 *The Dialogue*

At the heart of the dialogue is Ezra’s struggle to come to terms with God’s righteousness in two interrelated areas: 1) his covenant with Israel and 2) his creation of humankind.¹⁶⁰

6.4.1.1 Ezra’s Complaint: God’s Covenant Faithfulness

From the beginning, the Scriptures establish how God judges transgression with death (3:7–11). But those same Scriptures witness God’s special love for Israel. When the nations were sinning, God chose Abraham, loved him, and made a covenant with him to love his descendants, as verified in the giving of Torah (3:14–19; cf. 5:23–30). All things being equal, the covenant should give Israel a privileged position. If Israel sins like the nations, this is only because God did not take away her ‘evil heart’ (*cor malignum*) so that Torah could produce fruit (3:20). But this reality should not negate God’s regard for Israel: Or ‘[a]re the deeds of Babylon better than those of Zion? Or has another nation known you besides Israel? Or what tribes have so believed your covenants as

155 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 95.

156 Compare Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 95, who says this is not the case with respect to the dialogues.

157 Compare statements of Uriel (e.g., 5:56; 7:11, 17. 28–29) with statements made by God (13:32, 37, 52; 14:9).

158 Bauckham, ‘Apocalypses’, 162.

159 Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, NovTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 138; followed by Gathercole, *Boasting*, 138.

160 Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 36.

these tribes of Jacob' (3:31–32)?¹⁶¹ All these questions warrant, it is implied, a negative answer. Then why should the nations prosper at Israel's expense? This seems to run right against God's promises, the giving of Torah, and the particularity of Israel (4:23); it defies the fact that the nations are regarded as 'spittle', while the world was created for Israel, those 'zealous' for God (6:55–56). Besides, if people actually were judged strictly by works, the nations should be suffering at least as much as Israel.¹⁶² In the first instance, then, Ezra's concern about God's righteousness is a concern about God's uprightness with respect to his covenant. For Ezra the situation plainly suggests that God is being unfaithful to his promises.

6.4.1.2 Uriel's Response: The Necessity of Covenant Obedience

The first main component of Uriel's response to consider is his insistence on covenant-conditionality. Uriel begins to answer Ezra's question 'why has Israel not inherited the world that was created for her' by reminding Ezra that in light of Adam's sin, God's promises are reached through much toil and striving:

For I made the world for their [Israel's] sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged. And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome.... But the entrances of the greater world are broad and safe, and really yield the fruit of immortality. *Therefore unless the living pass through the difficult and vain experiences, they can never receive those things that have been reserved for them.* (7:11–14)

One of the reasons God has not blessed Israel is that she must first go through hardships to gain immortality. Yet there is a more fundamental reason why Israel has not seen the fulfilment of the promises: the necessity of covenant obedience.

¹⁶¹ Translations from B.M. Metzger, 'The Fourth Book of Ezra', in *OTP*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Longman & Todd, 1983). Latin references are from Albertus Frederik Johannes Klijn and G. Mussies, *Der lateinische Text der Apokalypse des Esra*, TUGAL (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983).

¹⁶² Tom W. Willett, *Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra*, 4, JSPSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 66; Pieter G.R. de Villiers, 'Understanding the Way of God: Form, Function, and Message of the Historical Review in 4 Ezra 3:4–27', *Society of Biblical Literature; Seminar Papers* 20 (1981), 361.

This is the meaning of the contest which every man who is born on earth shall wage, that if he is defeated he shall suffer what you have said, but if he is victorious he shall receive what I have said. For this is the way of which Moses, while he was alive, spoke to the people, saying, 'Choose life for yourself, so that you may live!' (7:127–129)

Ezra's struggle concerning God's righteousness was a struggle over his scriptural heritage. He saw how God had not only loved Abraham, but also his descendants. In order to repudiate such strong scriptural reasoning, Uriel needed an equally potent scriptural case, which he finds in Deuteronomy 30:19. There Moses expends some of his last words to plead with Israel: 'choose life for yourself, so that you may live'. Structurally, 7:127–129 is very close to 7:19–25. From this parallel we can deduce that 'choosing life' essentially means doing Torah (7:21).¹⁶³ Furthermore, 'life' in 4 Ezra takes on the connotation of personal immortality (7:96).¹⁶⁴ If life is not chosen, death is inevitable. This is Uriel's assessment of the situation: 'But they [Israel] did not believe him, or the prophets after him, or even myself who have spoken to them. Therefore there shall not be grief at their damnation' (7:130–131).

Surely important for Uriel's argument is that Moses spoke these words to the covenant community *after* they had been given both the promises and the Law. For while Ezra can affirm that God judges sin with death (3:7–11), he insists that Scripture illustrates how God grants Israel indemnity. Moses' words provide Uriel with a strong retort: covenant promises do not exempt Israel from the principle that eschatological life is won through an exertion of the will, since the realisation of the promises is contingent on obedience.

It has become popular over the past 30 years to stress how Israel's Law and her obedience take place within a context of God's covenant, and rightly so. Yet this fact does not demand the relationship between covenant and obedience that is often assumed; namely, that human obedience is simply a grateful response to God's covenant and that election and promise remain operative irrespective of law-observance. The temporal priority of Abraham's election does not preclude the possibility that the covenant promises are conditioned on covenant obedience. In fact, for Uriel, even that temporal priority is questionable. For eventually Ezra starts to concede Uriel's point and puts it back to God as a complaint: 'you have ordained in your Law that the righteous shall inherit these things, but that the ungodly shall perish' (7:17). Uriel responds:

¹⁶³ On the parallel structures of 7:19–25 and 7:127–131, see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 256.

¹⁶⁴ Burkes, "Life" Redefined, 59.

You are not a better judge than God, or wiser than the Most High! Let many perish who are now living, rather than that the law of God which is set before them be disregarded! For God strictly commanded *those who came into the world*, when they came, what they should do to live, and what they should observe to avoid punishment. Nevertheless they were not obedient. (7:19–22)

Uriel insists that it is reasonable to let the wicked, including those within the covenant, perish, because from the beginning of creation the structure of creation has been that people should do something in order to live and observe something to avoid punishment. God has not repealed his creational ordinance, not for Israel, not for anyone:¹⁶⁵

When the Most High made the world and Adam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgement and the things that pertain to the judgement. . . . For this reason, therefore, those who dwell on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding they committed iniquity, and though they received the commandments they did not keep them, and though they obtained the Law they dealt unfaithfully with what they received. (7:71–72)

Importantly, in these texts we see that Adam disobeyed ‘statutes’ (7:11); humanity ‘received the commandments’, ‘denied his covenants’ (7:24), and dealt unfaithfully with ‘the Law’ (7:72).¹⁶⁶ There is an organic relationship between the obedience-life pact that God made with Adamic humanity and the covenant that God gave to Israel.¹⁶⁷ In both one lives or dies by obedience to Torah.¹⁶⁸

165 The debate over the witness of Israel’s scriptural tradition also shows up in Ezra’s pleas for a representational model. Ezra sees in that heritage that there are times in history where the righteous are able to intercede for the wicked (7:106–110). Perhaps God could even look on the deeds of the righteous while overlooking the wicked’s sins (8:26–31). With respect to final judgement and the world to come, Uriel’s hermeneutic does not allow for such representation. Each individual must choose life.

166 Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 194. On the substance of Torah being known to all humanity, see Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen. I, 26f. in Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 43–44; cf. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom*, 144; Elliott, *Survivors of Israel*, 104.

167 The author might be drawing on a tradition of interpretation of Hos 6:7. For another explanation, see K.M. Hogan, ‘The Meanings of *tôrâ* in 4 Ezra’, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007), 541.

168 This makes better sense of Willett’s observation that ‘Ezra’s concern for the wicked is nothing more than a natural extension of his concern for Israel’ (*Eschatology*, 143n69); contra

The strength of his scriptural reasoning, therefore, is that the principle of conditionality contained within Deuteronomy 30:19 can be seen both *prior* to Abraham's election and also *after* the covenant and Law are given. Moses' words are simply a reaffirmation of this Adamic principle to the covenant community. So while Ezra's initial understanding of the covenant testifies to the fact that there were Jews who did not make covenant promises contingent on law-observance in their reading of Israel's tradition, this hermeneutic was unacceptable to others, including our author.¹⁶⁹ For him, Deuteronomy 30:19 provides the hermeneutical key.

Longenecker posits three ways of interpreting covenant, law, and salvation in 4 Ezra: 1) 'covenant confirmation' (God's grace and faithfulness to ethnic Israel is secure); 2) 'covenant redefinition' (the covenant and God's grace are narrowed to a faithful remnant); and 3) 'covenant abrogation' (the covenant is null and void and salvation is now based on individual efforts to accumulate works of righteousness).¹⁷⁰ Initially, and in large agreement with Sanders, Longenecker suggested the third option: 'Uriel removes obedience to the law from its traditional context, so that it no longer symbolizes the response to God's love by one who has already experienced grace within the covenant community'.¹⁷¹ Subsequently Longenecker adjusted his thesis, opting for a version of the second category: 4 Ezra redefines covenant theology so that it requires 'rigorous and exacting standards', its benefits are 'restricted to the ranks of exceptional people', the concept of 'mercy' and 'a robust theology of grace' virtually absent.¹⁷²

It is noteworthy that Longenecker's categories, along with his analyses, assume a normative definition of 'covenant' which is unambiguously present neither in the biblical literature, nor ANE parallels, nor Second Temple period. The relationships that covenants established were often assumed to be predicated upon mutual obligations. Failure to live up to these would evoke

A.L. Thompson, *Responsibility for Evil in the Theodicy of IV Ezra: A Study Illustrating the Significance of Form and Structure for the Meaning of the Book* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 267–69; Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 46–47.

169 Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 164: 'It is important to appreciate in what an eloquent and appealing form Ezra voices an inclusive covenantal view of God's gracious and forgiving relationship with Israel.'

170 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 31–32.

171 Longenecker, *Eschatology*, 98. For Sanders (*Paul*, 409), 4 Ezra puts forward legalistic perfectionism because of a collapse in covenantal perspective. See also Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 162.

172 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 100; cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 162.

sanctions and even forfeit one's share in covenant promises.¹⁷³ Uriel has not removed 'the law from the context of God's covenant mercy', nor has he 'redefined' covenant. Rather, by emphasising the contractual provisions of the covenant relationship, he has simply related Law and covenant in a way that fails to meet the expectations of those who downplay the conditional elements of covenantal treaties and thereby define 'covenant' in an overly restricted fashion.¹⁷⁴

6.4.1.3 Ezra's Complaint: Anthropological Pessimism

Ezra's anthropology gives him another reason to question God's righteousness. He believes that when God gave Israel the Torah, he did not establish her as a competent moral agent (3:20). And this is not simply a problem for Israel, but a problem with humanity: 'For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him' (3:21).¹⁷⁵ If the reality of the situation is that Adam's corruption pervades everyone, including Israel, then the prospects for salvation are slim:

O sovereign Lord . . . Blessed are those who are alive and keep your commandments! But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who is there among mortals that has not transgressed your covenant? And now I see that the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many. For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death . . . and that not just a few of us but almost all who have been created! (7:45–48)

After Ezra begins to concede that life is contingent upon obedience, he becomes bothered by a more fundamental question: What implication does this have for a world held captive to an evil heart?¹⁷⁶ Without his pessimistic anthropology, Ezra might have been able to stomach the absolute necessity of

173 See Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 13–43, esp. at 17, 23–24, 38–39. See also Freedman and Miano, 'People of the New Covenant', 7–26, and references there.

174 So, rightly, Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 170: '[I]t is not clear that the conception of the covenant that emerges from 4 *Ezra* is novel in itself.

175 On sin and corruption in 4 *Ezra*, see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 63–65.

176 Most commentators note a change in Ezra's perspective mid-way through chapter 9 (e.g., Willett, *Eschatology*, 54, 62, 65–66; Longenecker, 2 *Esdras*, 25–26, 59–64). I suggest that one can also detect a minor, gradual change leading up to this section; so also Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 24–28, 228, 280–83; Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 162.

obedience, but in the competition between the evil heart and the Law, the evil heart was sure to win.¹⁷⁷ The harsh reality of human corruption means that ‘few’ will be saved.¹⁷⁸ This is unacceptable.¹⁷⁹

For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it. . . . For all who have been born are involved in iniquities, and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions. And if we were not to come into judgement after death, perhaps it would have been better for us. (7:63, 67–69)

Likewise:

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

Ezra’s question about God’s covenant faithfulness is now linked to a more fundamental question regarding God’s integrity in creating the world. Surely it would have been more righteous to leave the world uncreated, than to create a world in which the evil heart reigns and few are saved.

6.4.1.4 Uriel’s Response: God’s Sovereign Prerogative

An undercurrent in almost all Uriel’s responses is that divine transcendence makes Ezra’s questions inappropriate. First, this can be seen when, in a manner reminiscent of the book of Job, Uriel poses cycles of rhetorical questions to highlight the limitations of human knowledge (4:5–11; 5:36–40).¹⁸⁰ God’s sovereign prerogative, along with the epistemological polarity between humanity and God, was meant to overwhelm Ezra’s concern that God has not created and sustained the world with integrity. The more existentially satisfying outcome

¹⁷⁷ On 3:22, see Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 404.

¹⁷⁸ See Shannon Burkes, *God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period*, JSJSup 79 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 195.

¹⁷⁹ A.P. Hayman, “The ‘Man from the Sea’ in 4 Ezra 13”, *Journal for Jewish Studies* 49 (1998), 15; Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 194.

¹⁸⁰ Willett, *Eschatology*, 59; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 201.

of this knowledge comes only after Ezra resigns himself to the reality of God's rule and is thereby qualified to imbibe the Holy Spirit, which enables him to write down revelations concerning the eschaton (13:57–58; 14:22–26, 37–42).¹⁸¹

So, secondly, Uriel responds to Ezra by noting that God is entitled to decide when to enact his saving righteousness on earth. In God's wisdom, this will occur only at the inauguration of the last days (4:36–37; 6:5–6, 25; cf. 11:39–46). Being corrupt, the present world order is not an appropriate place for the righteous to receive their reward.¹⁸² The vindication of the righteous must be postponed until the time when God decisively puts an end to all evil (4:27–32).¹⁸³ Only then can Ezra expect a resolution to the evil heart:

It shall be that whoever remains after all that I have foretold to you shall be saved and shall see my salvation and the end of my world . . . and the heart (*cor*) of the earth's inhabitants shall be changed (*mutabitur*) and converted (*convertetur*) to a different spirit. For evil shall be blotted out, and deceit shall be quenched; faithfulness shall flourish, and corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which has been so long without fruit, shall be revealed. (6:25–28)¹⁸⁴

For the author of 4 Ezra, the transformation (*mutabitur/convertetur*) of the human 'heart' is an eschatological reality. This does not mean, however, that humans are unable to obey. Twice after Ezra complains concerning humanity's fate, Ezra is emphatically commanded not to consider himself among the wicked (7:76; 8:47). Ezra's anthropology is so negative and his introspective conscience so forceful that he believes he too will not enter the future world. Uriel's rebuke, however, suggests that Ezra's conscience and anthropology have led him astray. So while Uriel never denies that only a 'few' will be saved (8:3), he does offer a subtle critique to Ezra's overly pessimistic anthropology.¹⁸⁵ In combination with the eschatological hope offered through apocalyptic visions, this corrective seems to have been a key factor in Ezra's new

181 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 62, 66–67; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 24–25.

182 Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 193. Longenecker (*Eschatology*, 156–57; *2 Esdras*, 46) suggests that God does not give grace in the present age. This is not quite right. God's love to Abraham, the gift of Torah, and the visions that Ezra receives are gifts of love. Nevertheless, God's gifts of rewards for and the vindication of the righteous, along with cosmic renewal, await the coming age; see further Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 134.

183 Willett, *Eschatology*, 67.

184 4 Ezra 6:26 resembles Ezek 11:19 and 36:26 and is most likely related to them (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 124).

185 Cf. Willett, *Eschatology*, 70–71.

perspective. He is now able to come to grips with the inadequacy of human knowledge and take comfort in the hope Uriel offers.

6.4.1.5 Resolution

Even though Ezra's heart is still troubled, his address to God beginning in 9:27 should not be taken as a complaint.¹⁸⁶ In stark contrast to the previous episodes, Ezra puts the blame of lawlessness onto the 'fathers' who 'did not keep what had been sown in them', rather than on the inadequacy of God's gift of Torah (9:32–33). In fact, these verses represent a vindication of God's gift which 'does not perish but remains in its glory' despite the sinfulness of those who possess it (9:34–37).¹⁸⁷ Ezra's confidence in God's righteousness is demonstrated in his interaction with a distressed woman whom he encounters in a vision: '[K]eep your sorrow to yourself, and bear bravely the troubles that have come upon you. For if you acknowledge the decree of God to be just, you will receive your son back in due time . . . shake off your great sadness and lay aside your many sorrows, so that the mighty One may be merciful to you' (10:15–16, 24). Ezra's words resemble the perspective of Uriel:¹⁸⁸ he has come to accept the conditionality of the covenant, the reality of Israel's failure, and God's prerogative to rule the universe. It is only after accepting this outlook that Ezra is suited to receive God's mercy, which is offered to him in the visions that follow. Notably, God shows him these visions because he sees how Ezra's compassion on the woman came *ex tot corde* (10:50).

6.4.2 *The Hermeneutics of Moral Competence*

Initially, the moral impotence Ezra associated with the evil heart caused him to question God's righteousness in judging those who lacked the ability to obey. Without dismissing every aspect of Ezra's charge, our author nevertheless puts into Uriel's mouth a corrective to this erroneous view. While in agreement that humanity is plagued by an evil heart which will not be cured until the eschaton (6:26), nevertheless with great effort humans remain sufficiently equipped to overrule the evil heart and accomplish Torah (7:92).¹⁸⁹ By prioritising Deuteronomy 30:19 in his reading of Scripture, our author maintains that only the law-observant will receive an inheritance in the new world.¹⁹⁰ If this is few, so be it; God created the world so that only those who 'labouriously

186 See the arguments by Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 62–64.

187 Willett, *Eschatology*, 71; Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 62–63.

188 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 63–64.

189 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 47; Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 165; Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 134.

190 Philip F. Esler, 'The Social Function of 4 Ezra', *JSNT* 53 (1994), 118.

served the Most High and withstood danger every hour so that they might keep the law' will be saved (7:89). In the end, Ezra accepts that Torah-revelation and willpower equip persons sufficiently for faithfulness: 'If then I have found favour before you, send the holy spirit to me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law, *that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live*' (14:22). Ezra's final exhortation reinforces the author's hermeneutic: 'If you, then, will rule over your minds and discipline your hearts, you shall be kept alive, and after death you shall obtain mercy' (14:34).¹⁹¹ A steadfast will and a mind that understands Torah are the two faculties necessary to effect obedience.¹⁹²

The ten tribes serve as an example, who by separating from gentile nations are thereby enabled to keep Torah (13:41–42).¹⁹³ Thus with considerable resolve ('they formed a plan') and in the right conditions (separation), Ezra's readers could also obey.¹⁹⁴ It is perhaps significant that the place where the tribes go is called Arzareth (13:45), which most likely comes from ארץ אחרת ('another land') in Deuteronomy 29:27. While in Deuteronomy 'Arzareth' is the place where God scatters Israel in anger, in 4 Ezra it is the place where the tribes dwell 'until the last times' when they will come to appear again (14:46). The allusion to Deuteronomy 29:27 becomes especially interesting when one observes how Moses is said to have received revelations about the 'end of times' which he is to keep secret: 'These words you shall publish openly, and these you shall keep secret' (14:5–6). 'Openly' and 'secret' probably reflect גלה and סתר of Deuteronomy 29:28. Since the ten tribes constitute one of the signs which has been revealed to Ezra that God would perform at the end of time (13:32; 14:8), the ten's eschatological return and appearance seems to be part of the 'secret things' of which Deuteronomy 29:28 speaks.¹⁹⁵ Whatever the case,

191 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 168.

192 Michael P. Knowles, 'Moses, the Law, and the Unity of 4 Ezra', *NovT* 31 (1989), 273; Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 211, 215.

193 Perhaps the ten tribes reflect a qualification to Uriel's earlier agreement that only 'few' would be saved (Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 167–69). Nevertheless, the ten still represent a paragon of righteousness (13:41–47); so Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 81.

194 See Jonathan Moo, 'The Few Who Obtain Mercy: Soteriology in 4 Ezra', in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 109–10, who, while not viewing separation as essential, nevertheless notes how it seems to make obedience easier (esp. 109n29).

195 Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 168n85, 171n92. As in the *yahadic* scrolls, the secret things are given to a distinct set of people. But as we will see with Paul, סתר also concerns people that God will reveal at the eschaton as those he is saving.

it is clear that in the future God will vindicate this obedient remnant, remove their evil heart, and establish righteousness.¹⁹⁶

6.4.3 *Gift, Grace, and Human Agency*

Our author's prioritisation of the human will and Torah in effecting obedience, along with his postponing of the reconstitution of the human heart until the eschaton, might suggest that his position is bereft of 'grace'. As we just saw in the final clause of 14:34, however, this is incorrect.¹⁹⁷ In the future the righteous can expect to be the recipients of divine mercy. When God does reveal his salvation, the transformation of humanity and removal of their evil heart will result in flourishing faithfulness (6:25–28). While mercy is not earned, it can be 'obtained' (*consequemini*) through ruling over the mind and disciplining the heart (14:34). Nevertheless, salvation is not something that can be achieved solely by human resolve, irrespective of the divine agent. God spares the righteous 'with great difficulty' and perfects them 'with much labor' (9:21–22). He intervened on behalf of the ten tribes to vouchsafe their journey (13:43–47). We can even assume that the tribes are forgiven for their previous failure to keep the law (13:40, 42).

But while salvation and grace are not completely absent from the present age, it is still the righteous to whom God is gracious—'to those who have turned in repentance to his law' (7:133). While these words come from Ezra before his new-found perspective in 9:27, 'some things' he spoke up to that point are true (8:37).¹⁹⁸ One of those things is that by his own creative intention, God has designed to give his salvific gifts to those who are qualified, to those who are righteous; but not to the wicked (8:38–39).

The gift-logic of the book can be demonstrated by looking at Ezra himself. Ezra's fittingness for revelation is continually emphasised. For instance, in 5:12–13 Ezra receives revelation; yet in order to hear 'greater things' he must 'pray again', 'weep', and 'fast for seven days'. He receives the same instruction in 6:31. The text goes on: 'for the Mighty one has seen your uprightness and has also observed the purity that you have maintained from your youth, *therefore* he sent me to show you all these things' (6:32–33). While Ezra's receiving

196 On the remnant theme, see Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 166; Michael E. Stone, *Features of the Eschatology of IV Ezra*, HSS 35 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 103–04. On the external, internal, and cosmic dimensions of salvation and their relationship in 4 Ezra, see Moo, 'The Few Who Obtain Mercy', 98–113.

197 So Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 135; Moo, 'The Few Who Obtain Mercy', 112–13.

198 Compare the Ethiopic and Georgian versions at 8:40, which give further support to Ezra's plea.

greater revelation was contingent on his preparation, the bare fact that he receives revelation is consonant with his uprightness. Moreover, it is because God sees how Ezra's compassion on the woman came from the entire heart (10:50) that God shows him the visions. And by accepting God's righteousness, Ezra is judged 'worthy to be shown the end of the times' (12:9). Even Ezra's initial complaints and prayers are heard because he is 'worthy' (*dignum*, 13:14). So because his spirit searches out the ways of the Most High (12:4), he is a fitting beneficiary of God's gifts.¹⁹⁹

Likewise Ezra is told to impart this knowledge to suitable recipients, to teach only 'the wise . . . whose hearts you know are able to comprehend and keep these secrets' (12:37–38). Only twenty-four of the books Ezra records can be handed out indiscriminately. But since it is improper to distribute some revelation to the 'unworthy' (*indigni*), seventy books are reserved for the 'worthy' (*digni*), who possess 'the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge' (14:45–47). If this is the case, it would be odd to find Abraham as an exception: God loved him and revealed to him the end of the times precisely because he too was worthy (3:14).

The pattern of gifting suitable recipients is also evident when God gives a gift that confers the ability to obey. For example, God offers Ezra his holy spirit in the form of a drink to enable Ezra to write the Scriptures (14:38–39). Consequently, Ezra's 'heart poured forth understanding and wisdom increased in [his] breast' (14:40).²⁰⁰ But the larger context makes clear why Ezra ultimately found 'favour' (*gratiam*) before God (14:22):

you have forsaken your own ways and have applied yourself to mine, and have searched out my law; for you have devoted your life to wisdom, and called understanding your mother. Therefore I have shown you this, for there is a reward laid up with the Most High. (13:54–56)

Ezra's life qualifies him to receive the interpretation; it also provides the rationale for his 'reward'. It would seem only reasonable to assume that God's gift of the holy spirit correlates with Ezra's desire to reciprocate by passing the revelation on to others.

By performing mighty acts on behalf of the ten tribes, God enables the tribes to separate from the nations so that they can keep the Law. Here again, God performs these gracious enabling acts for those are sufficiently capable of

¹⁹⁹ This same pattern is evident in 2 Baruch (e.g., 20:3–6; 38:1–4; 54:4–5).

²⁰⁰ Note the similar dynamic at work in 1 QH^a 20:11–12. On this theme in Second Temple Judaism, see Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 178–201.

desiring and, at least partially, effecting obedience, demonstrated in their prior resolve to keep the Law in spite of difficulty and personal loss. From the examples above we can see the logic behind God's gifting: God's mercy, his 'grace', extends to the worthy. This dynamic is also at play in salvific gifts. The analogy of precious and worthless material in 7:51–52 correlates the concept of 'worth' with salvation. Even Ezra's initial confession that 'our life is like a mist, and we are not worthy to obtain mercy' in 4:24 presupposes a framework where mercy is predicated upon worth. And in 4 Ezra, the worth of the gift-recipients always manifest itself in Torah-obedience.

This conclusion does not deny 4 Ezra a theology of grace;²⁰¹ it insists only that in 4 Ezra there is a logic behind God's gifting, a logic quite at home in the gift-exchange system of the ancient world.²⁰² In fact, the only way one can say that 'the author has had to abandon his belief in one of the characteristic qualities of that God',²⁰³ his graciousness, is by assuming and expecting a definition of grace that would have appeared very idiosyncratic in antiquity, namely one that sets grace and worth in antithesis. But this idiosyncratic definition should not be the standard by which forms of 'grace' are judged in and around the Second Temple period, not least in 4 Ezra.

6.4.4 *Conclusion*

In sum, 4 Ezra represents one Jew's arguments for the necessity of obedience shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple. It rejects the notion that covenant can be prioritised over law-observance in a way that negates the absolute necessity of the latter. Also rejected is the belief that God's gift of Torah was somehow deficient or that humans are now incapable of resisting the evil heart. It is still within human capacity to seek to obey God. If it does so happen that such capacities are only partially competent to *effect* obedience, God offers his grace and mercy to aid those who seek him. In addition, God offers the promise of vindication, personal renewal, and eschatological blessing in the age to come, including the *eschatological* transformation of the heart (6:26). 4 Ezra thus demonstrates yet another way an ancient Jew could correlate grace and works, divine and human agency.

201 Similarly, Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 173; Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 135.

202 On the ancient benefaction system, see Harrison, *Language of Grace*, 26–95, 167–209.

203 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 100.

6.5 Summary and Conclusion

Our study of the Apocrypha and Pseudopigrapha gives further testimony to how Deuteronomy 30:1–10 informs various Jewish understandings of the solution to human failure. Since behind human transgression lurks the deeper problem of the corrupt heart, for all these writers full moral competence comes through some sort of reconstituted Self. This new Self is sometimes pictured as being inaugurated or anticipated with heart-renewal, only to be consummated at the eschaton (2 Baruch). Other times, heart-circumcision and a renewed ability remain a future hope (Baruch; Jubilees), even something acquired in the new world (4 Ezra). Whatever the case, the new Self does connote a new sense of agency. We have also seen how this promised restoration was read alongside Ezekiel and/or Jeremiah. As such, restoration is often associated with the gifts of a ‘new heart’, ‘new spirit’ and ‘Holy Spirit’.

This literature witnesses to both divine and Israel-priority readings of Deuteronomy 30, which turn out to be more like poles on a spectrum than two distinct interpretative options. This is due to the fact that while all these texts envision some problem with the human heart, from book to book the depth of this problem differs. Nevertheless, most of our authors assume that, although imperfect, at least some retain the capacity to fulfil moral obligations, whether in part or in full. In 4 Ezra, all humanity falls into this category. In Jubilees and possibly 2 Baruch, the scope is drastically reduced to Israel, or even to a righteous predetermined remnant within Israel. What these authors have in common is the belief that Deuteronomy 30 is directed at people who maintain a certain degree of competence as moral agents. In denying to untransformed Israel any ability to respond to God, Baruch stands on the radical end of the spectrum; especially since Israel would provide the *best* example of moral competence.

But even in those texts where obedience is a necessary condition for restoration, it is never a sufficient condition: in every case God’s grace is also necessary, both to the restoration process and to the act of obedience itself. Even describing humans as only *partially* competent implies divine agency’s crucial role: since humans are unable to accomplish what is necessary by their own powers, God’s grace must provide what they lack. Yet while grace is undeserved, it nearly always correlates with human action and is dispensed to those who suitably qualify. Anything else might make God out to be capricious and prodigal. And so while divine and human action are both necessary, in most texts neither are sufficient conditions for eschatological life.

Philo

7.1 Introduction

Philo of Alexandria has left his legacy in a collection of works that give us access to his tireless desire to bridge the gap between his Jewish heritage and Hellenistic setting. Through philosophical reflection and scriptural reasoning, Philo's ambition was to demonstrate Moses' Torah as the masterpiece which gentile treasures could only replicate. Exegesis thus functioned at the heart of his integrative project, and Deuteronomy 30 stands among those texts on which Philo regularly meditated. As we shall see, his reading of that text provides a bridge into his philosophically and theologically informed perspective regarding humanity's capacity for obedience or, more accurately, the spiritual pilgrimage of the soul.

7.2 Deuteronomy 30 and Restoration

7.2.1 *The Necessity of God's Mercy*

In his work *De praemiis et poenis*, much of which is based on Deuteronomy 28–30, Philo advances his view that good lives are rewarded and bad lives punished (1–3). On this basis he encourages those whose souls are 'not altogether hard and stoney (μὴ πάνυ σκληραῖς καὶ ἀποκρότοις) . . . not to despair of transformation for the better or of a return, as it were, from the dispersion of the soul which evil has cultivated, to virtue and wisdom' (*Praem.* 114–115).¹ Philo grounds his hope for self-reform in the mercy of God: 'For (γάρ) whenever God is merciful, he makes all things easy' (*Praem.* 115). His analogy of 'soul-dispersion' borrows from the first part of Deuteronomy 30.² Encouraged by

1 Translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

2 Verbal resonances include: ψυχή, συνάγω, ἐλέεω, διασπορά (cf. Deut 30:2–4). Furthermore, ἐσχατιαῖς ἀπωκισμένους suggests Deuteronomy's idea that the dispersion would be from one end of the heaven to the next (30:4). In both texts, God shows mercy (ἐλέεω), gathers (συνάγω) and leads (ἄγω/εἰσάγω cf. Deut 30:5). In both there is an end to sin (compare the person who stops sinning (ἁμαρτάνω) in *Praem.* 117 with the healing of ἁμαρτία in Deut 30:3). Philo refers to this text elsewhere (e.g., *Conf.* 197) and references the end of the chapter earlier in *Praem.* The allusion is also suggested by James M. Scott, 'Philo and the Restoration of

Deuteronomy 30:4, Philo notes how ‘by one single word of command’ God ‘could easily gather those carried off to the extremities of exile to any place he should will’ (*Praem.* 117). Thus there is reason to be confident that ‘the Saviour who shows mercy will gather the soul after its long wandering . . . and guide it easily from a trackless waste onto a road, when/where it has determined to flee without ever looking back’ (*Praem.* 117).

While the scriptural text specifically addresses the sins and displacement of a nation, Philo finds a microcosm of this plot in the soul. His analogy, of course, is not foreign to the text itself; in LXX Deuteronomy 29:17–18, exile begins with an individual’s mind turning from God (τίνος ἢ διάνοια ἐξέκλινεν ἀπὸ κυρίου). There is, as it were, an invitation to read this text in individualistic terms. Taking up that invitation, Philo has found an assurance for the possibility of personal renewal that is attainable only by divine mercy.

A similar hermeneutic is at work in Philo’s reading of Deuteronomy 4:29, a text similar to Deuteronomy 30. In *De fuga et inventione*, Philo concludes his explanation of the second possible relationship between seeking and finding—when one both seeks and finds—with a reference to that text:

And this also is written among the hortatory precepts, for, it says, ‘You shall turn unto the Lord your God, and shall find him, when you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul’.

This quote follows a series of scriptural examples in which God provides for people who seek his truth: God ‘showers down heavenly wisdom . . . upon all the intellects which are properly disposed for the reception of it, and which are fond of contemplation’ (*Fug.* 138); God enlightens the soul ‘which is endowed with sight, shining upon it with the beams of truth’ (*Fug.* 139); God ‘delights people the moment they begin to examine’ (*Fug.* 141). Deuteronomy 4:29 sets out the principle directly: People who ‘seek’ for God wholeheartedly will find him.³

Successful finding, however, is not due to sufficient capacities within a seeker: the ability to seek does not entail the ability to find. Rather, seeking does not become ‘ineffectual’ (ἀτελής) because God, ‘on account of his merciful nature, comes to meet (προὔπαντῶντος) those who strive to see, manifesting himself by virgin graces’ (*Fug.* 141). As with *De praemiis et poenis* 114–117,

Israel’, in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 565n66.

3 Notable, however, is that Philo can elsewhere speak of many who desired repentance, but were not granted it (*Leg.* 3:213). Likewise, there are some people who are unable to achieve perfection; see Michael L. Sadlow, ‘Philo on Human Perfection’, *JTS* 59 (2008), 517.

the efficacy of human action is attributed to the mercy of God. Nevertheless, God's 'graces' (χάριτες), as all Philo's examples show, are given precisely to those who seek.⁴

7.2.2 *The Necessity of Human Intent*

If Philo insists that God's mercy is the grounds for human possibility, he is equally clear that the objects of God's mercy are precisely

those who being ashamed, seek to pass over from intemperance to self-control; and who reproach a life [worthy] of blame and loathe as many filthy idols as they have impressed upon their souls; and who are zealous for a tranquil state of emotions and run after a peaceful and quiet [way] of life. (*Praem.* 116)

Moses' promise is not for souls which are πάνυ σκληραῖς καὶ ἀποκρότοις ψυχαῖς (*Praem.* 114), but for those absolutely determined to flee (ἀμεταστρεπτὶ φεύγειν διεγνωκότα, *Praem.* 117). Notably, this assertion finds credence in Scripture itself. As I demonstrated, it is possible to read God's restorative mercies in Deuteronomy 30:1–10 as predicated upon the people's wholehearted turning, and this is precisely what Philo has done.⁵ Thus if God has 'mercy on whom he will have mercy' (Ex 33:19), for Philo those on whom God has mercy are indubitably those who strive for restoration. And if one were to ask about those who lack all ability to turn to God but still find him, the answer would be that Philo does not conceive of such people. While one might expect these to fall under the category 'those who do not seek and yet find', this category applies only to 'the self-taught and self-instructed wise men', who were born with innate ability (*Fug.* 166). As such, 'self-taught' can be somewhat misleading; more fundamentally, they were taught through God's creative gifting (*Fug.* 69–170).⁶ Seeking is unnecessary for such people, but not impossible. So while neither are sufficient in themselves, God's grace and human desire are both necessary conditions for personal restoration. Consequently, no hope is offered to people who lack the will to reform and are bereft of virtue.

4 As Zeller notes, in Philo God's grace always corresponds with human virtues. See *Charis bei Philon und Paulus*, SBS 142 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 154.

5 See above (pp. 26–28).

6 See further, Stephen E. Witmer, *Divine Instruction in Early Christianity*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 47–49; cf. C.J. Roetzel, 'Theodidaktoi and Handwork in Philo and 1 Thessalonians', in *L'Apôtre Paul: personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, ed. Albert Vanhoye, BETL (Leuven: University Press, 1986), 331–34.

Divine mercy and human desire are also necessary for national renewal. At the conclusion of *De praemiis et poenis*, Philo envisions a national διασπορά on account of Israel's idolatry (162). The situation can be remedied if people 1) take (ἐάν...δέχονται) Moses' words about the curse as admonitions, and 2) change. If they feel shame in their whole soul, then they will obtain goodwill from a merciful God (*Praem.* 163). A string of participles explain how 'changing' (μεταβάλλω) entails reproaching error (κακίσαντες), as well as confessing (ἐξαγορεύσαντες) and admitting (ὁμολογήσαντες) sin with a purified mind (διανοία κεκαθαρμένη). So radical and palpable is this renewal (μεταβολή) that Philo foresees it as inciting the people's masters to release them (*Praem.* 164). As a result, they return to the land in prosperity, while the curses are transferred to their enemies (*Praem.* 168–169).

Most likely this narrative also alludes to Deuteronomy 30,⁷ where people take (δέξι) Moses' exposition into their hearts and turn wholeheartedly.⁸ Once more we find Deuteronomy 30:4's idea of being exiled to the earth's extremities. Section 168 recalls Deuteronomy 30:5 and 9, where Israel returns to the land of her fathers, becomes fruitful, and is blessed beyond her fathers. Section 169 echoes the reversal of fortune in Deuteronomy 30:7.⁹ Reverberations become stronger when we consider how the concept of turning to one's heart in Deuteronomy 30:1 can imply confession and remorse,¹⁰ and when we observe the possibility that the concept of δiάνοια κεκαθαρμένη alludes to LXX Deuteronomy 30:6.¹¹ On this basis, it seems safe to conclude that under the guidance of Deuteronomy 30, Philo anticipates a national restoration.¹²

In the struggle for redemption, people have three παρακλήτοι: 1) the kindness of God, 2) the holiness of the founders, and 3) personal reformation (*Praem.* 166–167). While all are important, the final ally holds a place of prominence since it activates the other two. Moral reformation is therefore the *sine qua non* of restoration. As we saw with personal renewal, national restoration is

7 Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for his Time*, NovTSup 86 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 278.

8 Deut 30:2: ἐπιστραφήσῃ... ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου; cf. *Praem.* 163:... ὅλη ψυχῆ μεταβάλωσι.

9 Scott, 'Philo and the Restoration', 569.

10 See Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 16. Though the LXX does not render this phrase as such, the idea may still be communicated.

11 περικαθαριεὶ κύριος τὴν καρδίαν σου...

12 This is a minor theme in Philo, however; see Betsy Halpern-Amaru, 'Land Theology in Philo and Josephus', in *The Land of Israel: Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Lawrence A. Hoffman (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 65–93.

dependent upon human willingness to change, and here human agency takes precedence over divine mercy.¹³

7.2.3 *Grace, Gift and Reciprocity*

The relationship between the necessary conditions of divine and human acts is illuminated by exploring the mechanics underlying Philo's conception of gift-exchange. With respect to his reading of Deuteronomy 30, the correlation between gift and reception is most clearly set out in *De Somniis* 2:169–179. Here Philo encourages his readers to attain the virtue of joy through contemplation. Even God demonstrates this virtue when he 'rejoices' when the human race departs from sins, voluntarily (ἐκούσιος) inclining towards righteousness (*Somn.* 2:174). Deuteronomy 30:9b–10 supports his claim:

'For', [Moses] says, 'the Lord your God will return, that he may rejoice over you for good as he rejoiced over your fathers, if you will hear his voice to keep all his commandments and his ordinances and his judgments which are written in the book of this law'. (*Somn.* 2:175)

Though Philo cites the LXX almost verbatim, in its new setting these words no longer describe God's restoration of Israel, but his delight in the entire human race (τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος) whenever they are willingly disposed towards righteousness (2:174). If one wants 'God to rejoice', then 'be joyful yourself . . . rejoice to receive as many good things as he gives you' (*Somn.* 2:176). The point is that God rejoices over *anyone* whose contemplative mind joyfully receives his gifts. Section 177 further explicates (γάρα) the reason: God rejoices to give when the recipients are ἄξιοι χάριτος ('worthy of grace').

Rather than suggesting that people earn God's gifts, ἄξιοι χάριτος specifies what makes a *suitable* beneficiary (here, to have a mind voluntarily turned toward righteousness).¹⁴ That there are prerequisites for the giving and receiving of gifts was as logical in Philo's day as it is in our own.¹⁵ To give a gift that is incapable of being received is nonsensical. Why then would one expect God to give to unsuitable beneficiaries? Such a rationale underlies the logic of Philo's next statement: 'unless you suppose that those who are living in a culpable manner can rightly be said to provoke God's anger; and yet those who are living

¹³ Scott, 'Philo and the Restoration', 567.

¹⁴ See John M.G. Barclay, 'Grace Within and Beyond Reason: Philo and Paul in Dialogue', in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches*, ed. Paul Middleton, et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 11–12.

¹⁵ See Harrison, *Language of Grace*, 120–23.

in a praiseworthy manner do not make him rejoice' (*Somn.* 2:177).¹⁶ Philo contends that God's acts are reasonable and the structure of his argument (εἰ μὴ νομίζεις) takes for granted that his audience agrees. To assume that God would give to an unsuitable recipient is irrational (cf. *Spec.* 1:43–44).

What we have seen in Philo's reading of Deuteronomy 30 regarding the interrelationship of divine and human agency and of gift and reciprocity is further borne out in his section on repentance (*Virt.* 175–186). Philo defines 'repentance' (τὸ μετανοεῖν) as an act where one stops glorifying things less-than-God in order to revere God. This conversion, the most basic form of repentance, is accompanied by a 're-ordering' (μεθαρμόζομαι) of the entire life—from a sinful, vile life to a blameless, virtuous life.¹⁷ The first person plural pronouns indicate that 'reordering' is for Jews as much as it is for potential proselytes (*Virt.* 183).¹⁸ Deuteronomy 30:11–14 shows how every aspect of one's faculties should be brought into harmony, and once this happens a person becomes simultaneously loved by God (θεοφιλής) and a God-lover (φιλόθεος, *Virt.* 184; cf. *Post.* 85).¹⁹

For Philo there is a delicately balanced interplay between divine and human love to which Scripture itself bears witness:

You chose God today to be your God and the Lord chose you today to be his people.

τὸν θεὸν εἴλου σήμερον εἶναι σοι θεόν, καὶ κύριος εἴλατό σε σήμερον γενέσθαι λαὸν αὐτῷ. (*Virt.* 184)

16 Delling, "The "One Who Sees God" in Philo", in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (Chico, Cal: Scholars Press, 1984), 29, implies that this principle is manifest in Philo's consideration of Torah, since God gave Torah to a people who were capable of 'seeing' (*QE* 2:42); cf. *Her.* 78–79. And while seeing itself is a gift, seeing is given to those who labour severely (*Mut.* 81–82).

17 See Jean Laporte, *Théologie liturgique de Philon d'Alexandrie et d'Origène*, Liturgie 6 (Paris: Le Cerf, 1995), 97.

18 Rainer Riesner, 'A Pre-Christian Jewish Mission?', in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 241; Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 32–33, 90–94. Bekken, however, goes on to argue that 'the application of Deut 30:11–14 to Jews and Gentiles has the function of drawing the line from conversion from paganism to Judaism to conversion within the Jewish nation' (112). If such harmony is a 'membership requirement', as Bekken assumes, then one wonders on his analysis what makes this 'Jew' who converts, a Jew in the first place.

19 Philo communicates this maxim through an εἰ + optative conditional construction.

In Deuteronomy 26:17–18, the acts of divine and human selection represent a beautiful exchange of ‘reciprocity’ (ἀντίδοσις, *Virt.* 185). If the interrelation between divine and human choice remains ambiguous, section 185 clarifies each participant’s roles: ‘when a person hastens to serve the One who exists, then God, without delay, takes the one who pleads as his own; God goes ahead to meet the intentions of the one who genuinely and sincerely comes to serve him.’²⁰ Philo again discloses his prioritisation of human choice²¹ and specifies that choice as the proper worship of God (θεραπεύειν τὸ ὄν).²² As in *De fuga et inventione*, we see again how God fittingly responds to those who actively and authentically desire him. Yet here God’s responsiveness extends even to the influence of human ‘desire’ (βούλημα). When the βούλημα is exercised, God reciprocates by aiding the βούλημα.²³

7.2.3.1 Gift and Reciprocity: Implications for Human Agency

On the one hand, Philo’s gift-dynamic assumes that humans need God’s grace in order to follow him; on the other, human reception of grace requires a degree of participation and assumes that humans meet certain qualifications. Such a depiction sharpens the question of just how much moral competence the human agent possesses.

Human Competence: As biblical history demonstrates, God’s blessings are not for those who simply hear the word, but for those who obey.²⁴ In *De praemiis et poenis* 79, Philo paraphrases Scripture’s testimony:

If . . . you keep the divine commandments, being obedient to the injunctions, and receive the things that are explicitly stated, not merely to the point of listening, but if you ‘fulfil’ (ἐπιτελήτε) them through the deeds of your life, you shall have the first reward (δωρεά)—victory over your enemies.

²⁰ Similarly, *Leg.* 3:214–215; cf. 3:105–06.

²¹ So D.A. Carson, ‘Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Philo’, *NovT* 23 (1981), 159.

²² This choice is brought into further relief by *Spec.* 2:166, where Israel’s choice to worship represents the rectification of humanity’s great folly: ἐπληρωθώσατο, κυριώτατα φάναι, τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος . . . τοῦ δ’ ἀγενήτου καὶ αἰδίου μόνον τὴν θεραπείαν ἐλόμενον.

²³ Contra Bekken (*The Word is Near You*, 109), who asserts that Philo ‘wants to emphasise that the people of God are constituted by an initiative taken both by the convert and god’.

²⁴ Compare *Conf.* 197, where Deut 30:4 demonstrates how God cherishes virtue and destroys wickedness.

The precise statement of Moses to which Philo appeals is not clear, but he appears to have Deuteronomy 28:1 in mind.²⁵ Importantly, the ‘quotation’ continues uninterrupted with a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 30:11–14:

[F]or the commandments are not too difficult or burdensome for the powers of those who enact them, neither is the good removed far away, either across the sea or at the extremities of the land, so as to require a long and toilsome journey. Nor has it suddenly journeyed from here to heaven, in captivity, so that [the keeping] of these commands is barely able to be attained by certain men, being raised on high and winged; but [obedience] is near and very close, being established in three parts of each of us, in the mouth, and heart, and hands. This is figurative for the speech, the mind, and the actions. (*Praem.* 80)

Generally, Philo does not question one’s ability to will, to act, or to speak in a way that meets the conditions for grace-reception, and Deuteronomy 30:11–14 provides the anthropological rationale for Moses’ exhortation to obedience. It is therefore within human ‘power’ (δύναμις) to fulfil the hearing of the Law through performance and thus receive God’s δωρεά. In fact, the very reason Deuteronomy 30:15–19 was recorded was on account of human freedom (*Deus* 49–50).²⁶ Being created with both knowledge and freedom of choice, humans are obliged (ὀφείλω) to exercise their reason and choose the good.

This is also evident in the section in *De virtutibus* mentioned above, which stresses that changing (μεθαρμόζω) is within the realm of human capability with words and themes from Deuteronomy 30:11–14:²⁷

For this deed is not difficult, neither is it far removed, neither is it up in the air nor in the extremities of the earth nor beyond the great sea so as to be impossible to take; but it is near, dwelling in three parts of us, mouth, heart, and hands, which symbolise words and intentions and actions. For the mouth is a symbol of speech, and the heart [is a symbol] of plans, and the hands [are a symbol] of actions. (*Virt.* 183)

25 LXX Deut 28:1 has the corresponding terms: ἐντολή, φυλάσσω, and ἀκοή. The nations are said to be given (δίδωμι) to Israel (v. 7), and Philo calls these ‘blessings’ (εὐλογίας); cf. Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 117; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 261–64.

26 But see below on the fragments from a homily on Deut 30:15, 19, which can be found in J. Rendel Harris, *Fragments of Philo Judaeus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1886), 8.

27 ‘This deed’ refers to conversion (Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 33). On the verbal resonance, see Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 29–30.

While the content of repentance has been emptied of Torah-specificity and refilled with ‘virtue’, Philo nevertheless maintains on the basis of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 that repentance remains a live option.²⁸ Likewise, in *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, Philo voices his concern that people search for all types of pleasures, but when it comes to virtue no search is made (65–67). Yet Moses tells us that such a search is not even necessary because virtue is ‘in your mouth, in your heart, and in your hand’ (68). Deuteronomy 30:14 shows that while ‘words’, ‘actions’, and ‘intentions’ need to be cultivated by constant care, virtue is still attainable by those who work for it (*Prob.* 69). In sum, Philo’s various interpretations of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 unambiguously establish humans as competent moral agents.²⁹

Qualified Human Competence: Philo’s statements about humans as competent moral agents, however, must be read in light of what we have already seen about the necessity of God’s grace. For while humanity possesses the ability to seek God, seeking is not sufficient in itself. In several texts we have surveyed, God responds to a naturally insufficient human endeavour with an act that makes individuals effective in accomplishing their task—whether that act deals specifically with repentance and restoration, or more generally with seeking virtue and God.

While Philo generally believes that people are partially competent moral agents (capable of seeking but not of finding), this is not true for everyone. The first group with which he deals in *De fuga et inventione*—those who neither seek nor find—while at one time ‘possessing power to see sharply’, have become blind and ‘debased their reason by ignorance and indifference’ (*Fug.* 121). These people have completely lost the ability to perform an act which incites God’s response. LXX Deuteronomy 29:4 applies to them: “such men have not hearts to understand, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear,” but make the whole of their life blind, and deaf, senseless and mangled in every way’ (*Fug.* 123). Moral competence can thus be lost through poor decisions.

Finally, it is important to note that there are places where Philo will radically relativise human agency even to the point of near denial. Among the fragments of Philo’s writings is a homily on Deuteronomy 30:15–19, where he states that while it is good for a person to choose life, such choices are made

28 Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*, BJS 290 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 151, believes Philo has ignored the condition of obedience and replaced it with the harmony of thoughts, words, and deeds. For Philo, however, such harmony defines obedience (*Praem.* 79–81).

29 See *Mut.* 237, where Philo references Deut 30:12–14 to prove Μωυση̄ς διδάσκων, ὅτι ἡ ἀγαθοῦ κτήσις οὐτ’ ἀδύνατός ἐστιν οὔτε δυσθήρατος (236).

through the thoughtfulness of God (ἐπιφροσύνην θεοῦ). In his exposition, he puts God forward as the *sole* source of causation (cf. *Mut.* 155). All created agencies are therefore rendered inactive and passive. In *De cherubim*, he notes that it is a special attribute of created beings, including humans, to be passive, acted upon (77). What then can account for Moses' command: 'choose life'? It is explainable only as an imperative given to those who have not yet been initiated into the deeper realities about God's sovereignty, which Philo calls 'the great mysteries'. For Philo, strictly speaking, all power must be attributed to God since he gives blessings to the worthy (δωρουμένου τοῖς ἀξίοις τὰ κάλλιστα).³⁰ His primal gifting demands that all good be traced back to him.³¹

While Philo certainly has no investment in modern conceptions of an autonomous will, 'free' from God and possessing power to choose the contrary,³² there are reasons which warn against finding in his extreme language an absolute denial of human agency. As H.A. Wolfson points out, Philo's opening comparison in the fragment is between the happiness of one who chooses, and the greater happiness of the one for whom God 'brings it [i.e., the choice] over to himself and improves it'. This statement seems to be communicating something similar to what we saw in *De fuga et inventione* 139–141 and in *De virtutibus* 185: while the soul chooses the Good, human choice cannot take effect autonomously, without God establishing the efficacy of that choice so that it does bring Life.³³ Furthermore, a denial of human agency would stand in contrast to what he affirms throughout his writings. Philo's statements about human passivity are best understood as a relativisation of human agency vis-à-vis God.³⁴ His concerns are two-fold. On the one hand, philosophically, he wants to safeguard God's absolute sovereignty over the created order as the ἀτίον of all good things;³⁵ on the other, pastorally, he wants to root out an improper outcome which might result from his own view that humans are genuine agents—pride.

30 This is from the fragment on Deut 30:15–19. I take δωρουμένου as an exegetical participle.

31 See further, *Deus* 107; *Virt.* 94. As Harrison (*Language of Grace*, 121) notes, for Philo, the 'entire creation is a eulogy to [God's] grace'. So also, Barclay, 'Grace Within and Beyond Reason', 10–11. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), 1:444, who takes ἀξιος as implying some prior act of 'free will'. As Barclay notes, ἀξιος does not demand this.

32 So Barclay, 'Grace Within and Beyond Reason', 18; contra Wolfson (*Philo*, 1:436–37), who maintains that the will is absolutely undetermined in Philo.

33 Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:445; Zeller, *Charis*, 70.

34 See David Winston, 'Philo's Ethical Theory', *ANRW* 2.21.1 (1984), 377; Zeller, *Charis*, 70n147.

35 Again, see the fragment in Harris, *Fragments*, 8.

Yet it may be that more than rhetorical needs drive Philo to attribute causation exclusively to God. Perhaps this arises from the very structure Philo employs to relate divine and human agency. Note D. Winston's summary of how Philo thinks humans derive their agency:

[I]nsofar as man shares in God's Logos, he shares to some extent in God's freedom. That this is only a relative freedom is actually emphasized by him when he says that God gave man such a portion of this freedom 'as man was capable of receiving' and that he was liberated 'as far as might be'.³⁶

If Winston is correct, then this way of relating the two agencies approaches the model Barclay has called *kinship*.³⁷ On such a model, closely associated with Stoicism, God shares a portion of his own being with humanity.³⁸ Divine and human agencies are thus undifferentiated in character and the two operate within the same causal nexus.³⁹ In so far as all human agency is a kind of borrowed divine agency, all human acts are divine acts in which humans passively participate. Nevertheless, the fact that they do partake in the divine causal power makes them 'an active though subordinate partner of God'.⁴⁰ For Philo, this relative freedom is enough to endow humans with moral responsibility and absolve God of moral culpability.⁴¹

7.2.3.2 Gift and Reciprocity: Implications for Human Boasting

Significantly, Philo is convinced that the subtle interrelationship between divine and human agencies rules out any grounds for boasting. Prior to his section on repentance, Philo warns people about the dangers of pride, drawing on Deuteronomy 12. There, Moses is reflecting on how a person's possessions can lead to arrogance. Preventive care starts with remembering God (*Virt.* 163). Specifically in Deuteronomy 8:18 Moses reminds Israel that God 'gives strength to acquire power' (δίδωσιν ἰσχὺν ποιῆσαι δύναμιν, *Virt.* 165). While Moses is specifically referring to 'wealth', Philo broadens the meaning to note how 'vigour' (εὐτόνον) and 'strength' (ῥωμαλέον) are divine gifts. Philo's purposes are not

36 Winston, 'Ethical Theory', 380.

37 See Barclay, 'Introduction', 6–7.

38 See, e.g., *Deus* 48–49.

39 See further Barclay, 'Introduction', 6; Winston, 'Ethical Theory', 373–77; Engberg-Pedersen, 'Self-Sufficiency and Power', 122–24.

40 Winston, 'Ethical Theory', 380.

41 See Winston, 'Ethical Theory', 380.

primarily theological but pastoral. For Philo, God is ‘the cause of all things’ (*Fug.* 141)⁴² and humanity’s ultimate dependence upon his gifts should remind them of their weakness apart from him (cf. *Leg.* 3:136).

Of course when Philo attributes everything to God, this must be qualified since elsewhere he emphatically maintains that God is not the cause of evil (e.g., *Conf.* 180).⁴³ Philo either means that all things can be traced back to God as their first cause, or that God is the cause of all *good* things. If human dependence upon God is based on the latter, then the picture that emerges is one in which both divine and human agencies are extended to a certain point in all good acts, but only divine agency completes the act. Whatever the case, it would be wrong to infer from God’s responsiveness that he is determined by humanity in some ultimate sense. Accordingly, if Philo’s reading of Deuteronomy shows us that people are capable of seeking God and of virtuous lives, it also reminds us that humans are always ultimately dependent upon God to exercise that virtue;⁴⁴ for it is God himself who both creates people with good dispositions and effects virtues’ fruition.⁴⁵ The gift-exchange dynamics rule out all grounds for boasting.

7.2.4 *Summary: Deuteronomy 30 and Restoration*

In sum, Philo’s reading of Deuteronomy 30 gives us insight into his scriptural hermeneutic and theology. Philo reads the initial narrative of Deuteronomy 30 as a consortium of divine mercy and power that offers hope to those who wholeheartedly desire change. If people will turn to God and exercise virtue, they will receive God’s salvific gifts. While humans do not in and of themselves possess the sufficient capacities to perform acts that are acceptable to God, God delights to aid persons who desire him, even strengthening their desire and making their seeking efficacious. Consequently, Philo offers hope for the soul with even the smallest seed of virtue (*Praem.* 172).

42 See further David Winston, ‘Freedom and Determinism in Philo of Alexandria’, *SPhilo* 3 (1974), 47–70.

43 Through the identification of intermediate agents, Philo seeks to remove God from the immediate cause of punishment; so Carson, ‘Philo’, 152–53.

44 Jean Laporte, *Eucharistia in Philo*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 3 (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1983), 4–5; Ronald R. Cox, ‘Travelling the Royal Road: The Soteriology of Philo of Alexandria’, in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 176–77.

45 See John M.G. Barclay, ‘“By the Grace of God I am What I Am”: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, *LNTS* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 141–46; cf. Winston (‘Freedom’, 56–57), who construes Philo’s position as ‘ethical determinism’.

Yet Philo also believes that such hope is reserved for those poised to leave vice. While never autonomous, humans are competent to turn their wills toward God, opening themselves to the reception of his grace and thereby achieving virtue through God's empowerment. Human competence and the extension of God's agency over all that is good, even over human competence, is not in tension for Philo. While God's agency is foundational for human agency, very rarely will Philo deny humans the ability to enact genuine obedience,⁴⁶ even an obedience which elicits God's response. The general picture that arises out of Philo's anthropology is that human agency is both intact and, with respect to good works, in non-contrastive relationship to God's own agency.⁴⁷ Though Philo possibly refers to the purified heart of LXX Deuteronomy 30:6 in *De praemiis et poenis* 163, he construes it as a condition for mercy.⁴⁸ It would not seem from his reading of Deuteronomy 30 that created agents require transformation to obey God. A more thorough picture of the relationship between human transformation and moral competence, however, requires a broader consideration of Philo's use of the heart-circumcision metaphor.

7.3 Philo and Heart-Circumcision

7.3.1 *Physical Circumcision and Heart Circumcision*

Though Philo does not unambiguously allude to Deuteronomy 30:6 in any of his references to that chapter,⁴⁹ he does show an interest in the heart-circumcision/purification motif. In fact it is hard for Philo to read of one circumcision without seeing two: one concerning the penis and the other concerning reason (*QG* 3:46; *Spec.* 1:6).⁵⁰ To perform this second circumcision is to cut away

46 Hay notes that for Philo 'the Mosaic Law is valid for all humanity . . . [and] is not beyond human strength'. See 'Philo of Alexandria', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 374–75.

47 Compare Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:441, who assumes a competitive relationship.

48 See Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 276–277.

49 See, however, the possibility in *Praem.* 163. This absence is, in part, accounted for by his dependence on the LXX.

50 The only place Philo mentions physical circumcision without a discussion of heart-circumcision in the surrounding context is *Sobr.* 8 and possibly *Somn.* 2:25; however, see below on the latter. Philo's discussion in *Spec.* overlaps a great deal with his exegesis in *QG* 3:46–52; see further Richard D. Hecht, 'The Exegetical Contexts of Philo's Interpretation of Circumcision', in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, et al. (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1984), 69–71.

arrogant and resistant thoughts, to rid oneself of evil passions (*QG* 3:46; *Spec.* 1:305–06; *Migr.* 92; cf. *Fug.* 91).⁵¹ It is connected to physical circumcision in that physical circumcision was also commanded to keep (male) prides in check (believing that males bring the most significant component to procreation) (*QG* 3:47). Furthermore, both circumcisions excise excessive pleasures that confuse the mind. Finally, both objects of circumcision are generative organs: the first generates offspring and the second generates thoughts, ‘the most generative (force) of the heart’ (*QG* 3:48; cf. *Spec.* 1:6). Since Philo sees the heart as the seat of the mind, to circumcise the mind is also to circumcise the καρδία (*Spec.* 1:6). If Philo believes that the mind is superior to the body and thus presents the superior circumcision, he still maintains that both circumcisions are necessary; neither figurative interpretation nor symbolic metaphor should lead a person to disavow physical requirements (*Migr.* 92).

7.3.2 Heart-Circumcision, Transformation, and Perfection

From the above, we can begin to detect the implications that heart-circumcision will have on a human agent: circumcision of the mind/heart results in a changed disposition which facilitates obedience. In *De specialibus legibus* 1:304, Philo addresses those who do not exhibit virtue because they are ἀπερίτμητοι τὴν καρδίαν. That virtue is readily available (παρρημι) only exacerbates the uncircumcised’s culpability. The admonition in LXX Deuteronomy 10:16 ‘Circumcise your hardheartedness’ applies to such people; for a circumcised heart would produce a mind that is easy to manage, ‘submitting to the laws of nature’ (1:305–6). Given that for Philo the νόμος φύσεως, the Mosaic law, and the virtues are interconnected so as to be almost indistinguishable (*Mos.* 2:48; *Spec.* 4:133–134),⁵² one can see how heart-circumcision effects an interior change that aids an individual’s obedience.

We can elucidate the kind of change Philo envisions when we turn to a passage in *Legum allegoriae*, which distinguishes a ‘Perfect Man’ from one who is still advancing toward perfection (3:140). The ‘Perfect Man’ becomes such as he cuts out (ἐκτέμνων) the whole of his anger from his soul, thus making it

51 Compare Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 26–27, who fails to discern the influence of the scriptural texts which stand behind such thinking.

52 John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 172; David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 106–07; Ellen Birnbaum, ‘Two Millenia Later: General Resources and Particular Perspectives on Philo the Jew’, *Currents in Biblical Research* 4 (2006), 250–55.

manageable.⁵³ Again Philo indicates that eradicating evil thoughts will make the Self compliant. But now we learn that the person who does this becomes a 'Perfect Man'. What does this phrase mean and what might it tell us about the transformative value of heart-circumcision?

In a recent article on human perfection, M.L. Sadlow points out how Philo believes it is his job to help people on their way toward perfection.⁵⁴ The patriarchs provide us with different models for reaching this goal (*Abr.* 52–54; *Congr.* 34–38; *Somn.* 1:168).⁵⁵ Abram reaches perfection through learning. First he studies nature, but then advances to contemplating God, eventually becoming a sage.⁵⁶ When Abram reaches the point of perfection he is reconstituted as a new person, marked by a changed name—Abraham (*Mut.* 270). Elsewhere Philo tells us that the nature of a 'Perfect Man' is of distinct ontological status: he is 'neither God nor man, but . . . something on the border between uncreated and perishable nature' (*Somn.* 2:234).⁵⁷ Isaac, unlike his father, did not require this transformation; he is the exemplar of a small, privileged group known as the 'self-taught' (*Sacr.* 6; *Cher.* 1–10).⁵⁸ Since these are *born* in possession of virtue, they do not provide a model for seeking.⁵⁹ Finally, there is Jacob, the labourer. He obtains virtue through the blood, sweat, and tears of apprenticeship (*Congr.* 69). While his journey is characterised by ups and downs, through perseverance he too can reach perfection.

This sketch provides a window into Philo's understanding of heart-circumcision. First, since in *Legum allegoriae* 3:140 perfection is correlated with what Philo calls heart-circumcision elsewhere, then it follows that a heart-circumcised person is 'neither God nor man, but . . . something on the border between'. The second thing a correlation between perfection and heart-circumcision suggests is that there are at least three ways that one might attain heart-circumcision: through birth, through study, or through moral discipline, with the latter two being the more ordinary routes.⁶⁰ Once perfection

53 On the anthropological constitution of this perfect man, see *Somn.* 2:234.

54 Sadlow, 'Human Perfection', 504.

55 Sadlow, 'Human Perfection', 509.

56 Importantly, *Somn.* 2:169–179 sets forth contemplation as the condition for gift-reception.

57 While Fred W. Burnett, 'Philo on Immortality: A Thematic Study of Philo's Concept of *παλιγγενεσία*', *CBQ* 46 (1984), 453–58, discusses those who reach perfection as experiencing a rebirth of the soul, before death he seems to confine rebirth to the ethical sphere (456). From *Somn.* 2:234, it is better to conceive of Philo's 'perfect man' as existing in an in-between-state before full rebirth at death.

58 See also *Op.* 148; *QG* 1:8; *Leg.* 3:135.

59 Isaac's virtues can be emulated, however. See Hay, 'Philo', 366n31.

60 Sadlow, 'Human Perfection', 511; Witmer, *Divine Instruction*, 44–47.

is reached, one becomes virtuous by nature. Consequently, heart-circumcision holds eternal value; for it inclines the will towards virtue, *which is necessary for eternal life*. Commenting on Genesis 17:14, Philo notes how ‘the soul that is not circumcised of the vices of the flesh cannot be saved’ (*QG* 3:52). He pities those who do not drink from the labours of virtue because virtue is able ‘to immortalise’ (ἀθανατίζω, *Spec.* 1:303). Obtaining heart-circumcision is therefore critical and must be acquired for Life.⁶¹

7.3.3 *The Agent of Heart-Circumcision*

Like most of his concepts, the picture that emerges from Philo regarding heart-circumcision and human agency is not altogether straightforward. Though the circumcising agent is often left grammatically ambiguous, most contexts indicate that Philo expects humans to remedy their obstinate heart. For instance, as with *De specialibus legibus* 1:305–6, in *QG* 3:46 Philo explains heart-circumcision with a reference to LXX Deuteronomy 10:16. In accord with that verse, which expects humans to perform the removal, Philo claims that in doing this ‘you [his audience] shall make the sovereign part free and unbound’. Likewise, in *QG* 3:48 physical circumcision shows that ‘one ought to cut off other desires as well’. Furthermore, in *De specialibus legibus* 1:10, circumcision is a symbol of ‘knowing himself’ (γινῶναι τινα ἑαυτὸν) and ‘casting off’ self-conceit.⁶² Thus Philo attributes symbolic circumcision (e.g., heart-circumcision) to human agents, which makes sense given his dependence on LXX Deuteronomy 10:16. This conclusion is also congruent with the impression Philo gives in *QG* 3:48 and in the examples of Abraham and Jacob; namely that heart-circumcision is performed through the study of or obedience to Torah.

There are a few notable exceptions which might attribute heart-circumcision to other agents.⁶³ In *De somniis* 2:25, Philo compares reaping a harvest to being ‘twice circumcised’ (δὶς περιτέμνειν), a comparison probably invited by Leviticus 19:23.⁶⁴ Encouraged by an infinitive absolute construction, ἀργείων ἀφαργίζεσθαι,⁶⁵ Philo goes on to speak of the purification of the soul that has already been purified: τὴν ἀθάρασιν τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτὴν καθαίρεσθαι. This ‘double

61 Cf. Burnett, ‘Philo on Immortality’, 464–67.

62 The reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν, following an infinitive with an accusative subject, indicates that we should take the adjoining verb, ἀπώσασθαι, reflexively as well. Likewise, in *Spec.* 1:305, περιτέμνεσθε and ἀποκείρασθε seem to describe something people do to themselves.

63 *QG* 3:51 might make the divine word out to be the circumcising instrument.

64 Philo alludes to Lev 19:9 in section 23. He also references Lev 19:23 in *Leg.* 1:52 and *Plant.* 95, 113.

65 See LXX Num 6:2.

purification' can also be called a 'circumcision of circumcision' (περιτομῆς περιτομῆν) and occurs whenever a person delivers his soul to God to make it bright. Rightly, these individuals do not trust their own 'competence' (ικανός) to wash and purify a stain-filled life without θείας ἐπιφοροσύνης ('divine guidance'). At first, it seems as though Philo might be suggesting that humans perform the first purification while God enacts the second. But this would misunderstand his point. Rather, Philo's claim is that *when* people acknowledge their dependence upon divine guidance, they become doubly purified. The second circumcision is *the realisation of divine assistance itself*.⁶⁶ Philo insinuates that *both* acts are performed by a human who is dependent on divine agency. Since humans are always reliant upon divine power, the two agencies are not mutually exclusive.⁶⁷

Finally there are the God-born, like Isaac, who are *sui generis* in their natural perfection. They owe this to creation itself, and thus to God's creative agency. The metaphor of heart-circumcision does not easily apply to these exceptional humans since it always assumes the eradication of defect, the reconstitution of the individual. The God-born, however, were never *reconstituted*, they were simply *constituted* and have remained so. Thus while we may trace their nature and obedience to God's creative agency and primal gifting, it would be inaccurate to say their hearts were circumcised, either by themselves or by God.

7.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two notable ways this study on Philo contributes to our overall investigation. First, Philo expands our models for thinking about agency and causation in the ancient world. For Philo, God is always the ultimate, primary, and first cause. In this light, human agency will invariably appear borrowed, relativised and 'passive'. Notwithstanding, human 'passivity' does not indicate inactivity, nor does it imply that humans are not themselves

66 Circumcision takes a similar 'symbolic' meaning in *Spec.* 1:10–11: God is the true cause of all things and we must eradicate any thoughts that suggest otherwise. See John M.G. Barclay, 'Paul and Philo on Circumcision: Romans 2:25–9 in Social and Cultural Context', *NTS* 44 (1998), 539; cf. *Cher.* 74–77, 99–109.

67 Importantly, the link Philo draws between double-purification and double-circumcision indicates that he would not have had difficulty aligning heart-purification in LXX Deut 30:6 with symbolic circumcision. Thus his prioritisation of human agency in heart-circumcision cannot be attributed solely to his dependence on the LXX. Theological hermeneutics are also at play.

agents. Nevertheless, the very fact that on Philo's sophisticated construal humans derive agency only by partaking in God's own agency should engender humility. Thus with greater perspicuity than we have heretofore seen, Philo opens up the possibility of conceiving of divine and human agency in non-contrastive and yet asymmetrical terms.

A textured understanding of agency in Philo must also recognise that while humans are customarily depicted as being endowed with effective moral capacities, in any given act they might not be fully capable of achieving a creative effect. In *De fuga et inventione*, for instance, we saw that the ability to seek does not necessarily entail the ability to find. So while divine and human agency are non-contrastive and related by kinship, the share of competency which God bestows on humans can ultimately be 'ineffectual' (ἀτελής) for the fulfilment of an act. Without having their agencies relate in inverse proportion, it is as if God and the human are both fully engaged in a work up to a certain point, at which time human agency falls out and God is the sole agent involved in bringing the work to completion. In many cases humans are dependent upon God, not only because their agencies are grounded upon his own generative energies, and not only because human agency represents a share in divine agency, but also because his agency is necessary to bring their endeavours to fruition.

Secondly, this investigation has given us insight into Philo's conception of humanity's capacity for obedience, obedience's relationship to personal transformation, and how these subjects fit within the economy of salvation. Philo's reading of Deuteronomy 30 complies with his overall theological interests. His chief concern is the soul's approach to God and his aim is to help people on this ascent.⁶⁸ It is unusual for him to deny humanity's moral competence, and Deuteronomy 30:11–14 justifies his view. There are a few who have forfeited their potential, and here LXX Deuteronomy 29:4 applies. When Philo occasionally feels it necessary to dismiss human agency, he does so primarily for philosophical reasons. He has not been led to such a place because of a desire to praise God (as we saw in the *Hodayot*), or because of an overwhelming conviction about humanity's sin (as we saw in Baruch), nor even because of a personal experience of God's grace. His concern with divine causation is to show a coherent rationale behind the universe. Once we bracket this motive out, we see in fact that Philo is unwilling to dispense with human agency. Nevertheless, for all humanity's virtue-seeking capacities, no one ascends to God without his enabling grace.

68 See Hay, 'Philo', 365–69, esp. 365–366.

For Philo, divine gifting and the logic of the universe meet in salvation's economy. Moses' laws reflect a cosmic, God-given moral order. Present and eschatological blessing are contingent upon conformity to that order.⁶⁹ It would therefore be unreasonable for God to act contrary to this order by giving his grace to the unreceptive. God's gifts are thus reserved for those who are ἄξιοι χάριτος, including the graces which are necessary to find him. This does not take away from the 'gracious' character of divine gifting: God's gifts are never 'deserved'. And yet to receive God's grace, individuals must open themselves as suitable recipients to what is on offer.

Such suitability is most transparent in those who are, or have become, ὁ τέλειος. While a few are born this way, most who reach this height do so by the eradication of their evil desires, which in Philo is equivalent to heart-circumcision. Through progressive stages of developmental achievement, all humans apart from the 'earth-born' are able to arrive at a place where they are reconstituted as harmoniously perfect agents—totally led by God. In such a person is a house suitable for God to inhabit.

69 Peder Borgen, *Philo, John and Paul: New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity*, BJS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 28.

PART 3

Paul



Our study of Israel's scriptural heritage and of the interpretative traditions in Second Temple Judaism questions the assumption that Paul bypasses Deuteronomy 30:1–10 and even invites a reconsideration of how that text, along with Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36–37, might have influenced his conceptions about divine and human agency. In chapter 8, I will seek to substantiate Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10 through an investigation of Romans 2:17–29. While that small section houses some of the apostle's most radical statements, it is my contention that these are nothing less than his own reading of and wrestling with Israel's Scriptures. Examining Paul's hermeneutic will not only throw fresh light on his argument; it will also begin to answer questions about the way he structures divine and human agency. It should be noted that the approach taken here makes no claims regarding Paul's readers' abilities to pick up on his allusions. It is assumed that a range of familiarity with Israel's Scriptures existed in the congregations to whom Paul wrote. Our primary interest concerns how Paul's reading of his scriptural heritage informed his theology and vice-versa.

Chapter 9 investigates how the conclusions reached in Romans 2:17–29 interact with larger themes in Pauline theology as he develops his argument in Romans. I first trace Paul's reading of these scriptural narratives in Romans 5–8, with 7:5–6 serving as a basecamp. I then explore what light our investigation thus far might throw on Paul's radical rewriting of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Romans 10:6–8. In each case, my aim is to show the ways in which the conclusions from Romans 2 regarding grace and agency are confirmed and enriched when set in this wider context.

Chapter 10 briefly explores Paul's reading of these narratives in texts outside of Romans by looking at 2 Corinthians 3:5–6, Philippians 3:3, and the disputed Colossians 2:11–12. Even if the Pauline authorship of this final text is doubted, it still serves as confirmatory evidence for how Deuteronomy 30 was interpreted within the Pauline community.

Paul's Reading of Deuteronomy 30 in Romans 2:17–29

8.1 Introduction: Establishing the Connection

Our foray into the apostle's reading of heart-transformation narratives begins in Romans 2:17–29. Although commentators generally recognise Paul's reliance upon scriptural traditions for the concept of heart-circumcision,¹ surprisingly few entertain the question of whether or not specific texts have influenced him.² The aim of this chapter is to show how Romans 2:17–29 draws heavily on Deuteronomy 29–30. By imaginatively reconstructing Paul's reading of those chapters, we can begin to uncover how he expounds the agency dynamics contained therein. But first it needs to be established that Paul actually alludes to Deuteronomy 29–30 here. The reasons for assuming an intertextual relationship are as follows:

1) *Common Vocabulary*: Romans 2 shares with Deuteronomy 30 the concept of *περιτομή καρδίας* (heart-circumcision).³ While the reference could recall a number of related passages (e.g., Deut 10:4; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25), Deuteronomy 30:6

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- 1 E.g., James D.G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 1:127; C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., 2 vols., 1CC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:172; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 49; Leander E. Keck, *Romans*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 85.
 - 2 Exceptional are Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart* and Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 136n3, though the latter only suggests Deut 27–30 is in the background.
 - 3 While the LXX renders 30:6 *καὶ περικαθαρίει κύριος τὴν καρδίαν σου*, LXX 10:16 bears *περιτεμείσθε*. The close thematic and lexical correspondence between 10:12–16 and 30:6–8 suggests מור as underlying both texts. It appears that the LXX has chosen 'cleanse' in 30:6 to avoid what would have been an unfamiliar metaphor for its Greek readers. This was not possible in 10:16, as the object of the circumcision was not merely 'heart' but 'foreskin of your heart'. On Paul's reliance on a Hebraizing revision of the Old Greek, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and The Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 167–69, 255n12, 256n15.

is most evidently the primary referent. Texts such as Jeremiah 9:25 and Ezekiel 44:7–9 may be excluded on the grounds that they speak of the ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίας, while Paul speaks only of the circumcised heart. Further, the unique pairing of κρυπτά and φανερά in Romans 2:28–29 recalls LXX Deuteronomy 29:28—the only instance of this combination in any form in the Old Greek. *Unusual and specialised vocabulary highlights verbal connections* with Romans 2:27–29.⁴ Less specialised vocabulary links are present when Paul writes of the one who ‘keeps the righteous requirements of the Law’ (ἐάν . . . τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση, v. 26). This phrase echoes Deuteronomy 30:10 where Israel is exhorted φυλάσσεσθαι . . . τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ . . . ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τούτου.⁵

2) *Availability and Recurrence*: Paul’s explicit citations of this text elsewhere in Romans demonstrate that the source was available and reoccurs in his letters.⁶

3) *Common Linear Development and Thematic Coherence*: Deuteronomy 29:18 warns of an individual who, upon hearing the threat of the curse, presumes upon God’s mercy and says: ‘He/it will be kind to me, for I am walking in the error of my heart’. The irony is that God will not be merciful: the covenant curses will be enacted and the entire nation sent into exile (29:19–27). God, however, will bring his people out of exile, rejoice over them, circumcise their hearts and they will keep the Law.

At least since Romans 2:17, Paul’s argument is aimed at one who calls himself a Jew. Like the individual in Deuteronomy 28:18, this Jew is presumptuous: he boasts in God and in Torah (2:17, 23), persuaded that he is qualified to lead others (v. 19). By applying LXX Isaiah 52:5 to this figure, Paul paints his fellow countryman in exile: ‘For on account of you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles’. As S.J. Gathercole has noted, ‘this Jew is not merely an individual but a representative of the nation’.⁷ As in Deuteronomy, themes of exile are immediately followed by obedience to the Law, heart-circumcision and praise from God (vv. 26, 29).

This evidence offers an adequate basis for assuming that Romans 2:17–29 alludes to Deuteronomy 29–30.⁸ By putting Romans 2:17–29 into dialogue with its scriptural background, we can now determine how Paul might have read those chapters. To do this, I will examine the overlapping motifs between the texts to work out how they converge. Since the relationship between Paul’s

4 Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, 99.

5 Likewise, in 30:16 Israel is commanded φυλάσσεσθαι τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ.

6 E.g., Deut 29:4 in Rom 11:8; Deut 30:12, 14 in Rom 10:6, 8.

7 Gathercole, *Boasting*, 199.

8 Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, 106–07.

thought and Israel's scriptural heritage is the primary focus of this study, not every exegetical question will be addressed. Instead, the focus is on what appears to be a controlling issue in both texts: eschatological life.

8.2 The Way to Life and Fulfilling the Commands

The motif of judgement is pervasive in Romans 2. It is referenced in every verse up through verse 13 and again in verse 16. With discussion of eschatological judgement comes the topic of eschatological life. Paul writes that those who seek glory, honour, and immortality will be given 'eternal life' (ζωὴν αἰώνιον, vv. 6–8), a motif which continues in verses 25–29. Commenting on verse 29, Schreiner rightly notes how ἔπαινος denotes the eschatological reward of eternal life.⁹ Likewise in verse 26, λογισθήσεται—as future passive—describes an eschatological reckoning by God since 'the true Jew is an eschatological phenomenon'.¹⁰

To live into the eschatological age is to attain Life. In Deuteronomy 30, Life is given to those who turn and obey God, 'to keep and to do all his commandments and his righteous decrees' (φυλάσσεσθαι καὶ ποιεῖν πάσας τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ, v. 10). Following Deuteronomy, Paul reasons that only those who keep the righteous decrees of the Law (ἐὰν . . . τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσῃ) will be finally counted (λογισθήσεται) as God's people and given Life (2:26, 29). As with several of his contemporaries, Paul has read Deuteronomy 30 with reference to eternal life.¹¹ Also like his contemporaries, Paul makes Life contingent upon obedience.¹² Despite common assumptions, this is not uncharacteristic. Paul has just said that God gives eternal life to those who persist in good works (2:7); in 6:22, Life is the τέλος of holiness and in 8:13 it is conditioned upon mortifying the deeds of the body. Only those who

9 Schreiner, *Romans*, 140.

10 Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 74. So also C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1962), 59. Dunn (*Romans*, 1:122) notes that the future could be logical but is 'probably temporal'; similarly, Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 169n17.

11 See earlier discussions on the eschatological interpretations of Deuteronomy 30 at 4QMMT, 2 Bar 78:6–7, and 4 Ezra 7:96, 129.

12 This is evident, without exception, in every text studied. See, e.g., 4QMMT C30; CD 3:12–20, 7:4–9; Pseudo-Ezekiel [4Q385 f2:1–9]; Bar 3:14, 4:1; 2 Bar 82:2–6; 4 Ezra 7:17–22 and the discussion of perfection in Philo.

sow to the Spirit reap life (Gal 6:8), while those who gratify the Flesh will not (5:21). There is in Paul a moral imperative on which Life is somehow dependent. But what is this imperative and who, if anyone, does Paul believe satisfies it? Deuteronomy 30 provides insight into both questions.

8.2.1 *Fulfilling the Law as Adherence to the Shema*

If in Romans 2:25 Paul insists that only those who fulfil the Law are the eschatological and hence ultimate Jews, in 2:26 he goes further by saying that it is possible for such a person to be uncircumcised (v. 26)!¹³ The question of what Paul means by ‘keeping the commandments’ and how exactly this can exclude circumcision has bemused many exegetes (cf. 1 Cor 7:19). A related question is whether or not he has actual people in mind. On the one hand are those who believe Paul means perfect conformity to Torah’s demands. Paul would then be speaking hypothetically—for no one could perfectly perform Torah—and his argument is that a simple transgression invalidates covenant membership and eschatological standing.¹⁴ On the other hand are those who think that the phrase describes general conformity to the covenant. Whether this is defined as ‘faith’,¹⁵ ‘obedience’,¹⁶ ‘status’,¹⁷ or something else, Paul is not presenting a hypothetical situation but referring to actual Gentiles.¹⁸

So exactly what does Paul mean when he refers to a Gentile who ‘keeps the righteous requirements of the Law’ (ἐάν . . . τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση) and ‘fulfils the Law’ (τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα)? The fact that both phrases function as counter-descriptions of the ‘transgressor’ (παραβάτης, vv. 25, 27) suggests that they hold a similar meaning.¹⁹ As noted earlier, ἐάν . . . τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση echoes Deuteronomy 30:10, which describes Israel’s satisfaction of the *Shema* in light of the restoration. If Paul has carried forward this meaning then he probably does not have perfect conformity to every Mosaic stipulation in mind. But ‘covenant status’ is not in view either. Since Paul is reading

13 My choice of ‘ultimate’, rather than ‘true’ or ‘real’, reflects the eschatological nature of Paul’s description. See also CD 3:3–4, which speaks of the Sons of Zadok being the ‘chosen of Israel’ who will ‘appear’ at the eschaton as the ultimate Israel.

14 E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 168–69; Richard H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1:18–3:20*, WUNT 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 193–95.

15 Barrett, *Romans*, 58.

16 Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter*, 48.

17 N.T. Wright, ‘The Law in Romans 2’, in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D.G. Dunn, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 138–39.

18 So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:173.

19 Schreiner, *Romans*, 136.

Deuteronomy 30, he most likely describes someone who loves and obeys God wholeheartedly.

8.2.2 *Israel's Failure and Paul's Interlocutor*

The question of what type of obedience Paul thinks is required is bound up with the question of what he means by *παραβάτης*. What is the precise breach that invalidates his interlocutor's circumcision and leaves him condemned? Deuteronomy 29–30 give us a hint. There, the curses which form the backdrop to restoration come because Israel's heart is neither loving nor obedient, but 'wandering' (*ἀποπλανήσει*, LXX 29:18). She 'will forsake the covenant' (*κατελίποσαν τὴν διαθήκην*, LXX 29:24) and choose Death (30:15). Importantly, it is *not* transgression of specific Laws which enacts the sanctions. Rather, Israel's complete negligence in responding to YHWH due to a lack of 'a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear' (LXX 29:3) precipitates her dispersion.

Remarkably, Paul believes this to be the very situation of his Jewish non-Christian contemporaries; the words of LXX Deuteronomy 29:3 still apply to 'this very today' (*ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας*, Rom 11:8).²⁰ By depicting his interlocutor in exile (Rom 2:24), Paul discloses his belief that his dialogue partner is no exception and seeks to convince him of this reality. The problem is not that his interlocutor has presumed to accomplish Torah in its minute detail when, in fact, he has not. Still less is Paul concerned about an overly restricted, ethnocentric theology of mercy.²¹ Instead, Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 29–30 leads him to be critical of his contemporary's unresponsiveness to God, and the 'transgression' committed is nothing less than forsaking the covenant.²²

20 So Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 435: 'In Paul's reading of this text, the Israel of his own day is in exactly the same situation as the Israel addressed by Moses in the land of Moab'. This is where I fundamentally disagree with Thorsteinsson's proposal (*Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003] 211–231 esp. at 217–221, 226) that Paul is in dialogue with a circumcised Gentile proselyte. It is hardly convincing that Paul's charge of *ἑροσυλεῖν* would be any more agreeable to that figure than to a native born Jew.

21 Rightly Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 193; contra Dunn, *Romans*, 1:122. To be sure, Paul's argument has the *effect* of discounting circumcision as the identifying mark of the people of God, but that is not his primary purpose. The *γάρ* in v. 25 denotes that Paul is continuing his argument, introducing the Gentile as further support of the spiritual bankruptcy of his interlocutor, not to argue for Gentile legitimacy in the covenant.

22 See Akio Ito, 'Romans 2: A Deuteronomistic Reading', *JSNT* 59 (1995), 31–32. While Keck (*Romans*, 86) is right to note that disobedience is not necessarily apostasy, here Paul is concerned with deeper matters than acts of disobedience. Since not all Jews commit the

This supports Gathercole's conclusion that 'Paul is essentially dealing with a dialogue partner . . . *who is unrepentant*, and (though not visibly) an apostate'.²³ Gathercole helpfully reminds us that such apostasy would have forfeited the efficacy of cultic elements such as the temple sacrifices and circumcision since these 'did not function *ex opere operato*'.²⁴ As Paul insists, circumcision is not a ticket to eschatological life, and failure to attain eschatological life is as good as never having been circumcised (v. 25). Consequently, his interlocutor could not point to his circumcision for assurance since it now denoted a broken covenant.²⁵

The view that Paul was attacking contemporaries who presumed to perform Torah comprehensively has provided those who embrace the New Perspective a convenient whipping boy over the last 30 years. Yet to describe the religion of Paul's interlocutor as one characterised by repentance, atonement, and forgiveness is extremely misleading as well, since it skirts Paul's *reading* of Israel's condition.²⁶ It is important to realise that without eyes to see, ears to hear, or a heart that understands, Paul believes that his interlocutor lacks the capacity to be an effective moral agent. Paul's disagreement with his interlocutor, then, is precisely over his interlocutor's responsiveness to God, something Paul believes is all too absent.

sins of stealing, adultery, and temple robbery (vv. 21–22), Paul's point is not that these specific transgressions in and of themselves put one under covenant curse. The three transgressions that Paul lists serve his rhetorical point that Jewish teachers fail to perform the very things they teach. Their problem is deeper than any single transgression.

23 Gathercole, *Boasting*, 206, emphasis his.

24 Gathercole, *Boasting*, 210. So also Käsemann, *Romans*, 72: 'Paul does not recognize any sacraments that work *ex opere operato*. . . . If they do not open the path of obedience, their *ὠφέλεια* is illusory'.

25 John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; reprint 1987), 85–86: 'The practicing of the law is thus equivalent to the keeping of the covenant. Transgression of the Law which makes circumcision uncircumcision is the unfaithfulness to covenant obligations which in Old Testament terms is called the breaking of the covenant. . . . When these obligations are neglected and violated, circumcision has become uncircumcision and the outward sign is bereft of its significance'.

26 Beyond Paul's reading, a second element to be considered is the redemptive-historical. As Schreiner (*Romans*, 134) correctly notes, 'The only way for sins to be forgiven, now that Christ has come, is through the death of Christ'. Thus, while Paul is arguing from a common scriptural heritage, he is by no means arguing on his interlocutor's terms. This seems more adequate to me than, e.g., Keck (*Romans*, 84), who thinks silence about the Temple is evidence that the interlocutor is a diaspora Jew.

8.3 Heart-Circumcision and the Reconstitution of the Moral Agent

As we have seen, in Romans 2:25–29 those who are regarded as the eschatological people of God are those who are obedient. Yet in verse 29, the one who receives eschatological blessing is also described as being circumcised of heart. Since it is possible for one to be circumcised in the flesh but fail to attain eschatological Life (v. 25), Paul deems circumcision of the heart more fundamental in defining the 'Jew.' An ultimate Jew, the Jew who lasts, is a Jew who is presently 'in the concealed' (ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ) and not 'in the evident' (ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ), because his (or her) circumcision cannot immediately be ascertained (vv. 28–29).

Paul's statements are most curious and would have come across as odd to most of his contemporaries—not least when he claims, circumcision is not 'in the evident and in the flesh' (οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, v. 28). How does heart-circumcision relate to obedience? What could he mean when he says the ultimate Jew is concealed? And most importantly, how did Paul come to the conclusion that an uncircumcised Gentile could possess those qualities belonging to the true Jew? While Paul's experience might provide some rationale, Deuteronomy, and Paul's reading of it, has also had a powerful influence on him. If we are to understand better his views on these topics, we must continue to investigate how Paul wrestled with and was shaped by the sacred texts of his ancestral religion.

8.3.1 Heart-Circumcision and Obedience

In discussing Paul's use of heart-circumcision in Romans 2:29, Hays comments, 'The jarring metonymic image . . . appears both in Deuteronomy and in Jeremiah as a way of calling Israel to radical, wholehearted obedience.'²⁷ While Hays is correct—Deuteronomy and Jeremiah do employ the image for this purpose (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4)—in Deuteronomy 30:6 the metaphor *functions* differently. There, Life is the result of love, which is a consequence of YHWH's revolutionising work. It is by circumcising the heart that YHWH *establishes* 'radical, wholehearted obedience'.

As we have seen, on one possible reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10 that is evidenced in *some* Second Temple literature, heart-circumcision stands logically prior to any compliance on Israel's part and Deuteronomy 30 bears witness to a divine saving initiative that reconstitutes moral agents, creates Life out of Death, activates reciprocity, and refashions a command into a promise. When Paul alludes to this text in Romans 2, he evokes these dynamics.

²⁷ Hays, *Echoes*, 44.

For Paul believes God's invasive rescue mission promised in the Scriptures is coming true through Christ and Spirit (Rom 1:2–4), and when he says heart-circumcision occurs ἐν πνεύματι, he associates it with these eschatological realities (2:29).²⁸ Until the heart is circumcised, obedience is impossible since all humanity would remain enslaved to sin (6:17), and 'their foolish hearts were darkened' (ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδία, 1:21; cf. 1:24; 2:5). In stark contrast to this impotent agent is the eschatological Jew, who 'has received from God the Spirit and circumcision of the heart so that he no longer turns away from his creator'.²⁹ The reason (γάρ) this individual is able to perform Torah (2:26–27) is precisely because God has circumcised that individual's heart (v. 29). Deuteronomy 30 thus testifies to God's transformative gift revealed in Christ, a gift which reconstitutes humans as competent moral agents by the Spirit.³⁰

It is on account of such generating power that Paul now describes those united to Christ as no longer enslaved to Sin, but obedient ἐκ καρδίας (Rom 6:17).³¹ This phrase echoes Deuteronomy's description of Israel who, having been freed from slavery, fulfils the *Shema* at the restoration: 'You will obey his voice . . . from the whole of your heart' (ὕπακούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ . . . ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου, Deut 30:2). While Paul has glossed YHWH's voice as 'the imprint of teaching' (reflecting his christological view of revelation), he nevertheless applies the language of *Shema*-fulfilment to believers (Rom 6:17).³² Such obedience Paul will later summarise with another important word that stands at the center of Deuteronomy—love (Rom 13:8). There is therefore good reason for taking the ἀκροβυστία in Romans 2:26–27 as a Gentile Christian who, on account of the gifts of Christ and Spirit, satisfies the *Shema* through wholehearted, love-filled obedience.³³

28 So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:175n3: 'That πνεῦμα here denotes the human spirit is unlikely, since the inwardness of this circumcision is already adequately expressed by καρδίας. Moreover, in 7:6, and 2 Cor 3:6 (two other Pauline passages in which πνεῦμα and γράμμα are contrasted) πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit'. Cf. Barrett, *Romans*, 60: 'in a spiritual way'.

29 Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter*, 50, my emphasis.

30 Due to his belief that Paul here relies on Deut 12, Stowers (*A Rereading*, 156) denies that Paul is describing an 'eschatological miracle'. Unfortunately, Stowers does not demonstrate what criteria he has used to determine this allusion.

31 Significantly, this is the only place in the undisputed letters where Paul pens ἐκ καρδίας. Cf. 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22.

32 On 6:17, see the discussion below (pp. 255–260).

33 Compare Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 195–200, who believes that the context and Paul's odd terminology supports the hypothetical reading. The terminology is easily accounted for by the scriptural allusion, however. Similarly, Moo, (*Romans*, 168) argues from the

8.3.2 *Heart-Circumcision and the Ultimate Jew*

Now we can begin to see how heart-circumcision relativises physical circumcision for Paul. Since obedience is a necessary condition for membership in God's eschatological people, and since heart-circumcision is the sufficient condition for obedience, heart-circumcision is determinative in defining those who will be called 'Jew' at the eschaton. This seems to be the logic behind verse 29: 'The [ultimate] Jew is in the concealed, and [ultimate] circumcision is heart-circumcision' (ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαίος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας).³⁴ But Paul's claims are not all positive—defining what a Jew is—he also states what a Jew is not: 'an [ultimate] Jew is not in the revealed' (οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαίος ἐστίν). Here Paul goes beyond making heart-circumcision a necessary condition for obedience, and thus a necessary condition for Life: if *Gentiles* are able to be regarded as Jews (v. 26), then heart-circumcision is both *necessary* and *sufficient* for membership in God's eschatological people.³⁵ Though not meaningless, circumcision's value is limited to signifying a deeper reality: heart-circumcision.³⁶ It is, however, possible for the thing signified to exist without the signifier—Paul's most radical position.³⁷

While Paul's experience of worshipping in Spirit-filled Gentile communities provides some rationale for his view, Scripture, and Paul's reading of it, has also had a commanding effect on him. Perhaps even this conviction was nourished by Deuteronomy 29–30. For between chapters 29 and 30 of Deuteronomy stands one of the most enigmatic verses in all the Jewish Scriptures: 'The things which are concealed (τὰ κρυπτά) [belong] to the Lord our God, but the things which are evident (τὰ . . . φανερά) [belong] to us and

Pauline language and 'distinction between faith on the one hand and "the Law," "works," and "doing," on the other', that this could not be a reference to Christians. While Moo does note that Paul's ἐὰν . . . τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει reflects Deut 30:10, he uses this as an argument in favour of a non-Christian Gentile reading since it parallels other phrases of 'doing' in Deuteronomy (170n21). But φυλάσσεσθαι . . . τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ is also in parallel with ὑπακούσει τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ . . . ἐξ ἑλης τῆς καρδίας σου in Deut 30:2, a phrase which Paul is happy to apply to Christians (Rom 6:17).

34 Paul's terse phrases must be reconstructed, yet this has little consequence on the sense of the verses.

35 Barclay, 'Paul and Philo on Circumcision', 545, also notes how radical it was for Paul to make obedience to the commandments a sufficient condition. While I fundamentally agree, I focus on 'heart-circumcision' since, in light of Deut 30, it is more foundational than obedience.

36 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 155.

37 Contrast Jubilees 15:26, where failure to circumcise breaks covenant and accrues wrath. See also Philo (*Migr.* 92).

to our children forever, to do all the words of this Law' (LXX 29:28). It appears that in Romans 2:28–29 Paul presses Deuteronomy's cryptic contrast between τὰ φανερά relating to humanity and the τὰ κρυπτά relating to God into service. A key theme throughout Paul's indictment is the disparity between divine and human judgement (e.g. 2:1–3; 3:4–8; 4:2; 8:31; 14:3–4).³⁸ Paul gathers from LXX Deuteronomy 29:28 that while τὰ φανερά count for humans, τὰ κρυπτά prevail before God. Physical circumcision falls into the former category because its transforming work is immediately/visibly apparent and those transformed as such receive their praise from other humans (Rom 2:29). Yet God's reconstituting work is ultimately known only to him. As part of τὰ κρυπτά, all who embody such a work will receive his praise (v. 29).³⁹

Quite exceptionally, Berkley also perceives Paul's reliance upon Deuteronomy 29:28 for his ἐν τῷ φανερῷ/ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ contrast and believes 'Paul appropriates this language to show that the hidden or inward things of the heart, rather than the external marks of the written Law, are what identify the people of God'.⁴⁰ But it needs to be said that the contrast is not *primarily* between the internal and the external; rather, it is between that which is known to and accepted by God and humans respectively. Take, for instance, Paul's use of these terms in 1 Corinthians 14:24–25:

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the concealed things of his heart (τὰ κρυπτά τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ) are made evident (φανερά), and so falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Here, knowledge is revealed through the divine gift of prophecy which discloses things that would otherwise be known only to God. A similar relationship between divine and human knowledge appears in 1 Corinthians 4:5:

Therefore do not judge before the time when the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things that are concealed (τὰ κρυπτά) in the darkness and make evident (φανερώσει) the purposes of [human] hearts. And then praise (ἔπαινος) will be to each from God.

38 Dunn, *Romans*, 1:79.

39 The interplay between the acts being 'evident/concealed' and the people being 'evident/concealed' has to do with the acts' transforming quality. Once someone receives circumcision/heart-circumcision, *that person* is different.

40 Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, 99–100.

Paul exhorts the church to put off judging because human judgement is based upon partial evidence. When God distributes eschatological 'praise', however, τὰ κρυπτά will be taken into account.⁴¹ The contrast, then, is not between a religion of outward, external rites and a religion of internal, individual, spirituality,⁴² nor is it between ethnocentricity and universality;⁴³ rather, there is a disparity between the things which are accessible to humans (and hence on which they base their judgements), and the things which are ultimately open to God and will count before him.⁴⁴

If this is so, perhaps we can take Paul's use of Deuteronomy 29:28 a step further by noting that in Paul's perspective the concealed thing which God accepts in Romans 2:25–29 is a circumcised heart, which is the result of a *life-giving, divine act associated with the apocalypse of Jesus Christ*.⁴⁵ Heart-circumcision stands in sharp contrast to physical circumcision, which, though acceptable to humans, is executed by human agents and has left human unresponsiveness intact.⁴⁶ It would seem that Paul does not downplay circumcision's value solely because it is 'evident'; he denigrates it because it is not part of the newly-creative works of God revealed in Jesus Christ. As we have seen, in the Scrolls and in 4 Ezra Deuteronomy 29:28 was interpreted against an apocalyptic background. Both utilize Deuteronomy 29:28 to speak of certain aspects of divine revelation which are 'manifest' to all, while other 'hidden' aspects of divine revelation which are eschatologically manifest to a select group. Paul's use of Deuteronomy 29:28 in Romans 2:29 is at home in this apocalyptic landscape. For him God's work of heart-circumcision is part of the eschatological mysteries now made evident with the coming of Christ.⁴⁷

41 Cf. 2 Bar 83:3–4.

42 Boyarin (*A Radical Jew*, 78) is quite mistaken to call Paul's φανερός/κρυπτός contrast 'purely Hellenistic'.

43 So Dunn, *Romans*, 1:125.

44 So Käsemann, *Romans*, 77: 'The praise of the true Jew does not come from humans but from God *who alone knows* and judges τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων' (emphasis mine).

45 Evidently, the human 'praise' Paul is referring to is the praise of his interlocutor's Jewish peers (see Barclay, 'Paul and Philo on Circumcision', 548n21). When Paul acknowledges that physical circumcision does 'profit' before the Jewish community, he seems to be intimating that this is just the problem with his dialogue partner: he is more motivated by peer approval than by God's approval.

46 See Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 567–71.

47 See the similar, though independent conclusions in David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 151–53.

Though we can now start to see why Paul places a premium on heart-circumcision and why the ultimate Jew is presently 'concealed', it remains to be seen how Paul could read Deuteronomy 30 with integrity and still conclude that these qualities belong to Gentiles. D. Boyarin states the problem well when, after reading Paul's assumption that an uncircumcised person could keep Torah, he exasperatedly retorts, '[B]ut *keeping the Law while being uncircumcised is simply an oxymoron from the perspective of Rabbinic Judaism, because being circumcised is part of the Law*'.⁴⁸ But when assessing Paul's radical move we must remember that Deuteronomy 29:28 is the bridge between exile and restoration, and for Paul between Death and Life. While circumcision was the sign of the covenant, in Deuteronomy 29 Israel forsook that covenant (29:24), therein invalidating her covenant sign. To bring Life out of Death, God would need to perform an unprecedented work whereby he establishes Israel as an obedient agent in order to secure her Life. Surprisingly, in describing this generative act the only circumcision Moses mentions is heart-circumcision. Important for Paul would be the absence of any reference to physical circumcision. In fact, *not once in Deuteronomy is physical circumcision mentioned!* Boyarin is correct in saying that from the perspective of Rabbinic Judaism Paul's statements would appear oxymoronic. But Paul does not need to rely on allegorical methods of interpretation to reach his conclusion.⁴⁹ Instead, as Barclay argues:

[I]n utilizing the biblical metaphor of heart circumcision, Paul radicalizes its import, not by superimposing some other discourse concerning 'interiority', but by prioritizing the metaphorical sense over the literal and expanding its field of reference to include heart-circumcised Gentiles.⁵⁰

Barclay is right to suggest that Paul is not importing a foreign discourse here. But as a reader of Deuteronomy, neither does he need to radicalise heart-circumcision's import by prioritising the metaphorical over the literal; all he has to do is to exploit a conspicuous silence in the text. To be sure, Paul takes the heart-circumcision metaphor much further than Deuteronomy has envisioned when he includes Gentiles; nevertheless, it seems that (1) the enigmatic statement of Deuteronomy 29:28, (2) the necessity of a new work initiated by YHWH which lacked any reference to physical circumcision, and (3) Deuteronomy's silence on the subject as a whole, could all have worked to

48 Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 96, emphasis his.

49 Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 96.

50 Barclay, 'Paul and Philo on Circumcision', 552.

leave Paul with enough space to read Deuteronomy 30 as testifying to a divine gift so disruptive that it would transform the very being and make-up of the people of God.⁵¹

8.3.3 *Heart-Circumcision and the New Covenant*

Paul closes his description of the ultimate Jew by associating heart-circumcision with the Spirit over against the Letter (ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι). Though we will explore the meaning of this contrast in the following chapters, for now it is important to note the intertextual connections involved in Paul's reading strategy. In an earlier letter, Paul closely associates the Spirit/Letter contrast with the 'new covenant' (2 Cor 3:6). While at first glance an association between new covenant and Spirit might appear odd, we have already uncovered an interpretative tradition which reads Jeremiah's promise alongside Ezekiel's prophecy of a divine Spirit. Significantly, we have often seen these two motifs converge in allusions to Deuteronomy 30.⁵² Paul's description of heart-circumcision ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι in Romans 2:29, then, suggests that he falls into this interpretative tradition. Like some of his contemporaries, Paul read Deuteronomy 30 alongside Jeremiah's new covenant and Ezekiel's Spirit-gift.

8.4 Conclusion

In sum, it has been argued that Paul read Deuteronomy 30:1–10 as the assurance that in the future God would transform humans by Christ and Spirit. This transformative element informs Paul's debate with his interlocutor. Underlying his argument is the premise that his interlocutor transgresses the Law (Rom 2:25, 27) because he is *unable* to obey it. Failing to embrace God's gift in Christ, even as a Jew he remains incompetent as a moral agent (LXX Deut 29:3; Rom 11:8)

51 Berkley (*From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, 99–100) goes too far when he states, "The possibility of gentile inclusion in the people of God was always "hidden" with God'. On Paul's reading, τὰ κρυπτά can also describe Jews. What I am proposing is that *the fact* of God's accepting τὰ κρυπτά over against τὰ φανερά *allows* Paul to read this text as hinting at—*by suggesting the possibility of*—Gentile inclusion. Nevertheless, against those who claim Paul's primary interest in 'the universal', Gathercole (*Boasting*, 207) rightly contends: 'Paul is not merely redefining these terms so that they include (some) gentiles; he is also redefining them in such a way as to exclude many Jews'.

52 See above on, e.g., Bar 2:30–3:7; Jub 1:15–21; *Barki Nafshi* and *Words of the Luminaries*.

because, as the next chapter demonstrates, any obedience this Jew can offer must be done in reliance upon the Flesh (Rom 7:5; cf. Phil 3:3).

If Paul here combats the claim that circumcision ‘profits’ at the judgement,⁵³ he is at the same time repudiating any notion that circumcision ‘profits’ with respect to obedience.⁵⁴ Unlike some, Paul cannot accept that circumcision renders individuals as competent moral agents.⁵⁵ His reading of Deuteronomy 30 working in concert with his experience of the Christ compels him to restrict all such power to God’s heart-circumcising enterprise. Thus if for Paul it is only the obedient who attain Life, those who obey are always and only those who have been radically reconfigured by God’s forerunning grace manifest in Jesus Christ and communicated by his Spirit.⁵⁶

Paul’s move is not as novel as it might at first appear. The author of Baruch, the covenanters at Qumran, and Philo all take Deuteronomy 29:3 (4) to denote moral incompetence. What is more, the former two even apply this verse to Jews who have not received God’s promised gift. In Baruch, all remain incompetent as God has yet to give the new heart. Situating themselves at a later point on the redemptive narrative, the communities associated with the *Yahad* apply 29:3 to those who refuse to search out God’s gift, a gift which has come in the form of their teacher’s instruction.

Paul shares much in common with these two interpreters. With Baruch, Paul believes that without God’s gift humanity remains incompetent as moral agents. With the *yahadic* communities, he is convicted that the gift has already been revealed, and that those who do not accept that revelation are thereby shown to be incompetent. But whereas for the *yahadic* communities God’s revelation is

53 So Moo, *Romans*, 167; Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter*, 48–49.

54 Paul’s words would certainly also speak against reliance upon Jewish distinctiveness (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:119), but they speak against much more. So also Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 566–70.

55 As we have seen, a defective moral competence was sometimes thought to be remedied through the possession or keeping of the Law (e.g., CD 2:14–3:3; Jub 25:7), and many believed that possession of the Law indicated that people had sufficient capacities for obedience (4 Ezra 14:22; Philo, *Praem.* 80). Certainly, in this regard, circumcision would have been considered one of the chief laws which capacitated people for obedience. See Jub 15:28–32; Tg Cant 3:8; Gen Rab 11:6; 46:4–5. See further three important studies by Joel Marcus: ‘The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James’, *CBQ* 44 (1982), 606–21; ‘The Evil Inclination in the Letters of Paul’, *IBS* 8 (1986), 8–21; ‘The Circumcision and Uncircumcision in Rome’, *NRS* 35 (1989), 67–81.

56 Gathercole (*Boasting*, 128) surmises that Paul redefines the relationship between the believer and Torah by making Torah fulfilment ‘a by-product rather than the goal of Christian obedience’. Reverberations of Deut 30 verify his inclination.

mediated *through* a person who discloses a divinely authorised hermeneutic, in Paul the revelation *is* a person, whose life holds far-reaching hermeneutical implications. For the *Yahad*, God's revelation furnishes the only lens through which to see a Law that dictates acceptable human action. The revelation of the Christ, however, presents the Law as a witness to an event which founds human action by bringing that action into intimate relationship with the saving agency of God.

Another point of comparison concerns the uses of τὰ φανερά/τὰ κρυπτά from Deuteronomy 29:28. As we have seen, Paul is not the only reader who has been influenced by this verse. In CD (3:12b–16) and in 4 Ezra (14:6), τὰ κρυπτά/סתר denotes an eschatological revelation that is hidden from the majority of Israel, but given to a privileged few. In keeping with their understanding of God's gift, the *yahadic* communities understand τὰ κρυπτά/סתר to refer to *Halakhah*, disclosed to the righteous for obedience. For 4 Ezra, τὰ κρυπτά/סתר are signs, one of which is the appearance of a 'secret' group, the 10 Tribes, that will vindicate God at the eschaton as the rewarder of the obedient. Paul also speaks of the divine gift in revelatory terms (Rom 1:17), and believes that τὰ κρυπτά/סתר bespeaks individuals who are revealed at the eschaton and demonstrate God's righteousness. But his understanding and experience of God's gift necessitates that τὰ κρυπτά include Gentiles who have been made righteous through God's heart-circumcising initiative and who on account of that initiative receive his praise. An initial comparison of Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 29–30 with these other Jewish readings suggests that, for all their similarities, the precise ways in which Paul and fellow Jews understand grace and its implications for agency are by no means identical.

Paul's Reading of Restoration: Further Considerations

9.1 Romans 7:5–6: A Critical Link

We continue to fill out Paul's reading of Israel's restoration narrative by focusing on Romans 5–8. Romans 7:5–6 provides an obvious entry point as Paul's well-known, though rare, contrast between Spirit and Letter associates the two texts at a thematic and linguistic level. Since this contrast appears only one other time (2 Cor 3:6), it is reasonable to assume that the two occurrences in Romans are interrelated. What is more, after 2:28–29 Paul's prominent Flesh/Spirit antithesis does not appear until 7:5–6. The two passages also share somewhat parallel structures.

2:28–29

v. 28: For the [ultimate] Jew is not in the evident, nor is [ultimate] circumcision in the evident and in the Flesh (ἐν σαρκί).

v. 29: Rather the [ultimate] Jew is in the concealed, and [ultimate] circumcision is heart-circumcision, in the Spirit, not in the letter (ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι).

7:5–6

v. 5: For when we were in the Flesh (ἐν τῇ σαρκί), the sinful passions were working in our members through the Law to bear fruit for Death.

v. 6: But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter (ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος).

Romans 2:28 and 7:5 both depict aspects of existence 'in the Flesh', followed by the contrasting (ἀλλά/νυνὶ δέ) existence 'in the Spirit' (2:29; 7:6). In both, the emphatic negation 'not the letter' sharpens the disparity between the two realities. While the additions καινότητι and παλαιότητι in 7:6 fill out the contrast along temporal lines, the structural semblance and thematic overlap between 2:28–29 and 7:5–6 imply that they address similar concerns. Romans 7:5–6

thus provides a foray into the maturation of ideas that were introduced and presupposed in 2:25–29.

Romans 7:5–6 also serves as an important structural marker in Paul's argument. Verses 5 and 6 provide the respective thesis statements for 7:7–25 and 8:1–13. The former passage describes existence in the Flesh with particular reference to the triad of Law, sinful desires, and death. The latter passage expounds Christians' new life in the Spirit as a result of Christ's eschatological work. Yet even while these verses primarily point forward, they do not exclusively do so. The terms *παλαιότης* and *καινότης*, for instance, link back to the previous chapter's discussion of *ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος* (6:6) and *καινότητι ζωῆς* (6:4, 6). Being released (*κατηργήθην*) from the Law via death reminds the reader of how the body of Sin was nullified (*καταργηθῆ*, 6:6) through Christ's death. Further, the term *μέλος* (7:5) appears four times in chapter 6. Even the *ὅτε . . . νυνὶ δέ* structure builds upon the contrast Paul set up in chapter 5 between two great aeons, here marked by Flesh and Spirit.¹

Romans 7:5–6 is thus a pivotal text. With an eye in both directions, we will see how it encapsulates the perspective of moral agency that Paul puts forward in chapters 5–8. While scholars often note the eschatological and/or redemptive-historical underlay of these chapters, scant attention is paid to how Israel's restoration narratives might have influenced them.² Given the strong affinities between Romans 7:5–6 and 2:25–29, it is possible that these later chapters also exhibit Paul's scriptural reflection. Thus with particular attention to restoration reverberations and in light of Paul's theological outlook, I now seek to unpack each side of the contrast: moral agency in the Flesh (v. 5) and in the Spirit (v. 6).

9.2 Moral Agents in Eschatological Contrast

Before developing Paul's Flesh/Spirit contrast, we must first understand his world-picture. The *ὅτε . . . νυνὶ δέ* structure of 7:5–6 functions as an interpretative signal pointing the reader back to the hostile world-stage set up in 5:12–21. Lining up on one side are the powers Sin and Death. Sin entered the world through Adam, resulting in death (5:12). From then on Sin 'reigned' (*βασιλεύω*,

1 Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 437–38.

2 E.g. Schreiner, *Romans*, 267–269, 299; Moo, *Romans*, 314, 351; Jewett, *Romans*, 372, 437; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 471. But compare Wright, *Romans*, 525, 533, 536.

5:21; cf. 6:6, 12) in death and ‘rules’ (κυριεύω, 6:14) over the world as it exists outside of Christ. Death, though not as active as Sin, nevertheless entered the world and co-reigns with Sin (5:14, 5:17). Both powers now hold the cosmos under their sway.³

In 7:5, Paul connects these powers with his concept of ‘Flesh’ (σάρξ). It is precisely those who are ‘in the Flesh’ (ἐν τῇ σαρκί) that Sin is able to coerce (Rom 7:5), and the outlook of the Flesh leads to Death (Rom 8:6). Sinful desires and acts are attributed to and characterised by the Flesh (8:13; Gal 5:17, 19). Furthermore, Flesh is in antithesis with and hostile to Spirit (7:6; Gal 5:17). If Sin and Death entered the world through Adam and exerted their destructive rule, the temporal extent of this rule can be called an ‘aeon’ or ‘age’ and spatially a ‘world’.⁴ Within this world-aeon, Sin is an effective agent capable of producing (καρποφορέω, 7:5) deadly fruit and of bringing about (κατεργάζομαι, 7:8) sins in all those subjugated to its dominion.⁵

On the other side of the conflict are the powers of Grace, Righteousness, and Spirit. In the events associated with the Christ-apocalypse, a new rule and ‘world-aeon’ has dawned. In opposition to the Sin-Death-Flesh aeon is the reign of Grace, which is characterised by Righteousness, Life, and the Spirit. οὐνι δέ in 7:6 is but one of a number of repeated constructions which Paul employs to convey the stark contrast between what was *then* in the aeon before Christ and what is *now* as a result of Christ’s obedience.⁶ The ‘transfer’ of humanity from one rule to another is most fruitfully comprehended from within this eschatological, old creation/new creation framework.⁷ In order to elucidate the com-

3 Moo, *Romans*, 374; Schreiner, *Romans*, 304; Käsemann, *Romans*, 165; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:306.

4 The phrases, however, are synecdochic.

5 Sin should not be separated from specific acts. See Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Bd 6 (Zürich: Neukirchener, 1978), 172–73.

6 See, e.g., Gal 1:4; 3:23–25; 4:4, 8–9; 6:15; Rom 3:21; 5:12–21; 6:17; 8:1–4; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 15:20–28, 42–49; 2 Cor 5:17; 6:2.

7 As Schnelle correctly emphasises (‘Transformation und Partizipation’, 63–64, 70). As Peter Stuhlmacher suggests, the technical term *καινή κτίσις* comprises all the main themes of Paul’s theology (Erwägungen zum ontologischen Charakter der *καινή κτίσις* bei Paulus’, *EvT* 27 [1967], 1). For various portrayals of the eschatological structure of Paul’s thought, see Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988); Martyn, *Theological Issues*; Johan Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135–81; Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (London: SPCK, 1977), 44–68; Samuel Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung: eine Untersuchung zur Eleutheria bei*

petency that Paul believes the moral agent to possess in the new word-aeon, we must first consider the nature of its enslavement under the old.

9.3 Life in the Flesh: Moral Agents in the Old Aeon

9.3.1 *The Misuse of Human Agency and Enactment of Divine Judgement*

Romans 1:18–32 graphically presents the consequences that a misuse of human agency had upon the world. The suppression of the knowledge of God and refusal to glorify him is the precise reason (διό) for the current world-scene (1:21–24).⁸ This primal and perpetual act of rebellion is matched by a divine response. Three times, Paul says, God ‘handed over’ (παρέδωκεν) humanity: He hands them into ‘uncleaness’ (εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, 1:24), into ‘dishonourable passions’ (εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, 1:26), and into a ‘worthless mind’ (εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, 1:28).⁹ Humans are not simply passive, however; those handed over accomplish (κατεργαζόμενοι) sinful acts themselves (1:26–27), doing (ποιοῦσιν) and approving (συνευδοκοῦσιν) what is contrary to God’s will (1:32).

Beverly Gaventa has recently elucidated the importance of the three παρέδωκεν clauses in Romans 1. She begins by noting how in the LXX παραδίδωμι is frequently used to describe handing over an individual or people to a third party, and often in conflict-situations.¹⁰ The prophets, for instance, regularly warn of God handing Israel over to a foreign power on account of covenant faithlessness.¹¹ These and similar warnings fit the context of Romans 1,¹² where God

Paulus und in seiner Umwelt, FRLANT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 375–96. For earlier works, see Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930) and Geerhardus Vos, *Pauline Eschatology* (Philipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1979); ‘The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit’, in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1980), 91–125.

8 On humanity’s meta-Sin, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 2006), 106.

9 In this regard, Paul differs starkly from the Scrolls, since, as Ridderbos notes, ‘Paul does not go back to an original dualism between God and the world, or between God and the powers (*Paul*, 92)’. On the ironic correspondence between sin and its penalty, see Simon J. Gathercole, ‘Sin in God’s Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS (London: T.&T.Clark, 2006), 162–66.

10 E.g., Deut 2:24, 30, 31, 33; 3:2, 3; 7:2, 23, 24; 20:13; 28:7; Jos 2:14, 24; 6:2, 16; 7:7; 8:18.

11 See, e.g., Jer 21:10; 22:25; 24:8; 39:28; Ezek 11:9; 16:27; 21:36.

12 E.g., Ex 23:31; Lev 26:25.

punishes humanity for infidelity by ‘handing them over’ to something else.¹³ With this vital background established, Gaventa demonstrates what that object is by noting the close relationship between the παραδίδωμι clauses in Romans 1 and Paul’s depiction of Sin in chapters 5–8.¹⁴ Most formidable among her arguments is that the ‘uncleanness’ (ἀκαθαρσία) into which God hands humans over (1:24) is depicted as an enslaving power in 6:19. Significantly, enslavement to uncleanness is sandwiched between two descriptions of enslavement to Sin.¹⁵

6:17: ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἀμαρτίας

6:19: παρεστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δούλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ

6:20: ὅτε γὰρ δοῦλοι ἦτε τῆς ἀμαρτίας

Sin and Uncleanness reference the same enslaving power. Thus Gaventa concludes that in Romans 1 God handed humanity over to nothing less than the anti-God power Sin.¹⁶

Regardless of whether we should understand Sin in Paul as a demonic force,¹⁷ Gaventa’s thesis offsets those theories which find discrepancies in the

13 Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 115.

14 Gaventa, *Mother*, 118–20.

15 The slavery metaphor runs throughout Rom 5–8. Having been handed over, humanity is now σάρκινος . . . πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν (7:15); see Stowers, *A Rereading*, 281.

16 Note that Gaventa (*Mother*, 134) does not mean that Paul believed in ‘a literal character by the name of Sin’.

17 See Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 145, who labels the powers ‘ontological’. For similar understandings, see Martin Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), 122; Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 76; Käsemann, *Romans*, 198; and the monograph by Helmut Umbach, *In Christus getauft von der Sünde befreit: Die Gemeinde als sündenfreier Raum bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); cf. Watson, *Beyond the New Perspective*, 280, who labels the power ‘quasi-demonic’. Recently, Westerholm has argued against understanding sin as a demonic force, writing how ‘each reference that might tempt one to think of “Sin” as a demonic force is surrounded by others that militate against the notion’ (‘Anthropological Pessimism’, 79; see also *Perspectives*, 394). Nevertheless, elsewhere Westerholm concedes that ‘the human dilemma goes beyond the concrete sins that humans commit’, and that such sins ‘reflect their belonging to an age gone wrong, dominated by sin and, indeed, by powers that are not God’ (*Perspectives*, 380). For other arguments against understanding sin as a power, see Günter Röhser, *Metaphorik und Personifikation der Sünde*, WUNT 2 (Mohr Siebeck, 1987), esp at 103–129; Bruce Norman Kaye, *The Thought Structure of Romans With Special Reference to Chapter Six* (Austin: Scholars Press, 1979), 56. For a socio-cultural

Pauline sin-concept,¹⁸ as well as those which limit sin to specific acts.¹⁹ God does not merely hand humans over into sinful acts, but more fundamentally into states of being. Thus we read how those who were handed over 'were filled with' (πεπληρωμένους) all manner of corruption (1:29–31). The enumeration that follows, with its cascade of nouns and substantival adjectives, does not detail human activity so much as sketch a decadent disposition. Of course the two are intimately related—internal disposition gets worked out in external acts—but it is important to note that by judging humanity God altered its moral composition and therein its capacity to live righteously.²⁰ Life in the Flesh entails the inescapable horror of being subjected to a distorted disposition, which is epitomised in the degradation of the νοῦς and καρδιά.²¹

9.3.1.1 Corruption of the Nous

Most are in agreement that νοῦς is not a particularly Hebraic concept and its appearance in some Jewish literature reflects these texts' Hellenistic environment. In classical anthropology the νοῦς was considered to be the superior part of the tripartite Self. Since Paul uses terms and concepts in ways that seem to fit this mindset (e.g., 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Cor 4:16; Rom 7:18–25), he is sometimes thought to have wholly adopted the Greek viewpoint.²² A comparison of Paul with Philo, a Jewish contemporary who imbibed Platonic assumptions, casts some doubt on this thesis.

reading of Paul's sin-concept, see T.L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

18 This view was first made prominent by Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt*.

19 See, e.g., Kaye, *Structure of Romans*, 56; Stowers, *A Rereading*, 177; Räisänen, *Paul*, 99n29.

20 While some interpret παρέδωκεν as divine permissiveness, weakening God's active role (Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:108; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:73; Wright, *Romans*, 433), the active verb and the otherwise superfluous repetition of ὁ θεός highlight God's agency (Gaventa, *Mother*, 113–18).

21 If some interpretations are in danger of truncating Sin, the 'apocalyptic' view which Gaventa represents risks downplaying this important anthropological component. Note Gaventa's comment: 'What may at first glance seem an exaggeration will, in my judgement, illumine the apocalyptic struggle' (*Mother*, 127–28). I wonder if in illuminating the apocalyptic struggle she has not obscured Paul's motif that humans are enslaved from *within* as well.

22 See, more recently, George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Emma Wasserman, 'The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Revisiting Paul's Anthropology in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology', *JBL* 126 (2007), 793–816. See n84 below.

Reflecting on God's warning to Adam and Eve, Philo distinguishes between two kinds of death: the death which faces everyone, namely separation from the body, and the death of the soul in particular, which happens when the soul becomes 'entombed in passions and all kinds of evil' (*Leg* 1:105–6). Philo explains how soul-death

is practically the antithesis of the death which awaits us all. The latter [i.e., physical death] is a separation of combatants that had been pitted against one another, body and soul, to wit. The former, on the other hand, is the meeting of the two in conflict. And in this conflict the worse, the body, overcomes, and the better, the soul, is overcome. (*Leg* 1:106–107, *LCL*)

In line with Platonic presuppositions, Philo describes soul-death as the joining of body (with its passions and vices) to the soul (with its rationality and virtue) in such a way that body suppresses soul.²³ This death is antithetical to what happens in physical death; for while soul-death means slavery, physical death means freedom, since bodily passions no longer subjugate the virtuous soul.

In 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul appears to make a similar Platonic distinction, contrasting 'the outward Self' (ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος) and 'the inward Self' (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος). Several features in Paul's discourse strike one as curious, however. First, though his statement regarding the outward and inward Self comes as an explanation of what lies in verses 7–15, there Paul writes that both the death and life of Jesus are at work ἐν τῷ σώματι (4:10–11). Likewise, verses 8–9 describe neither the outward nor inward Self but the whole person, viewed as both outward and inward, who experiences 'consternation but not despair', etc. Second, only a few verses after the outward/inward contrast Paul expresses anxiety over being naked, i.e., existing without a body (5:2–4). His reflex stands in sharp contrast to Philo and indicates that Paul does not plot his anthropological terms on the traditional Greek map.²⁴ Further evidence of Pauline

23 For an accessible overview, see Craig S. Keener, '“Fleshly” Versus Spirit Perspectives in Romans 8:5–8', in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 216–18.

24 See Hans Dieter Betz, 'The Concept of the “Inner Human Being” (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul', *NTS* 46 (2000), esp. at 334, 340–341; Christoph Marksches, 'Innerer Mensch', *Rellexikon Für Antike und Christentum* 18 (1997), 266–312, though I slightly disagree with both on the meaning of ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος. See also Graham J. Warne, *Hebrew Perspectives on the Human Person in the Hellenistic Era: Philo and Paul*, Mellen Biblical Press Series 35 (Lampeter: Mellen Biblical, 1995), 30–31; Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 48.

reappraisal is found in Romans 1:24. Rather than locating the ἐπιθυμία in the body or flesh, Paul relates it to the καρδιά.²⁵ In fact, αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι τῶν καρδιῶν come to expression in the dishonouring of the body (σώματα), not the reverse. In these examples Paul does not fall neatly within Platonic paradigms. Though he often makes distinctions through his employment of various terminology, on the whole νοῦς, καρδιά, σῶμα, ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, and ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος provide ways of contemplating humanity from a particular vantage point or of viewing humans as they function in distinct manners.²⁶ What then is the role of the νοῦς in Paul?

Though the term is difficult to specify, when Paul uses νοῦς he seems to depict the Self in its thinking and deliberating as it perceives God and his world.²⁷ Important for our purposes is that at the climax of the three παραδίδωμι clauses in Romans 1, God hands humanity over to a ἀδόκιμος νοῦς. Since humans failed to judge God fit (ἐδοκίμασαν) for worship, 'becoming futile in their deliberations', God consigned them to a mind that is unable to judge what is fitting (ἀδόκιμον, 1:21, 28). The infinitive clause ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα indicates that the inability to determine what is fitting results in a failure to practise what is befitting. Thus if νοῦς refers to one's intellectual and rational capacities, then those capacities are integrated into the entire person and determinative in human action.²⁸ Tragically, 1:28 informs us that the νοῦς exists in a degenerate state.

9.3.1.2 Corruption of the Kardia

In Romans 1, failure to worship God is not reflective only of a debased νοῦς, but also of a dark and foolish 'heart' (καρδιά, 1:21). Here and elsewhere the

25 Compare the discussion of Plotinus by van Kooten (*Anthropology*, 370–74). van Kooten is mistaken in asserting that for Paul the inward man is 'sinless' (373) and that 'the body poses the main and only threat to man' (382).

26 See Rudolf Karl Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM Press, 1952), 1:209.

27 Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 1:74; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 118. Perhaps on the basis of 1 Cor 1:10; 14:14–19, there is some merit to Jewett's understanding of the νοῦς as the 'constellation of thoughts and beliefs which . . . provides criteria for decision' and acts as 'the agent of discernment and communication' (*Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings*, AGJU 10 [Leiden: Brill, 1971], 365, 450); cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 74n101.

28 Walter Gutbrod, *Die paulinische Anthropologie* (Stuttgart-Berlin: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), 52; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 74; Alexandra R. Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation: Paul's Apocalyptic Word in 1 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press Publishers, 1995), 146; cf. Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*, 166. See Rom 14:5; 1 Cor 1:10; cf. Rom 8:6–7; Phil 2:2–5.

καρδία is closely related to the νοῦς. As with νοῦς, the καρδία is the place where things are decided (προαιρέω, 2 Cor 9:7) and settled (ἵστημι, 1 Cor 7:37). In 2 Corinthians 3:14–15, Paul claims that the Israelites' 'minds' (τὰ νοήματα) were hard on account of a veil, but then says the veil remains 'upon their hearts' (ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν).²⁹ The close relationship between καρδία and νοῦς might suggest synonymity.³⁰ καρδία, however, relates not only to thought and deliberation, but also to the emotional life (Rom 9:2; 10:1; 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 1:6–7), and to the elemental desires, motivations and convictions which form the basis of belief and action (Rom 5:5; 6:17; 10:9–10; 1 Cor 4:5).³¹ καρδία thus appears to be a more central,³² fundamental, and inclusive category than νοῦς,³³ even encompassing the νοῦς itself. While both can be categorised as 'the inward Self' in that both refer to the person only as that person is ultimately ascertainable to him or herself and/or God,³⁴ the heart depicts the pre-functional disposition:³⁵ 'what man is is determined by the quality of his heart'.³⁶

In Romans 1, however, Paul describes the heart as ἀσύνητος ('senseless'). In Sirach 15:7, ἀσύνητος is used of those sinners who will never perceive or lay hold of Wisdom. Later in Romans, Paul references Scripture to note how God will make Israel jealous and angry by a nation that is ἀσύνητος (10:19). With the help of Isaiah, he interprets the meaning:

29 See also the parallel between καρδία and νόημα in Phil 4:7.

30 So van Kooten, *Anthropology*, 365, 374; cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:220–221.

31 Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:222.

32 On Dunn's count, καρδία appears 52 times in Paul, whereas νοῦς appears 21 (*Theology of Paul*, 73–74).

33 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 119; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 75.

34 Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:222. In Rom 7:22–23 ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος and νοῦς are interchangeable though probably not identical (Markschies, 'Innerer Mensch', 281). In 2 Cor 4:16, ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος refers back to 4:6–7, to the process taking place on the καρδία, which is not immediately evident (cf. 5:12). In contrast, ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος describes the Self viewed phenomenally, as an observable reality. On this theme, see above (pp. 217–221). See also Rom 8:27; 1 Cor 4:5; 14:25; 1 Thess 2:4. Compare 2 Cor 3:2 where what is on the heart is known and read by all because, no doubt, what is on the heart becomes manifest in lives.

35 For this term, I am indebted to Richard B. Gaffin, *By Faith Not By Sight* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 55. Acting out of a pre-functional disposition is what gives 'from the heart' the sense of sincerity.

36 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 120, emphasis his; so also Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 448.

εὐρέθην ἐν τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν, ἐμφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν.

I was found by those who do not seek me, I made myself visible to those who do not ask for me. (Rom 10:20)

By putting these quotations together, Paul, like Sirach, implies that ἀσύνητος characterises those who neither seek nor ask for God. As with the mind, the human heart has been disfigured beyond recognition: it is insensitive and lacks the capacity to receive from and respond to God aright (cf. Rom 2:5).

It seems commensurate with this evidence to conclude that at least one primary reason why Paul can describe Sin as a power in Romans 5–8 is precisely because the human disposition has become so corrupt as to render humans absolutely incapable of good as Paul defines it. This is not to deny or to undermine Sin's cosmological dimension;³⁷ it is simply to view anthropology as an elemental component of the cosmic landscape.³⁸ In Pauline conception Sin influences humanity from within as well as from without. So H. Ridderbos notes:

The bondage of sin to which man is subjected, his condition of death because of the divine wrath, is not only determined by the depravity of the inner man as its effect on 'the body'; rather, one must say that the reverse is not less characteristic . . . that sin, as it were, lays hold of the body 'from without' and thus subjects the entire man to itself as a slave.³⁹

As with the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*, so in Paul it is fundamentally misguided to pit anthropology against cosmology. And since cosmology is so intimately connected with historical epochs in Paul, it is also wrongheaded to contrast anthropology and redemptive-history/eschatology. It is only by keeping this macro-structure in view that we are able to consider adequately Paul's portrayal of the degradation and rectification of the human agent.

9.3.2 *Moral Agents Enslaved to the Power of Sin*

Romans 6 brings to the fore the implications of the dark dominion of Sin and Death for human agents living in the 'present evil age' (cf. Gal 1:4). Paul holds that the 'old Self' (ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος), the former existence of those in Christ,

37 So 8:19–23. Note also the neuter τὰ πάντα in Gal 3:22.

38 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 92: 'It is this conception of cosmos which in principle determines Paul's view of human nature outside Christ.'

39 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 124.

was 'enslaved to Sin' (6:6). Since for Paul it is a commonly understood principle that a person is a slave to whomever she obeys (v. 16), enslavement assumes a degree of active submission on the slave's part. As agents under Sin's lordship, the Roman Christians lived in Sin (v. 6) and presented their members to it in ever increasing degrees of lawlessness (v. 19). Moreover, there are only two possibilities of lordship: loyalty is directed 'either to Sin unto death or to Obedience unto Righteousness' (v. 16), which six verses later Paul will clarify as allegiance to God.⁴⁰

One can infer from such statements that unless people have been released from Sin to serve God they will inevitably serve Sin. Sin's dominion over the Flesh is so potent that humans act in concert with Sin. While those in the Flesh 'perceive' (φρονούσιν), they perceive 'according to the Flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα; 8:5; cf. 1 Cor 1:21, 2:12).⁴¹ In 5:20, the increase of Sin is parallel to the increase of the 'trespass', suggesting that as Sin's power grew so did the sins of humanity. It would appear, then, that the agencies of Sin and humanity are set in a direct, positive relationship. The result of this sad state of affairs is a humanity hostile toward God (1:21). The old Self is neither able to submit to God's Law nor to please God (Rom 8:7–8).⁴² Human hearts have become dark, senseless (1:21), hard (σκληρότης) and unrepentant (ἀμετανόητος, 2:5).⁴³ Bound by Sin, humans are so incapable of righteousness that Paul considers them 'free' (ἐλεύθερος) from it (6:20). Thus while personal agency appears to remain intact—the person still genuinely acts—for Paul the power of Sin directs and thus profoundly qualifies that agency. In short, those handed over to the power of Sin are now incompetent as moral agents and any summons to obedience which does not entail the rehabilitation of the human agent will inevitably go unheeded.

9.3.3 *Israel in the Aeon of Flesh*

A question must be raised at this point: What about Israel? While it is not unprecedented for Second Temple Jews to describe the Gentile world as incapacitated,⁴⁴ surely Paul, like his contemporaries, believes that Israel or a sect within Israel forms an exception to this rule? It is one thing for Paul to regard his interlocutor as a covenant-breaker; quite another to assert that he

40 Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 16: '[I]t is basically God to whom one is enslaved when enslaved to grace, obedience, and righteousness'.

41 On Paul's use of φρονέω, see below at pp. 263–265.

42 Cf. 1 Cor 2:14.

43 Cf. Eph 4:17–19.

44 See e.g., Jub 15:30–32 and the chapter on the Dead Sea literature.

was bound to be one. Yet this is exactly what Paul assumes. Since, as we saw in the last chapter, heart-circumcision, not physical circumcision, is necessary for obedience, in Romans 2:25–29 Paul implicitly denies that physical circumcision grants the capacity for obedience. Paul is thus repudiating more than Jewish advantage at the judgement: to be marked out as a Jew does not constitute a person as an agent sufficiently capable of obeying God.

The question that arises in 3:1—What then is exceptional (περισσόν) about being a Jew or what is the profit (ὠφέλεια) of circumcision?—carries forward this theme (cf. ὠφέλεια, 2:25).⁴⁵ The word περισσός may further indicate that advantage at the judgement is not the only concern. Elsewhere in the New Testament περισσός or its verbal form denotes 'the superabundance of the new age'.⁴⁶ Paul himself utilises a verbal form (ὑπερπερισεύω) to characterise life in Christ (Rom 5:20; 2 Cor 7:4), and in Matthew 5:20 περισεύω refers to the 'surpassing' righteousness of kingdom members. In John 10:10 περισσός refers to the 'abundant life' that Jesus offers. Coming after a discussion about the ability to complete Torah which the heart-circumcised possess over against those circumcised only physically, it would make sense that the objection behind the question, Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου?, stems from a Jewish assumption that, comparatively speaking, Jews possess an extraordinary ability to obey God.⁴⁷

While not denying that Jews have certain comparative advantages,⁴⁸ Paul does not list moral competence as one of them.⁴⁹ Thus the question of

45 Compare those who think Paul has lost his way; e.g., C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 46–48; Heikki Räisänen, 'Zum Verständnis von Röm 3:1–8', in *The Torah and Christ: Essays in German and English on the Problem of the Law in Early Christianity = deutsche und englische Aufsätze zur Gesetzesproblematik im Urchristentum*, ed. Anne Marit Enroth (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1986), 185–205. Although he does not believe that Paul is responding to objections, Cosgrove helpfully affirms that 3:1–8 carries on the discussion of 2:25–29 and works to establish that 'all are under the power of Sin' (What If Some Have Not Believed? The Occasion and Thrust of Romans 3:1–8', *ZNW* 78 [1987], 92).

46 Jewett, *Romans*, 241–42.

47 That the interlocutor's questions serve as objections (not points of clarification) is evident from Paul's emphatic negations: μή γένοιτο (vv. 4, 6). Overlooked by many commentators is that the conditional clauses do not indicate the interlocutor's actual agreement with Paul's premises, only that he is agreeing *for argument's sake*. Nothing in the text suggests that this Jew has adopted Paul's view-point; contra Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:164; Jewett, *Romans*, 242; Cosgrove, 'What If Some Have Not Believed?', 94.

48 πολύ probably refers back to τὸ περισσόν (Jewett, *Romans*, 242).

49 Cf. Rom 9:4–5.

whether or not Jews possess capacities sufficient for obedience remains and is sharpened:⁵⁰ if it were true that Jews could not obey, then would their unfaithfulness not put God's faithfulness into question (3:3)?⁵¹ Paul rejects such a conclusion, contending that God cannot be indicted, because his gifting was not reciprocated (3:4–8).⁵² Yet Paul knows that this answer does not satisfy the heart of the issue raised in 2:25–29: Can Jews be distinguished from Gentiles in their ability to obey?⁵³ So the question is repeated in 3:9 with the issue of moral competency more pointedly in view: 'Do we [Jews] have an advantage (προεχόμεθα, 3:9)?'⁵⁴ Paul now answers with a firm denial: οὐ πάντως.⁵⁵

50 Dunn, *Romans*, 1:132; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 243.

51 Following a comment about God having entrusted (ἐπιστεύθησαν) his word, and in light of 2:25–27, ἀπιστία reflects disobedience to the covenant (Käsemann, *Romans*, 79; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:131). Some interpreters think that the unfaithful 'some' (τινες) refers to Torah-faithful, Messiah-rejecting Jews; see, e.g., Cosgrove, 'What If Some Have Not Believed?', 92, 102; Räisänen, 'Röm 3.1–8', 189–91. The distinction between covenant breaking and unbelief is suspect, however. In my opinion, nothing in Paul warrants the assumption that he believes there are Jews who were both Torah-faithful and Christ-rejecting (on the question of Rom 7, see pp. 240–251, and on Phil 3:6, see section pp. 282–284). The fact that they reject Christ means they are uncircumcised of heart and thus unequipped to obey. Cosgrove spells out this line of reasoning only to reject it ('What If Some Have Not Believed?', 102–103). He admits that while this could be inferred from 2:27–29, Paul never 'proves' that Jews are unable to keep Torah apart from the eschatological Spirit and reasons that if Paul wanted to imply this, he would need to avail himself of language from Ezek 11:19 and 36:26ff (103n36). As the present thesis argues, however, Ezek 36:26–27 is in the background of Rom 2:27–29. Furthermore, it is a mistake to think that Paul would give empirical evidence to 'prove' Jewish sin. Not even 2:21–22 would qualify as empirical evidence, since all Jews did not evidently rob temples. Paul is not so naive as to think that he and his contemporaries share an epistemological outlook (cf., 1 Cor 2:14; see also pp. 263–264 below). He therefore does not seek to 'prove', only to 'charge' (προαιτιόμαί, 3:9).

52 Note the πιστεύω/ἀπιστέω contrast.

53 I assume that Paul is continuing to address Jews in vv. 5–8, even while the question is framed generically.

54 The text critical problems are not insurmountable. Most assume that the readings in the UBS⁴ and NA²⁸ are correct and others seek to clarify. Translating προεχόμεθα is difficult, but this has little bearing on our concerns since, either way, Paul's goal is the declaration that Jews, with Gentiles, are ὕφ' ἁμαρτίαν. I have followed the majority of scholars and English translations by taking the middle as holding an active sense.

55 Wilckens, *Römer*; Käsemann, *Romans*, 86; Murray, *Romans*, 102; Wright, *Romans*, 457; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:190. The difficulties between 3:1 and 3:9 ease if we realise that Paul is answering the question in 3:1 as regards advantages in general, and 3:9 as regards advantages with respect to moral competency and judgement in particular; cf. Stowers, *A Rereading*, 173–74. The repetition of the question does not break down the diatribal logic

Paul's explanation (γράφ) reveals that his response touches directly on the question of moral competence: 'We have already charged (προητσιασάμεθα) that all are ὑφ' ἁμαρτιαν ('under Sin') Jews and Greeks alike. προητσιασάμεθα looks back to Paul's argument from 1:18 onward; ὑφ' ἁμαρτιαν characterises the situation of humanity after God handed them to the anti-God powers. ὑφ' ἁμαρτιαν should thus be rendered 'under the power or reign of Sin' and indicates that all humans are Sin's slaves.⁵⁶ The scriptural catena which follows serves to demonstrate this fact (3:10–18).⁵⁷ Again, the anthropological dimension cannot be overlooked:⁵⁸ They 'do not understand' or 'seek God'; they have 'turned aside' and become 'useless'; their 'mouths are full of cursing'.

In 3:1–9, Paul has not drifted from the topic of the debilitating effects of Sin to questions about Jewish status at the judgement.⁵⁹ For Paul, questions of status, judgement, and the competency of moral agents are intimately connected. Since non-Christian Israel is uncircumcised of heart and without the power of the Spirit, she remains enslaved to Sin. As ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος, she continues in the Flesh (7:5) and, like Gentiles, her mind is hard and a veil covers her heart (2 Cor 3:14–15).

9.3.4 *Israel's Law in the Aeon of the Flesh*

If we were to put Paul into imaginary dialogue with any one of his Jewish contemporaries, surely the first objection not a few would raise is: What about the Law? Several of the works we have surveyed depict the Law as a testimony to Israel's capacity to obey, if not as the sufficient enabler of obedience itself.⁶⁰ For many, Deuteronomy 30:11–14 means precisely that Israelites were constituted

so long as we remember that this is an imaginary dialogue partner, in whose mouth Paul places words to further the argument (*pace* Jewett, *Romans*, 257).

56 Käsemann, *Romans*, 86; Wright, *Romans*, 457; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (London: Doubleday, 1993), 331; Moo, *Romans*, 201.

57 See further Leander E. Keck, 'The Function of Romans 3:10–18: Observations and Suggestions', in *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 141–157.

58 Schreiner, *Romans*, 164.

59 It is typical of nearly all interpreters to conclude that Paul is demolishing the notion that Jews have an advantage at God's judgement. Wright, *Romans*, 457n85, for instance, argues that since προεχόμεθα refers to position and status, Paul is not concerned with moral behaviour. My analysis shows that judgement is not Paul's only concern, however. From 2:25–29 we see that at issue is that Jews were no better off in regards to obedience, and as such would be condemned (cf. 2:12–13).

60 For references, see above at p. 222 n55. See also 4 Macc 2:6–3:2.

as competent moral agents at Sinai. On Paul's reading, however, Israel's story proves the opposite: since Torah the trespass only increased (Rom 5:20). His view becomes clearest in Romans 7:7–25.

Romans 7 sets up a basic scenerio of two competing agents: The ἐγώ (i.e., the Self) and Sin. In the history of exegesis, the identity of this ἐγώ has led to much bewilderment.⁶¹ And yet identifying the ἐγώ and its history is not nearly so important for understanding this passage as the function of the νόμος in history.⁶² In and of itself, the νόμος is divine (v. 22), holy, righteous, and good (v. 12); it is even spiritual (v. 14) and unto Life (εἰς ζώην, v. 10). One would then expect the νόμος to help the ἐγώ in the battle against Sin. It is all the more shocking, therefore, when Paul says the νόμος emphatically did not support the ἐγώ. Quite the opposite: the νόμος assisted Sin and contributed to the Self's demise. 'Through the commandment' Sin wrought all kinds of covetousness, deceived, and killed the ἐγώ (vv. 8, 11). It is not in spite of but by the very means of the νόμος that Sin exerts its influence (cf. 1 Cor 15:56).⁶³ Paul's point: Sin's power is so strong, its agency so efficacious, that neither the ἐγώ nor the νόμος could match it.

61 If Paul is speaking about himself as a Christian, or of Christian existence, he could be speaking only of the Christian life perspectively, apart from union with Christ. In other words, Paul would then be presenting the Christian experience hypothetically as 'I and I alone' (which τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου in v. 18 and αὐτὸς ἐγώ in v. 25b might suggest; see particularly the argument of Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 226–37; see also the translation in Brian J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I': Personal Example as Literary Strategy*, JSNTSup [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 104 and comments in Jewett, *Romans*, 473), which could never be true of reality ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (8:1). Regardless of whether or not Paul is describing himself as a Christian, his description is from a Christian vantage point; see Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter*, 115; Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 183–95.

62 Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 238–39; Moo, *Romans*, 424; Schreiner, *Romans*, 358; Wilckens, *Römer*, 2:75. As Räisänen, 'The Use of ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμέω in Paul', in *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series; 43 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 97, summarises: 'In 7.7–8.4 Paul wants to prove two things: (1) the law is good; (2) it is powerless'. This is not to deny anthropological questions, however; see R. Weber, 'Die Geschichte des Gesetzes und des Ich in Römer 7,7–8,4', *NZSTh* 29 (1987), 149, 163. Compare Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung*, 345n292, who restricts the Law's importance here to its association with Sin.

63 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 145.

Paul seems to be drawing on and integrating two scriptural stories.⁶⁴ The earliest story concerns Adam.⁶⁵ When Paul reflects on a time without Torah, when Sin was dead and humanity alive (7:8–9), we are reminded of Genesis 2:7, when God breathed into humanity the breath of life and humanity became alive.⁶⁶ With the giving of the (single) command, Sin sprang to life and the ἐγὼ died. The commandment to which Paul refers is the Tenth (7:7). Like other Jewish interpreters, he connects the Torah given at Sinai with the story of the first humans.⁶⁷ In this version, the role traditionally attributed to Satan is recast as the mischievous character Sin.⁶⁸ Sin deceived (ἐξηπάτησεν) humans and killed them.⁶⁹ Thus Sin co-opted the νόμος, through the νόμος gained strength, and even used the life-preserving command to bring Death (7:10–13; 7:24).

The Adamic story is not the only backdrop: there is also the story of Israel constituted under Torah. That Paul is alluding to the experience of Israel is clear from his quotation of the Tenth commandment and his application of that commandment to the Adamic narrative.⁷⁰ Furthermore, Paul's juxtaposition in verse 6 between πνεῦμα and γράμμα elsewhere reflects a distinction between the realities brought into existence by Christ and the Mosaic covenant respectively (2 Cor 3:6), or between Christ and that which marks one as a

64 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 144–45; Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 186–87; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 197, 227; Paul W. Meyer, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7', in *The Word in this World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology*, ed. John T. Carroll (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 70–71.

65 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 196–97; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:383.

66 Gathercole, 'Sin', 168.

67 See above on 4 Ezra 7:11, 24, 72 (pp. 175–179). For a tradition of interpretation which relates the sin of the golden calf to Adam's sin, see Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung*, 258. On the link between Adam and ἐπιθυμία in Jewish interpretation, see Jan Dochhorn, 'Röm 7,7 und das zehnte Gebot: Ein Beitrag zur Schriftauslegung und zur jüdischen Vorgeschichte des Paulus', *ZNW* 100 (2009), 59–77; cf. Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, trans. John P. Galvin (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 204–06; J.A. Ziesler, 'The Role of the Tenth Commandment in Romans 7', *JSNT* 34 (1988), 77–82. One should not assume that Paul believed Adam knew Torah as Torah, which would in fact undermine his argument in Gal 3–4. Rather, Paul is able to draw an analogy between the substance of Torah given at Sinai and the commandment given to Adam. See, for instance, his comment in 5:13–14 that until Moses people did not sin in the likeness (ὁμοιώματι) of Adam, but after Moses they did. See further Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 149; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:379; pace Moo, *Romans*, 428–29.

68 Dochhorn, 'Röm 7,7 und das zehnte Gebot', 69; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:381.

69 Cf. LXX Gen 3:13: ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με καὶ ἔφαγον. On the linguistic difference between ἔξαπατάω and ἀπατάω, note 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14.

70 See Moo, *Romans*, 428; Meyer, 'Worm at the Core', 70–71.

member of the Mosaic covenant (Rom 2:29).⁷¹ If for Paul the νόμος has become aligned with Sin, membership in the Torah-constituted people could not possibly facilitate obedience.⁷² Under Sin's influence, Torah is simply unable to bring Life (cf. Gal 3:21). Rather than empowering Israel, Torah compounded Israel's handicap in its fight against Sin. As such, Israel remains without the capacity to obey.

9.3.5 *Israel's Will in the Aeon of the Flesh*

If 7:7–12 describes the ineptitude of Torah under Sin's mastery, 7:13–25 painfully details how that ineptitude plays out in the Self's struggle with Sin.⁷³ As the γάρ in verse 14 suggests, verses 14–25 explore the question raised in verse 13: How could Death, instead of Life, result from the good Law?⁷⁴ Bultmann perceptively noticed how 'Life' and 'Death' continue to play an important function in verses 14–25 through their relationship to 'good' and 'evil'.⁷⁵ His observation was sharpened when Francis Watson pinpointed Deuteronomy 30:15 as the scriptural source of Paul's co-ordinates: 'the first part of Paul's analysis is determined by the life/death polarity (Rom 7:7–12), whereas the second part is determined by the good/evil polarity (7:13–25) . . . the construction of Paul's argument mirrors exactly the pairs of opposites with which Moses summed up the meaning of the law'.⁷⁶ All this suggests that in verses 13–25 Paul continues to describe the ἐγώ under the Law in the light of Israel's story and the verses most pointedly address an Israelite.⁷⁷

When Paul reflects on the inability of the ἐγώ to overcome Sin and obey God, he specifically says that although the ἐγώ wants (θέλω) to do good, it practises (πράσσω/ποιέω) evil; that it continually carries out that which it does not want (vv. 15, 16, 19); and that accomplishing the good is not within reach (v. 18). These statements raise several interrelated questions: What precisely prevents

71 Furthermore, Watson has argued that Paul is reflecting on the wilderness narratives. See his *Agape, Eros, Gender: Towards a Pauline Sexual Ethic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 163–68; *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 356–80.

72 Rightly, Dunn, *Romans*, 1:381.

73 See further Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 375; Dochhorn, 'Röm 7,7 und das zehnte Gebot', 60–61.

74 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 190–91. On the connection between the two sections, see also Wilckens, *Römer*, 2:85; Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 375.

75 Rudolf Karl Bultmann, 'Romans 7 and the Anthropology of Paul', in *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. Schubert M. Ogden (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1961), 152–55, followed by Meyer, 'Worm at the Core', 72.

76 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 507–08.

77 Contra Stowers (*A Rereading*, 258–84), who believes that Paul is utilising Jewish stereotypes about Gentile *akrasia* to mimic a Gentile.

this ἐγὼ from obeying Torah? How is it that a person can θέλειν something, but not actually accomplish it? And how for that matter can a person accomplish something they explicitly do not θέλω? At least on the surface, these confessions contain an inherent contradiction: The ἐγὼ states plainly that it does not want/will the evil it does; and yet, it actually does evil intentionally, thus voluntarily. The conundrum: the ἐγὼ that denies its desire for evil *could have performed evil only if it wanted to perform it*.⁷⁸ What then is the precise division in human experience which is being portrayed? Various answers have been given to this complex set of questions. For heuristic purposes, I have divided them into three basic approaches.

9.3.5.1 The Will as Divided: The Traditional Approach

On a traditional interpretation, what many consider a 'straightforward' reading, the good intentions of the ἐγὼ do not reach fruition because the will is divided and fails to perform that which it sets out to do. Perhaps the most sophisticated and historically situated version of this interpretative line is set out by S. Stowers. Detecting an allusion to a proverbial Medean saying, Stowers believes that Paul is drawing on and interacting with the *akrasia* (weakness of the will) tradition.⁷⁹ 'Ancient moralists', Stowers notes, 'debated as to whether *akrasia* . . . was caused by ignorance and false belief or by passions inherent in human nature'. The former position is Stoic, while the latter is Platonic. Since for Paul knowledge of Torah does not solve the problem of *akrasia*, Stowers reads Paul as siding with 'the popular and Platonic view against the Stoics': for Paul *akrasia* is a result of 'desire arising from passions (similar to our emotions and appetites)'.⁸⁰

On this line of interpretation, these verses describe competing desires within a human agent.

ὃ θέλω	(Desire 1)
οὐ . . . τοῦτο πράσσω	(Desire 2)
ὃ μισῶ	(Desire 1)
τοῦτο ποιῶ	(Desire 2)

78 A. Van Den Beld, 'Romans 7:14–25 and the Problem of Akrasia', *RelS* 21 (1985), 500.

79 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 39; so also Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 244, 368–69n27.

80 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 279; see further Wasserman, 'Death of the Soul', 803–04, who takes a similar line but attributes the actions to ἀκολασία (806–808, 810). Compare Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Reception of the Graeco-Roman Culture in the New Testament: The Case of Romans 7.7–25', in *The New Testament as Reception*, ed. Mogens Müller and Henrik Tronier, JSNTSup (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 32–57, who gives a Stoic reading.

Paul's seemingly contradictory statement is resolved by posing a 'split-personality' within the ἐγώ. The split involves 'mutually incompatible wants' which the ἐγώ cultivates within itself.⁸¹ In part, *akrasia* can be explained as a conflict between short-term, transitory desires [Desire 2] and long-term, life-purpose desires [Desire 1].⁸² At the same time, Stowers detects a conflict between 'irreconcilable long-term desires'—the desire to follow two 'laws', one of God (Desire 1) and the other of sin (Desire 2).⁸³ On his account, the Self's identification with good desires, and non-identification with evil desires, reflects an ancient anthropology where 'the true self is identified with the mind or rationality and the lower or false self identified with the body or the flesh'.⁸⁴ An alternative or complementary explanation is what T. Engberg-Pedersen calls the 'process of disassociation': though recognising its inherent sinful disposition, the ἐγώ identifies with its good desires and refuses to identify with evil ones.⁸⁵

While seemingly cogent, on closer inspection problems arise within the traditional interpretation. For one, the ἐγώ is never said to will multiple things: 'good' and 'evil' are not two objects of θέλω. To the contrary, verse 19 unambiguously denies that the ἐγώ wills the evil it practices (ὁ οὐ θέλω κακόν). Furthermore, as Bultmann observed, it is not the case that the willing is sourced in some good powers, while evil practice comes from the flesh; both emanate from the flesh.⁸⁶ The ἐγώ is not partly, but is in its entirety, sold

81 Van Den Beld, 'Akrasia', 515. See recently Joshua W. Jipp, 'Educating the Divided Soul in Paul and Plato: Reading Romans 7:7–25 and Plato's Republic', in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 240.

82 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 280, here following Van Den Beld, 'Akrasia', 510–15.

83 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 280–81.

84 Stowers, *A Rereading*, 279. Two recent works seeking to map a Platonic anthropology onto Paul argue that the inner man, mind, and spirit all refer to the rational part of the soul. According to Wasserman, the speaking 'I' represents the mind because it reasons, reflects, and makes accurate judgements. The mind in Rom 7 is fundamentally good but ineffectual because it is enslaved by the passions ('Death of the Soul', 812–13). van Kooten shares the view that 'the body poses the main and only threat to man, as it might be the gateway of sin' (*Anthropology*, 382). He is more optimistic than Wasserman, however, believing that the mind here represents 'the proper functioning of the restored mind' (373n52, italics original). On van Kooten's reading, the I 'is equipped to wage war against the temptation' and thus 'able to restrict the effectiveness of the involuntary impulse' (383). This reading is implausible, however. Verses 14–24 suggest just the opposite: the Self perpetually loses the battle to Sin, does not do what it wants, and is made a captive.

85 Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 244–45.

86 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 151.

under Sin (v. 14).⁸⁷ 'Good' does not dwell in the ἐγώ (v. 18) for the simple reason that Sin has occupied that space (vv. 17, 20).⁸⁸ Thus the ability to accomplish the good is not present (v. 18). The lack of explanatory power in the traditional approach warrants a consideration of other options.

9.3.5.2 The Will as Misdirected: The Bultmannian Approach

An alternative to the traditional approach was forcefully asserted by R. Bultmann.⁸⁹ According to Bultmann, the traditional reading fails to understand that Paul speaks of an act that 'is absolutely and in principle perverted', not simply of a failure to 'fully and constantly' obey.⁹⁰ Since, for Bultmann, Philippians 3:6 testifies to the fact that many Jews did fulfil the law, 'the discrepancy between "willing good" and "doing evil" cannot describe a discrepancy between affirmation of the law's requirement by the will (conscience) and violation of that same requirement in action'.⁹¹ What then is the split of which Paul speaks? Bultmann believes that this can be understood only when one realises that 'the object of "willing" is not the fulfilling of the "commandments" but "life"'.⁹² The problem is that the very 'willing' of Life is evil and thus results in Death.⁹³

ὁ θέλω	(Goal: Life)
οὐ . . . τοῦτο πράσσω	(Accomplishment: anti-Life)
ὁ μισῶ	(anti-Goal: Death)
τοῦτο ποιῶ	(Accomplishment: Death)

On such a reading, 'I do not know what I am bringing about' means that the person does not realise that his willing results in death and *κατεργάζομαι* does not refer to transgression but to 'the result of doing . . . namely, death'.⁹⁴

In support of his reading, Bultmann insists that Paul never suggests that 'transgression' is the problem. Rather '[w]hat is emphasised is that by means of the "commandments" desires are awakened; and these are awakened

87 This presents the fundamental problem for Wasserman, 'Death of the Soul', 812–13. The 'I' cannot refer solely to the mind and remain 'good' when it is both sold under Sin and has Sin inhabiting it (vv. 17, 20).

88 See the discussion below (pp. 247–251).

89 Bultmann predates the exponents of the traditional approach we surveyed.

90 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 148.

91 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 148.

92 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 152.

93 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 154.

94 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 155.

whether the commandments are transgressed or fulfilled.⁹⁵ Paul's problem with the Law is that it necessarily entails 'a seeking after one's own righteousness'.⁹⁶ In sum, Paul's polemic is emphatically not against any failure to keep the Law, but against a zeal which seeks after self-establishment.⁹⁷ The 'split' described is between the object willed, Life, and the result, Death.⁹⁸

While Bultmann shows up weaknesses in a traditional reading and while his analysis holds some key exegetical insights, his overall project is unsustainable. One can dislocate ἐπιθυμία from transgression only by overlooking the context. When Paul follows the statement 'I would not have known ἐπιθυμία' in verse 7 with 'unless the Law said, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις', he shows that he is not speaking of 'desire' generally but of coveting in particular. Thus when verse 8 says that Sin accomplished πάντα ἐπιθυμία in the ἐγώ, the context would have us understand these desires as a violation of the Tenth commandment.⁹⁹ Furthermore, to interpret ἐπιθυμία as a single desire, the will to self-assertion, makes the force of the attributive πάντα difficult to decipher. Finally, as Räisänen points out, Paul does not seem to equate desire with sin here, but sees it as an example of sin,¹⁰⁰ or better, as an example of the general principle that Sin uses the Law to provoke various sinful passions (cf. 7:5). Bultmann's nomistic approach does not provide an adequate explanation of the text.

9.3.5.3 The Will as Deceived: S.J. Chester's Approach

This study develops an interpretative option put forward by S.J. Chester.¹⁰¹ For Chester, Romans 7:7–25 represents Paul's reconstructed biography. Paul is able to see things about the fleshly ἐγώ in light of the Christ event that are otherwise wholly absent from the Self's perception. On this reading it is imperative that one follow the full implications of what Paul says in 7:11, namely that Sin *deceives*. Yet the ability to recognise deception (either in oneself or in another) assumes that the speaker does not speak from a deceived standpoint. There is

95 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 154, emphasis mine.

96 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 149.

97 For a recent version of this reading, see Jewett, *Romans*, 255–73 and his earlier *Anthropological Terms*, 400.

98 Bultmann, 'Romans 7', 155.

99 So Ridderbos, *Paul*, 145–46; Wilckens, *Römer*, 2:80–81; Stephen Westerholm, "'Letter" and "Spirit": The Foundation of Pauline Ethics', *NTS* 30 (1984), 237.

100 See Räisänen, 'ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμέω', whose entire article represents a critique of Bultmann's position.

101 For his full discussion, see Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 183–95; cf. Jan Lambrecht, *The Wretched 'I' and Its Liberation: Paul in Romans 7 and 8*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 14 (Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 86–87.

therefore dissonance between Paul's description and the Self's perception;¹⁰² the description is the result of Christ-sight.¹⁰³ In other words, it is only through 'Christ-sight' that Paul is able to discern that the ἐγώ is deceived and breaks the Law (7:11).¹⁰⁴ Christ-sight reveals that Sin put the ἐγώ into epistemological confusion where it does not 'know' what it 'accomplishes' (ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω, v. 15).¹⁰⁵

Since Paul's Christian outlook reveals new dynamics that introduce a tension not present otherwise, the 'split' existence of the ἐγώ is better interpreted in light of this two-fold perspective.¹⁰⁶

ὁ θέλω	(Deceived Perspective: I will the good)
οὐ . . . τοῦτο πράσσω	(Christ-Sight: The ἐγώ wills and practises evil)
ὁ μισῶ	(Deceived Perspective: I hate evil)
τοῦτο ποιῶ	(Christ-Sight: The ἐγώ wills and does evil)

While the ἐγώ truly believes itself to be obeying the Law, through 'Christ-sight' Paul perceives that in actuality the ἐγώ neither does what it believes itself to be doing nor wills what it believes itself to be willing. Blinded by the god of

102 In v. 15 Paul writes 'I do not 'know' (γινώσκω) what I accomplish'. But in vv. 17–18 the Self 'knows' (οἶδα) that sin, not good, inhabits and accomplishes evil. Vv. 17–18 thus describe the anatomy of the deception with clear eyes.

103 Hence for Chester this is Paul's reconstructed biography. I prefer 'Christ-sight' instead of 'hindsight' to show that this perception is not strictly temporal or biographical so much as eschatological: it stems from one's perception in union with Christ. While in basic agreement with Chester, I do not see biographical elements as intrinsic to Paul's discussion.

104 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 190: 'Paul now knows that, through the commandment, sin wrought in him *πάσα ἐπιθυμία* . . . He now considers that sin was rampant in his life, whereas previously this went unrecognised'; so also p. 186.

105 Chester (*Conversion at Corinth*, 193n152) and Schreiner (*Romans*, 373n3) both reject Bultmann's suggestion that *κατεργάζομαι* refers to the result of the transgression, rather than the transgression itself. By locating these terms' scriptural roots in Deut 30:15–20, however, Watson (*Hermeneutics of Faith*, 507–08) allows us to cut through this dichotomy. In Deut 30:19–20 the choice of life is defined as: *ἀγαπᾶν κύριον . . . εἰσακούειν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ*. Here choosing an outcome is closely related to one's mode of conduct. The conduct *is* the choice!

106 One objection to reading the 'I' as Israel or an Israelite is that this imposes an 'introspective conscience' on Judaism that did not exist; so Jewett, *Romans*, 442. Yet the 'introspective conscience' could simply result from 'Christ-sight'.

this age (cf. 2 Cor 4:4), the ἐγώ is deceived about indwelling Sin (7:18, 20).¹⁰⁷ With respect to its desires, the ἐγώ is more confused than divided.¹⁰⁸ The crux of the ‘split’ lies between the conscious, thinking ἐγώ, and the unconscious, acting ἐγώ.¹⁰⁹ The former represents how the ἐγώ sees itself (i.e., I believe that I am willing good). The latter represents how ‘Christ-sight’ sees the ἐγώ (Sin deceived the ἐγώ so that it unknowingly wills evil). If verses 22–25 depict two parts of the Self waging war, this construction is a result of two very different epistemological perspectives on the same reality. The ἔσω ἄνθρωπος and νοῦς concern the thought world of an ἐγώ *who is both deceived and enslaved*.¹¹⁰

Perspective of the Deceived Self

7:22 κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον:

// συνήδομαι . . . τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ
θεοῦ

According to the thoughts of the ἐγώ, it not only delights in God’s Law, but serves it.

7:25 αὐτὸς ἐγώ τῷ μὲν νοῦ . . .

// δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ

Perspective of Christ-Sight

7:23 βλέπω

// ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν
μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ
τοῦ νοῦς μου καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντά
με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ
ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου.

Christ-Sight reveals that through a covert operation Sin is at war with the mind and holds the entire ἐγώ captive.

7:25: τῇ δὲ σαρκί

//δουλεύω . . . νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας

107 Consequently, Paul’s position has points of contact with both Stoic and Platonic understandings of ineptitude (ignorance and corruption, respectively) without falling neatly into either camp.

108 Chester is somewhat unclear as to whether the Self truly wills good or whether the deception means precisely that the ‘good’ willed is actually ‘evil’.

109 Gathercole, ‘Sin’, 166–67.

110 Thus Wasserman (‘Death of the Soul’, 814) is correct to suggest that ‘Romans 7 does not simply describe internal struggle and conflict but rather explains the mind’s total defeat’. Paul is thus closer to ἀκολασία than ἀκρασία. Wasserman (with van Kooten) is wrong to assert the mind’s basic soundness, however. Neither author takes into account the deception of the Self and the dissonance entailed in Paul’s description. Better is Keener, ‘“Fleshly” Versus Spirit’, 218–19.

One objection that could be raised against this reading is that in 7:7 Paul claims that the Law actually brings the knowledge of sin. This claim appears to conflict with a reading which effectively makes the Self unaware of its sinful actions. Still, one can know something about what constitutes sin in principle all the while being deceived with regard to one's own specific actions.¹¹¹ That something similar is going on in Romans 7 finds support in Paul's use of the terms ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, νόος, and μέλος. While the former two concern the unseen life of the Self as thinking, the latter concerns the Self as acting. Regardless, if there is a tension it is a tension for *any* reading and can be ignored only by overlooking the deception motif altogether. The advantage of Chester's interpretation is that it takes this motif seriously.

9.3.5.4 The Incompetent Agent in Romans 7

We are now in a position to see that Romans 7 does not present us with an upright will that is free in its direction and unscathed by Sin. We begin by noting that for Paul there is no such thing as an independent will. Humans are always caught up into larger networks of power.¹¹² This is no less true for the agent in Romans 7. As Käsemann insists, verse 14 provides the heading to verses 15–25: ἐγὼ . . . σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.¹¹³ Here the

111 Compare Chester, who appears to give two solutions. (1) This knowledge is retrospective knowledge (*Conversion at Corinth*, 188–89; similarly, Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 231). (2) 'Paul does not mean that the very existence of sin or, indeed, all knowledge of their own trespasses, is hidden from human beings until they believe in Christ'; in fact, 'the knowledge of sin that Paul gained only after his conversion is the use made of the law by sin (7:8–11)' (189). The first suggestion is improbable given that Paul is most likely speaking about the time when the commandment came (vv. 7–9). It is difficult to know what to make of the suggestion that the 'I' also failed to recognise how Sin used the commandment to bring it into *conscious* Law-breaking, since earlier Chester states: 'Given that it is the commandment, shortly to be defined as holy and righteous and good, that provides sin with the opportunity to deceive the pre-conversion self, it is difficult to see how the deception can involve anything other than a failure to recognise certain actions as transgressions of that commandment' (186). On what basis can we distinguish between certain actions that the 'I' failed to recognise as sin and others which the 'I' committed consciously as sin? Cf. Gathercole, 'Sin', 171.

112 As Warne states: 'Hebrews viewed the human person primarily in relation to other totalities within the cosmic order' (*Perspectives*, 58–59). On how this relates to Paul's thought, see Ernst Käsemann, 'On Paul's Anthropology', in *Perspectives on Paul*, NTL (London: S.C.M. Press, 1971), 1–31. These insights have recently been developed in some interesting ways by Engberg-Pedersen in 'The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul', *NTS* 55 (2009), 179–97.

113 Käsemann, *Romans*, 200.

slavery motif of chapter 6 is carried forward so that the entirety of the Self is captive ‘to the law of Sin’ (τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἀμαρτίας, 7:23; cf. v. 25b) and must be set free from ‘from the law of Sin’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀμαρτίας, 8:2). Accordingly, the ‘inner man’ (v. 22) and ‘members’ (v. 23) are but two aspects of an undivided Self which is in bondage to Sin.¹¹⁴ The fleshly agent wholly operates under Sin’s influence.¹¹⁵

By recognising that human agents function within networks of power, we can better interpret the peculiar confession in 7:17 and 20: ‘it is no longer I who accomplish it [evil] but Sin which dwells in me’. Such a statement is not a denial of human agency—for on Paul’s account slavery assumes obedience to a master (6:16)—but a denial of the human agent’s independent operations.¹¹⁶ While human agency retains its integrity, it is so bound up with higher networks of power that human accomplishment can be attributed without reservation or qualification to that power. Here Paul evidences the structures of thought we saw in the Scrolls (1QS 3–4) and in Jubilees (11:5); namely, that humans are determined by supra-human powers, and that their agencies coincide and are set in a direct, positive relationship.¹¹⁷ Notably, Paul speaks similarly about his own agency under the power of grace (1 Cor 15:10).¹¹⁸ The fleshly agent of Romans 7, however, is under Sin and determined by Sin’s governance.

114 Meyer, ‘Worm at the Core’, 76; Hermann Lichtenberger, *Das Ich Adams und das Ich der Menschheit: Studien zum Menschenbild in Römer 7*, WUNT 164 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 157–58; cf. the earlier work of Werner Georg Kümmel, *Römer 7 und Das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: zwei Studien*, TBü 53 (München: C. Kaiser, 1974), 135–37.

115 A common argument against taking the ἐγὼ as a through-and-through fleshly individual is that it contradicts what Paul says about the mind of the Flesh in 8:5–7 (Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 114–121, 123). This objection will not stand. Rom 8:7 says that the mind of the Flesh is hostile to God because it cannot submit (ὑποτάσσω) to God’s Law, not because it is unable to delight (συνήδομαι, 7:22) in his Law or acknowledge its goodness. Besides, if my interpretation is correct, the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος and νοῦς concern the thought life of a *deceived* person.

116 Assuming a competitive relationship, Meyer (‘Worm at the Core’, 73–74) thinks that the Self’s agency is negated.

117 Possibly significant here is the phrase τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός (Gal 5:19). That the genitive should be taken as a subjective genitive/genitive of production (the flesh’s workings/the works that the Flesh produces) is suggested by the parallel ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός (5:22), supporting the notion that the actions of the Flesh and humans coincide.

118 On agency dynamics in 1 Cor 15:10, see Barclay, ‘Grace and the Transformation of Agency’, 377–78. While one can see how Rom 7:17, 20 would seem to support the view that Paul adopts Platonic notions about the Self (see n84 above), it is extremely difficult to comprehend 1 Cor 15:10 on such assumptions.

Romans 7:17 and 20 thus mark an important development in and modification to Paul's slavery metaphor. The captive Self, Paul indicates, is a possessed Self, in-dwelt by the very master that enslaves it (cf. 8:2, 9–11). Human agency is connected with Sin at a pre-functional level. Furthermore, Sin's claim on this individual is total: 'Good does not dwell in' that person (7:18).¹¹⁹ In keeping with his emphasis on the mutual exclusivity of masters (6:16–18), the residence of Sin implies 'the non-residence of good'.¹²⁰ In such a situation, the human agent lacks the moral hardware to obey.

It is possible that Romans 7:18 represents an ironic allusion to the new covenant, and if so this only sharpens the point. Paul has already identified the commandment as ἀγαθή ('good') in 7:12. Although switching to the neuter in verse 13 broadens the discourse, Paul nevertheless refers to the commandment metonymically as 'the good' (τὸ ἀγαθόν).¹²¹ If ἀγαθόν still retains contiguity with ἡ ἐντολή when it appears again in verse 18, then the confession that 'the good does not dwell in me' is a way of communicating that the commandment has not been placed within (cf. Jer 31:33)¹²² Since to have Torah within is to have an obedient disposition, the *absence* of the commandment within would suit a discussion about the incompetence of moral agents in the Flesh.

Contemporary scholarship shies away from the conclusion that this ἐγώ is incapable of responding to God. In large similarity to the approach taken above, J.L. Martyn and P.W. Meyer agree with the present thesis that 'the tragic element in Romans 7 does not... arise from a divided self',¹²³ but that this dismal existence stems 'from the self's enslavement to the power of Sin', from 'Sin's power to deceive via the Law, the result being that [humanity] accomplishes the opposite of what [it] intended'.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, both scholars deny the impotence of the ἐγώ. Meyer, for instance, bemoans the reformation tradition's influence and finds nothing in these verses to suggest 'despair over one's

119 On this translation, see Leander E. Keck, 'The Absent Good: The Significance of Rom 7:18a', in *Text und Geschichte: Facetten theologischen Arbeitens aus dem Freundes und Schülerkreis Dieter Lührmann zum 60.*, ed. Stefan Maser (Marburg: Elwert Verlag, 1999), 66–75.

120 Keck's phrase ('The Absent Good', 74).

121 ἡ ἀμαρτία... διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ... ἡ ἀμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.

122 Of note is that instead of referring to a single תורה, in LXX Jer 38:33 God places 'laws' (νόμους) into the mind and writes them (ἀντῶν) on the heart. The plural suggests that specific laws are written, i.e., commandments.

123 See J. Louis Martyn, 'A Formula for Communal Discord!', in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 272–74, here 272; see also Meyer, 'Worm at the Core', 70–74.

124 Martyn, 'Formula', 272, emphasis removed.

inability to live up to the demanding requirement'.¹²⁵ Likewise, Martyn writes: 'Paul's argument attaches impotence not to the human will, but rather to the Law'.¹²⁶ Such conclusions pose false dichotomies. While Paul certainly believes that Sin has compromised Torah and thus deals with something 'far more serious than a mere impotence of the human will',¹²⁷ his entire discussion presupposes the insufficiency of human capacities to effect obedience. The Law's powerlessness on account of the Flesh concerns its inability to equip fleshly individuals to fulfil the divine requirement (7:5; 8:3–4). Paul's point in Romans 7:14 is precisely that when the spiritual Law falls on a fleshly, Sin-possessed disposition, it does not find fertile ground, and the result is Death.¹²⁸ Romans 7 does not need to make explicit that the ἐγώ is 'unable to do what he wishes' in order to communicate the Self's inability to obey God;¹²⁹ for this is already *implicit* in the confession ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω (v. 19). Moreover, the ἐγώ represents the situation of someone in the Flesh (7:5), whose inability to obey God is explicitly pronounced in 8:7–8:

The outlook of the Flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not submit (οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται) to God's Law, neither is it *able* (οὐδὲ . . . δύναται); and those in the Flesh are *unable* (οὐ δύνανται) to please God.

Such evidence forces the conclusion that the ἐγώ in Romans 7 is wholly incompetent, and Paul gives no ground to those who would 'view the Law as an agent of transformation'.¹³⁰

It is important to realise that Paul's understanding of Israel's hardening (παρώω) is not primarily an empirical observation: it is formulated through

125 Meyer, 'Worm at the Core', 71. Somewhat inconsistently, Meyer will write only three pages later: 'The thought of these verses [15–20] is exactly the same as in vv.10b–11, only now it is not the Mosaic Torah but *the religious self devoted to it that is powerless to achieve what it longs for*' (74, emphasis added). While on Meyer's reading 'what is longed for' is eternal life, nevertheless, his statement would seem to attach impotence to the human will.

126 Martyn, 'Formula', 273–75.

127 So Martyn, 'Formula', 273.

128 See Otto Betz, *Jesus, der Herr der Kirche: Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie II*, WUNT 52 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), esp. at 135, 180–181.

129 Cf. Martyn, 'Formula', 274.

130 Schreiner, *Romans*, 358. See also Moo, *Romans*, 438: 'Paul has in mind the tendency of some Jews to accord to the Mosaic law life-giving power'. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 147: 'All that is depicted here has no other purpose than to say that man cannot live from the strength of the law, but has died and still dies'. The question in v. 13 is telling in this regard. Compare the conclusions of Jipp, 'Educating the Divided Soul', 253–57.

his reading of Israel's scriptural heritage in light of the Christ event. With Deuteronomy 29:3, Paul maintains that 'God gave [Israel] a spirit of stupor, having eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear' (Rom 11:7–8). Hostile to God and unable to submit to his Law, they will inevitably commit sins and even abandon the covenant.¹³¹ Accordingly, Paul is certain that Jews are under God's just condemnation because they remain in a community characterised by moral ineptitude (Rom 3:19–20).¹³²

9.3.6 *Summary and Conclusions*

I have now sketched out the implications of one side of Paul's contrast: life in the Flesh. Under the regime of Sin, human actions are determined by sinful passions that are themselves exacerbated by Torah. The phrase 'sinful passions' (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν) reflects the corruption of that which drives human activity.¹³³ The implications this holds for Paul's reading of Israel's restoration narrative and human agency in that narrative are noteworthy and can be thrown into relief by comparing him with the other interpreters we have studied.

As in the Scrolls, Jubilees, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, Paul believes that Israel's fall is a result of her corrupt nature. While the Qumran sectarians and Paul both hold to a doctrine of absolute moral incompetence, for the sectarians this description applies only to the Sons of Darkness. Neither there, nor in any of the other works just mentioned, is anthropological perversion or demonic influence taken so far as to deny Israel certain measures by which she can stay evil powers and overcome the malign heart. In 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, for instance, the heart's corruption, while making obedience arduous, in no way rules obedience out as a possibility. Moses' offer of Life and Death remain extended to a people who can reform their wills and obey (Deut 30:15, 19). Paul, in contrast, believes Moses' offer was directed at a people who remained in the Flesh and under the power of Sin (7:5, 14). For him it was inevitable that, like Adam before her,¹³⁴ Christ-less Israel would transgress the commandment and

131 Rightly, Schreiner, *Romans*, 150.

132 Similarly, Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 348; Thielman, *Paul*, 126–27.

133 Michaelis notes how παθήμα indicates passivity—one is controlled or subdued by the sinful passion ('πάθημα', in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967], 930–31).

134 As Wright so astutely noted, the problem is 'the hidden Adam in Israel' ('The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans' [Oxford, 1980], 152).

follow the path of 'Death' and 'Curse' instead of 'Life' and 'Blessing'.¹³⁵ Bondage to foreign nations pales in comparison to the bondage she was experiencing under the powers of the old aeon. Lacking both a reconstituted will and deliverance from the anti-God powers, the Israel of Paul's day was no better off than the generations of covenant-breakers before her.

Undoubtedly, at this point, the author of Jubilees would insist that the uniqueness of Israel, her separateness from other nations maintained to a large extent by circumcision and food laws, could protect her from demonic influence and assist her in keeping Torah (Jub 15:30–32; 22:16, 19–22). For Paul, however, circumcision and other 'boundary defining' laws provide no recourse against the Flesh (Rom 2:25–3:9; Gal 4:8–11; 5:2, 16), and thus in no way mitigate the incompetence of moral agents. Thus even if one could imagine Paul conceding a historic return from exile, he would never admit that Israel could be released from covenant curse through renewed efforts at law-keeping (Gal 3:10; cf. Rom 8:3).¹³⁶ In fact, for Paul, Israel needed to be released from Torah itself, since even it had been possessed by Sin (Rom 7:4, 6).¹³⁷

In the sectarian scrolls, 'restoration' is due in large measure to reflection by the Sons of Righteousness on Torah under the guidance of their Teacher, but also to acknowledging sin (CD 1:8–9).¹³⁸ Paul, however, would insist that until one turns to Christ, a veil remains over the heart whenever the Scriptures are read (2 Cor 3:14–16). Moreover, his extreme position concerning Sin's ruinous effects on the noetic faculties makes acknowledging sin somewhat problematic. Besides, in Paul's dark world, wholehearted sorrow and confession result only in more death (2 Cor 7:10). A scenario in which God restores Israel on the basis of good intentions, as Philo suggests (*Virt.* 185), would hardly be

135 This conclusion supports the hypotheses of Noth, 'For All who Rely on Works of the Law are Under a Curse', in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 119, 129–131; Eichholz, *Die Theologie des Paulus im Umriss*, 2., durchges. u. um Literatur erg. Aufl ed., (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977), 247; Scott, 'Works of the Law', 213–15; and Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework to Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*, NovTSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 67–68, 72; *Paul*, 127–29, in so far as all conclude that Paul views Israel as under a perpetual curse.

136 See Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter-Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3*, WUNT 81 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995), 182, 442.

137 So also Schnelle, 'Transformation und Partizipation', 67. The conclusion that the Law that one dies to is the *Sin-Possessed Law* is clear from 7:7–25 and not dependent on textual variants which read 'Law of Death' (e.g., D F G).

138 Something the Scrolls share with 2 Baruch (78:6).

amenable either.¹³⁹ The one ally Paul appears to have is the author of Baruch. But even though those two mavericks share an unyielding stance on Israel's depravity, even Baruch does not go so far as to make the Torah itself in need of redemption. In the final analysis, the picture Paul paints reveals 'the absolute necessity of another moral power than that of the I-myself, the *nous*, the inward man'.¹⁴⁰ What is required is a power that can engender a more radical, fundamental change—the harbinger of new creation.

9.4 New Creation: The Reconstitution of the Human Agent in Christ

Having established the nature of life in the Flesh (7:5), we are now in a position to consider how Paul conceives of liberation from Sin, and how human agency functions in its liberated existence. This brings us to the $\nu\nu\iota$ $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ of 7:6 and the explication of servitude 'in newness of the Spirit'.¹⁴¹ Romans 7:5–6 concludes a somewhat convoluted analogy regarding the principle that death enables marriage partners to unite to another. Paul's point: having died to the Sin-possessed Law through the body of Christ, believers are now united to Christ (v. 4). Rather than bearing fruit to the anti-God powers (cf. v. 5), this union has the purpose of offering fruit to God. Paul's statements in verse 6—release from slavery and service in newness of the Spirit—are predicated upon the previous chapter's discussion of union with Christ. If we are going to understand how Paul conceives of Christian liberation and new life in the Spirit, we must start there.

9.4.1 *Union with Christ and the Recreation of the Moral Agent*

Romans 6 opens with the rhetorical question that arises from a faulty conclusion based on the relationship Paul constructs between the Law, Sin, and Grace in 5:20–21: 'What are we saying then: "Let us remain in Sin so that grace may increase"?' If one's prior assumption is that Torah was intended to stay the trespass, it is easy to see how once Paul denies it this function there is nothing left to empower the human agent. A lacuna appears in Paul's system.¹⁴²

139 So Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 384: 'Paul clearly thought sinners lacked the capacity and even the inclination to so repent'.

140 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 130. See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 464.

141 So Jewett, *Romans*, 437: 'The turn of the new creation is indicated by $\nu\nu\iota$ $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ '.

142 See J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 108; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:326.

Paul firmly denies that believers should continue to sin by pointing his readers back to the Christ event. It is from the implications of this event that he reasons with believers about their current status as moral agents. The recurrence of expressions with the prefix *σύν* demonstrate that Paul's main theme is the believer's participation in Christ's once-for-all, aeon-breaking, world-shattering event. On the one hand, believers are in union (*σύμφυτος*) with Christ's death: They were 'co-crucified' (*συσταυρόω*, 6:6) and 'co-buried' (*συνθάπτω*, 6:4) 'with him' (*σύν αὐτῷ*). For Paul 'when Christ died, they died, and his death was their own' (cf. 2 Cor 5:14).¹⁴³ Being joined to Christ through baptism thus marks a believer's decisive break with the old world-aeon (6:3–4).¹⁴⁴ The cosmos is thereby crucified to the believer and the believer to the cosmos (Gal 6:14). The implication is that since Christ's death was a death to Sin (6:10), those united to Christ have also died to Sin's reign and been transferred out from under Sin's dominion (6:2, 7; cf. v. 9).

On the other hand, Paul speaks of participation in Christ's resurrection. Verses 5 and 8 assume that those united to Christ's death shall also be raised and live (*συζῶω*) with him in the new creation. Since verses 5 and 8 depict a future resurrection, there is some question as to when believers start to participate in this new world. Should we conclude that while believers presently participate in Christ's death, participation in his resurrection remains merely a future pledge? In Colossians (2:12–13; 3:1) and Ephesians (2:5–6), believers have been raised with Christ in some sense already. Is there any hint of this in the undisputed Pauline letters, or are the two incompatible?

In 6:4, Paul argues that Christians were united to Christ in death in order that (*ἵνα*) just as Christ was raised they also might walk in newness of life. The *ὡσπερ . . . οὕτως καὶ* structure draws a comparison between Jesus' own resurrection and the newness of life in which believers now walk. What unites the comparison is a description of eschatological existence after death. After Christ died, he was raised 'through the glory of the Father' (*διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς*).¹⁴⁵ Here 'glory' associates Christ's resurrection with the power of the eschatological age (cf. 1 Cor 15:40–43). Likewise, the phrase *ἐν καινότητι* endues believers' lives with eschatological 'newness'. In 7:6, this newness is described as *καινότητι πνεύματος*—the Spirit being closely associated with resurrection life (cf. 1:4). Thus while believers have yet to be raised in their mortal bodies

143 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 207; so also Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 27; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:316–318, 330–331; Schnelle, 'Transformation und Partizipation', 63–65.

144 As Jewett (*Romans*, 398) notes, burial is the 'point of no return'. On the role of baptism, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 335–36; Käsemann, *Romans*, 163.

145 Moo, *Romans*, 367n72.

(Rom 8:11), the consideration of faith (and not of sight) is that they are already 'dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (6:11).¹⁴⁶

These preliminary observations lay the groundwork for a discussion of the reconstitution of the moral agent. Since it is the contention of this thesis that Paul's understanding of human agency is informed not only by the Christ event but also by Scripture, and more particularly by a dynamic interplay between the two, by exploring his reading of sacred texts we will be able to press deeper into his conceptions of divine and human agency.

9.4.2 *Union with Christ as the Fulfilment of Scriptural Promise*

9.4.2.1 Union with Christ and the New Covenant

Should believers sin now that they are free from the Law and under Grace? This is the question Paul addresses in 6:15–23. In response, he reminds his audience of three things: 1) individuals are enslaved to whomever they obey (v. 16); hence, the impossibility of serving Sin while being enslaved to God. 2) Christians are enslaved to God and not in a neutral position (vv. 17–18). 3) Enslavement to Sin results in shame and Death; enslavement to God results in sanctification and Life (vv. 21–23).

In the midst of this emancipation discourse, Paul says that the direct result of God's act in Christ is that Christians have become obedient from the heart εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδασχῆς (v. 17b). Significantly, verse 17b marks the only undisputed place where Paul pens ἐκ καρδίας and the action which flows from the heart is 'obedience' (ὑπηκούσατε). As noted earlier, this echoes Deuteronomy's description of Israel who, having been released from slavery, fulfils the *SHEMA* at the restoration: ὑπακούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ . . . ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου (Deut 30:2).¹⁴⁷ If this allusion has been overlooked by scholars, it is not for lack of comment on these words. In fact, both the syntax and meaning have been so bewildering that some even reject 17b as an interpolation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ On believers being joined to the new creation, see particularly Stuhlmacher, 'Charakter', 28. Compare Paul W. Meyer, 'The Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters', *Int* 33 (1979), 3–18, who argues that believers do not participate in the new creation. Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:330: 'There is clearly implied a sharing in some degree in Christ's risen life'. Yet elsewhere Dunn states, 'however much [believers] share in Christ's death they do not yet share in Christ's resurrection' (332). Similar is Schnelle, for whom the power of the new world 'spills over' (hineinwirkende) into the present ('Transformation und Partizipation', 64–65, here 64n24).

¹⁴⁷ See above at p. 216.

¹⁴⁸ Rudolf Karl Bultmann, 'Glossen im Römerbrief', *TLZ* 72 (1947), 197–202; Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), 127–28; and most recently Jewett, *Romans*, 419. As such, v. 17a 'Thanks be to God that being slave of Sin . . .' is picked up at v. 18.

But as one such commentator admits, removing 17b does not resolve every syntactical problem.¹⁴⁹ Besides, this solution lacks textual support. Yet most who reject verse 17b do so because it does not seem to square with Paul's thought. My contention, however, is that if we set aside any *a priori* assumptions about what Paul could and could not write, and pay attention to his allusion, then a fairly coherent interpretation emerges.

The first syntactical problem that arises concerns the object of obedience. The verb *ὑπακούω* normally takes a dative or genitive, but here has an accusative (*τύπον*) as its object. Yet as R. Gagon notes, 'in Greek it is perfectly legitimate to incorporate the antecedent into its relative clause. In such cases the antecedent is often placed at the end of the clause, without the article.'¹⁵⁰ Here the separation of syntactical elements has resulted in a case of inverse attraction, the antecedent being attracted to the case of the relative pronoun.¹⁵¹ Thus we find *εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδασχῆς*.

While the combination of the verb *παραδίδωμι* with *διδασχῆ* might suggest the idea of some handed-down-tradition (cf. 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3), here *τύπον διδασχῆς* is not 'handed over' to Christians, but 'you' [Christians] are 'handed over' (*παρεδόθητε*) to *τύπον διδασχῆς*. To understand the dynamic of Paul's words we must remember how Paul uses *παραδίδωμι* elsewhere in Romans. Earlier we noted how God 'handed over' humanity to (*εἰς*) the anti-God power Sin (1:24, 26, 28). The verb is used two other times outside 6:17, both of God 'handing over' Jesus on behalf of (*ὑπέρ*) Christians (8:32), particularly because of (*διὰ*) their trespasses (4:25). From these five occurrences a pattern emerges: As an act of judgement God handed over humanity to Sin's slavery. As an act of redemption God judged Sin by handing Jesus over to death (Rom 6:6; 8:3). Romans 6:17 moves the drama one step forward. On the logic of 6:16, slaves released from one master must take another; neutrality is ruled out.¹⁵² By using *παραδίδωμι* in this context Paul communicates that through the death of Jesus God has reversed his former act of judgement, releasing Christians from captivity by

149 Jewett, *Romans*, 418. As Beare observed: 'if we once start to tidy up St Paul and eliminate his oddities of rhetoric, it is hard to say what we shall have left' '(On the Interpretation of Romans vi. 17', *NTS* 5 [1958], 206)!

150 Robert Gagon, 'Heart of Wax and a Teaching that Stamps: ΤΥΠΟΣ ΔΙΔΑΧΗΣ (Rom 6:17b) Once More', *JBL* 112 (1993), 668. See the numerous examples in Friedrich Blass, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §294.

151 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 339; cf. Blass, *Greek Grammar*, §294 (5). The two differ only with respect to classification.

152 Käsemann, *Romans*, 180.

placing them under a new master (εἰς ὄν).¹⁵³ While at first glance τύπος διδασκαλίας appears to be a strange master, Paul has already described Christians' master as Obedience (v. 16), goes on to describe their master as Righteousness (vv. 18, 19), and climactically as God (v. 22).¹⁵⁴ By presenting διδασκαλίη as a power into which humans are handed over, Paul creatively enlists one more metaphorical expression to communicate God's saving rule over Christians. And yet even if this is so, the question remains: What does τύπον διδασκαλίας mean and what does Paul gain by saying that Christians have become obedient to it particularly?

From Paul's use of τύπος elsewhere, a few options present themselves. Paul could refer to an impersonal 'standard' of teaching present in the early church. In this baptismal context, such a 'standard' could refer to doctrinal codification,¹⁵⁵ or more likely to a specific 'model' or 'example' of conduct. This model then either issues forth from the teaching or is simply the content with which the teaching is concerned (cf. 1 Thess 1:7; Phil 3:17).¹⁵⁶ Cranfield modifies this option by taking τύπον διδασκαλίας as a 'mould' which consists in teaching and shapes the lives of those who give themselves to it.¹⁵⁷ The difficulty with Cranfield's view comes when it smuggles in some notion of *believers* 'giving themselves' over to the mould through obedience. Here Paul is specifically concerned with what *God* accomplished through a transfer of lordship, the very basis of obedience and reason for thanksgiving.¹⁵⁸ The other options are problematic as well; they struggle to explain how διδασκαλίη, an impersonal referent, could serve as an 'example'. Besides, an impersonal referent does not correlate with Paul's personal references to τύπος elsewhere. For this reason Dunn has suggested taking τύπον διδασκαλίας as an allusion to Jesus, the 'pattern' of obedience.¹⁵⁹ Although certainly at home in Paul's theology, grammatical and contextual grounds rule out Dunn's proposal: it is difficult to make Jesus the antecedent of ὄν,¹⁶⁰ and this transfers the emphasis from what God accomplished to how humans should respond.

153 Beare, 'Interpretation of Romans vi. 17', 206–07.

154 Beare, 'Interpretation of Romans vi. 17', 207.

155 Some detect here a contrast, either between Paul's own gospel and other teachings, or between Christian and Jewish teaching (e.g., Käsemann, *Romans*, 181–82; Moo, *Romans*, 402). While the former lacks contextual support, the latter might find it in 6:15.

156 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 449–50; Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter*, 94; Wilckens, *Römer*, 2:36–37.

157 Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:324. See also Beare, 'Interpretation of Romans vi. 17', 209–10.

158 So Gagon, 'Heart of Wax', 680. Even Paul's awkward syntax—passive with εἰς ὄν—serves to emphasise the divine act (Schreiner, *Romans*, 336).

159 Dunn, *Romans*, 1:343–344.

160 See further Gagon, 'Heart of Wax', 676–77.

R. Gagon has proffered yet another option. He suggests that since τύπος originally comes from the verb τύπω (to strike), it most naturally refers to the ‘imprint’ made on the mind or heart by the teaching. In support he marshals a host of Greek philosophers, as well as Philo.¹⁶¹ A few examples from the latter demonstrate the plausibility of his suggestion. First, Philo says that at creation God’s ‘divine nature stamped (ἐνεσφραγίζετο) her own impression (τύπους) in an invisible manner on the invisible soul, in order that even the earth might not be destitute of the image of God’ (*Det.* 86). In context, Philo is arguing that the human soul acts reasonably because God impressed his image on it. Elsewhere Philo claims that on account of idolatry Moses taught people about God’s sovereignty and in so doing ‘stamped deep impressions on [their] minds (τύπους ταῖς διανοίαις), engraving piety [in them] (ἐγχαράττων ὀσιότητος, *Spec.* 1:30). In both examples an impression on the soul/mind informs human ability and action. In *Spec.* 1:30, teaching itself writes obedience on people’s minds so that they obey. Noting the ‘strong link between teaching and the imprint (τύπος) left by such teaching on the inner person’, Gagon proposes that Paul’s use means something similar and even correlates with Jeremiah’s promise of the Law engraved on the heart, Ezekiel’s new heart (*Ezek* 11:19–20; 36:26–27), and the circumcised heart of Deuteronomy 30:6.¹⁶²

This study strengthens Gagon’s hypothesis. As already noted, ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἀμαρτίας ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας in Romans 6:17 recalls Deuteronomy 30:2 where enslaved Israel obeys (ὑπακούω) God ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας. Paul here picks up his reading of Deuteronomy 30 from 2:25–29. There I suggested that the Spirit/letter dichotomy intimates how Paul follows an interpretative tradition which conflates Deuteronomy 30 with Jeremiah’s new covenant and Ezekiel’s eschatological promise (cf. 2 Cor 3:3–6). Important to remember is that all these texts forecast that when God delivers Israel from exile, he will perform a work on people’s hearts to establish them as obedient agents—either through heart-circumcision, a heart-and-spirit-gift, or by writing Torah on the heart. Although it lacks direct verbal links, τύπον διδασχῆς conceptually fits as an allusion to the latter. In contradistinction from the fleshly agent in 7:18 is the Christian,¹⁶³ who, having been freed from slavery, obeys God’s διδασχῆ wholeheartedly.¹⁶⁴ What accounts for this obedience is God’s inscribing διδασχῆ on the Christian’s heart.

161 See in particular Gagon, ‘Heart of Wax’, 682–85.

162 Gagon, ‘Heart of Wax’, 685.

163 On the possible allusion to the new covenant in 7:18, see p. 249 above.

164 It is worth noting that A contains a textual variant at 17b which reads ἐκ καθαρὰς καρδίας. Perhaps a scribe was familiar with the concept from the interpretative tradition of

If this is so, then διδασχῆ appears to provide a functional equivalent for νόμος in LXX Jeremiah 38:33. From Paul's uses of διδασχῆ and διδάσκω elsewhere it is difficult to know what to make of this substitution and how it helps to define the content of what is inscribed.¹⁶⁵ We might find a clue from Paul's reference to Christians as θεοδιδασχοι in 1 Thessalonians 4:9 (cf. Is 54:13). There the divine teaching specifically concerns love for one another. What makes this suggestive for our purposes is that in the previous verse God is described as the one who gives the Holy Spirit to you (τὸν θεὸν τὸν καὶ διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἄγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς, 1 Thess 4:8), an allusion to Ezekiel 36:27/37:14.¹⁶⁶ Thus very close to one of Paul's allusions to Ezekiel's restoration narrative, divine διδασχῆ is specified in terms of the love-command (cf. Gal 5:14). As we will see, this command is also read into Paul's interpretation of Ezekiel 36:26–27 at Romans 8:3–4. If Paul has that narrative in mind in Romans 6:17, then perhaps the teaching which is impressed by God is nothing other than love for one another.

There is more to be said about 6:17, which incidentally strengthens this conjecture. In the divine-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30, we noted a particular interplay between divine and human agency which intersects at the human heart. It is probably not a coincidence that only a chapter before describing Christians as obedient from the heart (6:17), Paul spoke of God's love penetrating their hearts by the gift of the Spirit (5:5): ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν. The combination of pouring (ἐκχύνω) with Spirit (πνεῦμα) immediately reminds one of Joel 3:1: καὶ ἐκχέω ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου. But in many ways Paul's words reflect Ezekiel 36. Ezekiel reminds the Israelites how their sin resulted in an outpouring (ἐκχέω) of God's wrath (LXX Ezek 36:18). God will reverse this situation when he sprinkles water on his people, gives them a new heart (καρδία), and places ['gives'] his Spirit in them (τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν, vv. 25–27). Likewise, in Romans 5:5 the giving (δίδωμι) of the Spirit accompanies the outpouring of love in the heart. Allusions in Romans 5:5 in combination with allusions in 6:17 present a interplay approximating divine-priority readings of Deuteronomy 30, Jeremiah 31, and Ezekiel 36. For Paul, the outpouring of divine wrath is extinguished through an outpouring of divine love. But rather than speak

Deut 30:6, since יהוה אלהיך ומלך ירוהו אלהיך gets translated περιχαθαριεὶ κύριος τὴν καρδίαν σου in the LXX. Cf. 1 Tim 1:5; 1 Pet 1:22.

165 Paul uses the terms somewhat generically (e.g., Rom 2:20–21; 12:7; 16:17; 1 Cor 2:13; 11:14) and occasionally to refer to teaching on Christian living (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 4:17).

166 See Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 19; Witmer, *Divine Instruction*, 157; G.K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 123.

of heart-circumcision, in 5:5 this love finds expression in Ezekiel's promised Spirit-gift.¹⁶⁷ God's sending his Gift into human hearts is then reciprocated in 6:17 by wholehearted obedience, which has its end in Life (v. 22).

God pours love/Spirit into the heart > leads to human love/obedience
from the heart > leads to Life.

Thus if Paul can trace obedience back to heart-circumcision (2:25–29/ Deut 30:6), he can also attribute it to an internal divine inscription (6:17b/ Jer 31:33) or to God's Spirit-gift (5:5/ Ezek 36:26–27).

While accepting Gagon's explanation of τύπος, R. Jewett nevertheless considers 6:17b an interpolation because the language of obedience from the heart is foreign to Paul and because the idea of learning doctrinal instruction fits neither the context nor co-text.¹⁶⁸ If Paul is alluding to restoration narratives to describe the Christ event, however, then the peculiar language is explicable by the scriptural reverberations, which serve to speak of something far more profound than Christians remembering commands and obeying them because of doctrinal instruction. As an interjection of thanksgiving to God, Paul celebrates God's gospel initiative to established obedient agents through Christ and Spirit. Even if the scriptural language appears peculiar because it gets subsumed by Paul's Gospel explication, buried beneath the surface of 6:17 lies a reading of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Such a reading is brought into clearer focus in Romans 8:1–11.

9.4.2.2 Union with Christ and Ezekiel's Restoration Narrative

While many have suggested similarities between Ezekiel 36–37 and Paul's Spirit language in Romans 8, commentators have done little to substantiate the allusion or to ask how Paul's engagement with Ezekiel has informed him. A recent exception is J.W. Yates, who firmly establishes Ezekiel's influence.¹⁶⁹ Note, for example, the lexical correspondence between Ezekiel 36:26–27 and Romans 8:4.

¹⁶⁷ On the influence of Ezekiel 36 in Romans 5:5, see Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 255.

¹⁶⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 418–19.

¹⁶⁹ John W. Yates, *The Spirit and Creation in Paul*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 144–45. This study builds on his analysis. See also John A. Bertone, 'The Function of the Spirit in the Dialectic Between God's Soteriological Plan Enacted but not yet Culminated: Romans 8:1–27', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (1999), 82–84.

Romans 8:4:

ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα

LXX Ezekiel 36:26–27:

καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν καρδίαν καινὴν καὶ πνεῦμα καινὸν δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ἀφελῶ τὴν καρδίαν τὴν λιθίνην ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν καρδίαν σαρκίνην καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ποιήσω ἵνα ἐν τοῖς δικαιώμασίν μου πορεύσθε καὶ τὰ κρίματά μου φυλάξῃσθε καὶ ποιήσητε

Though uses of the terms vary, both texts reference δικαίωμα ('righteous requirement/s'), σὰρξ ('flesh') and πνεῦμα ('Spirit'). A less exact parallel is that while Ezekiel speaks of κρίματα ('decrees'), Paul has just declared that there is no 'decree against' (κατάκριμα) those in Christ (8:1). Furthermore, both texts denote life-style with 'walking' terminology (περιπατέω/πορεύομαι).¹⁷⁰

The broader contexts of both passages strengthen the link. While Ezekiel says that God will place his Spirit in people (τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν), Paul tells believers 'the Spirit of God dwells in you' (πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, 8:9). Ezekiel dramatises this divine act in chapter 37, where God pledges to the dead exiles:¹⁷¹ 'I will bring to you the Spirit of life' (πνεῦμα ζωῆς, 37:5). Strikingly similar is Romans 8:10: 'though the body is dead (νεκρόν) on account of sin, the Spirit is life (πνεῦμα ζωῆ) on account of righteousness'.¹⁷² In both texts, this life-Spirit refers to God's Spirit (πνεῦμα μου, Ezek 37:6/ πνεῦμα θεοῦ, Rom 8:9), and the Spirit's indwelling leads to Life.¹⁷³

Ezekiel 37:6: δώσω πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ ζήσεσθε

Romans 8:11: εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν

This evidence adequately demonstrates Paul's dependence on Ezekiel in Romans 8:1–11.¹⁷⁴ Assuming this scriptural background, I now aim to show

¹⁷⁰ Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 144.

¹⁷¹ 37:9: εἰς τοὺς νεκρούς.

¹⁷² Compare Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 491; Wilckens, *Römer*, 2:132–133, who take πνεῦμα anthropologically.

¹⁷³ This way of putting the matter intentionally bypasses the thorny issue of whether or not διὰ should be read with a genitive or accusative in the final clause: διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος [τὸ ἐνοικοῦν] αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν.

¹⁷⁴ Contra Käsemann, *Romans*, 216.

how Paul understands union with Christ as participation in the fulfilment of Ezekiel's promise.

Union with Christ and the Indwelling Spirit: In Ezekiel, resurrection marked the time when God would newly create Israel by placing his Spirit within her. Informed by this narrative, Paul says twice that the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead now resides in believers (8:9, 11). At first glance it appears that Paul has inverted Ezekiel's narrative sequence since the Spirit's indwelling precedes believers' own resurrection (v. 11). It is important to note, however, that in Ezekiel the giving of the Spirit does not follow, but is concomitant with the resurrection. Keeping in mind that Christ's resurrection marks the beginning of one general epochal event (1 Cor 15:22–23),¹⁷⁵ Paul, like Ezekiel, believes that God pours out his Spirit *during* the resurrection; i.e., between the start of the resurrection begun with Christ and the conclusion of that event at the resurrection of all believers. Since the outpouring of the Spirit is integral to the Resurrection event, through receiving the Spirit believers themselves begin to share in that event. Paul's identification of Christ with the Spirit develops this thesis.

Paul posits a close relationship between the risen Christ and the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 15:45). So close are the two that Paul reasons from the Spirit's being in *you* (πνεῦμα . . . ἐν ὑμῖν, 8:9) that the resurrected Christ is in *you* (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, 8:10). This does not make the Spirit and Christ identical or absolutely indistinguishable in their roles.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the Spirit which inhabits believers is nothing other than the Spirit of Christ (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, 8:9). Paul's union doctrine entails mutual-penetration: those in Christ Jesus (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 8:1) have Christ in them (cf. Gal 4:19; Col 1:27; Eph 3:16–17)¹⁷⁷ and are thereby united to his resurrection existence.¹⁷⁸ This union delimits a believer's present participation in the fulfilment of Ezekiel's restoration promise.¹⁷⁹

175 As an incorporative and representative figure, Christ stands as the first-fruits and first-born of all those to be resurrected, 'the actual beginning of th[e] general epochal event' (Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 45).

176 For instance, there is a distinction in their work of intercession (8:26–27, 33–34). See further Richard B. Gaffin, '“Life Giving-Spirit”: Probing the Center of Paul's Pneumatology', *JETS* 41 (1998), 184–85.

177 See Käsemann, *Romans*, 221–22; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:389; cf. Moo, *Romans*, 491; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:429.

178 So Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 162–63; contra Meyer, 'Holy Spirit', 3–18.

179 Though Paul will not say that believers have experienced ἀνάστασις, which for him denotes bodily resurrection, as Kirk (*Unlocking Romans*, 116) reasons: 'in some ways, asking if the believer is already thought to be raised with Christ in these verses [Rom 6:1–7:6] misses the point. . . . The central point is that believers have been united to Christ, who died and

Transformation and the Indwelling Spirit: In 8:5–8, Paul elaborates on 7:5–6 by describing two groups of people as they relate to the antithetical power spheres of Flesh and Spirit. The contrast is set out as follows:

- v. 5a: existing according to the Flesh/according to the Spirit
- v. 5b: perceiving the things of the Flesh/of the Spirit
- v. 6: the outlook of the Flesh/Spirit
- vv. 8–9: existing in the Flesh/in the Spirit.¹⁸⁰

Whereas 8:4b concerns behaviour,¹⁸¹ verses 5–9 ground behaviour in location. As the antithesis demonstrates, those who exist *κατὰ σάρκα* (v. 5) exist in the power-sphere of the Flesh (v. 8); those who exist *κατὰ πνεῦμα* (v. 5) exist in the power-sphere of the Spirit (v. 9). Again, humans are shaped by their environments.¹⁸² Verses 9–11 demonstrate this by claiming that to be *ἐν πνεύματι* is to be personally inhabited by the Spirit. As with the powers of the old age (7:17, 20), so here being brought under a new Lord is to be inhabited by that Lord. Verses 5–6 present another way in which humans are so fashioned.

Paul says people *φρονοῦσιν* according to the sphere in which they exist (*ἄνθρωποι*). The verb *φρονέω* means to think about something in a particular manner, from a particular perspective.¹⁸³ Elsewhere, Paul says that one can 'perceive' (*ἐφρόνουσιν*) things as a child (1 Cor 13:11); that is, one can have a child's outlook. The Christian community is exhorted to share Christ's 'outlook' (Phil 2:5). And Paul relates his 'perception'/'outlook' to what is in the heart (Phil 1:7). As in these cases, so here Paul is not speaking about the ability to reason, of intellectual capacities, or of an anthropological function which is now restored to believers.¹⁸⁴ Importantly, he does not share the platonic assumption of a universal rationality as if there were only *one* way to reason; *both* those who exist according to the Flesh and those according to the Spirit *φρονοῦσιν*, yet they do so in very distinct ways, according to distinct dispositions, worldviews and pre-

who was raised. This means that in Christ, believers participate now, proleptically, in the benefits which will be theirs fully in the age to come, including resurrection life'. Similarly, Schnelle, 'Transformation und Partizipation', 65.

180 Following Moo, *Romans*, 486.

181 Rom 8:4 is addressed below.

182 Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 486; Schreiner, *Romans*, 410–11; Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 75–76.

183 The three categories listed in BDAG share this in common.

184 Pace Emma Wasserman, 'Paul among the Philosophers: The Case of Sin in Romans 6–8', *JSNT* 30 (2008), 409–410; van Kooten, *Anthropology*, 384–85; cf. Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Material Spirit', 193.

suppositions.¹⁸⁵ And while differing outlooks bring different things (τά) into focus (cf. 1 Cor 2:13–14), Paul’s concern is not so much on the things perceived, or even on the act of perceiving itself; rather, as his turn to the nominal form φρόνημα indicates (vv. 6–7), his interests lie with the basic orientation out of which one thinks—one’s *Weltanschauung*.¹⁸⁶

Paul, therefore, insists that one’s outlook is constructed in relationship to one of two controlling power-environments. J.L. Martyn has pointed out the ‘inextricable connection’ Paul makes ‘between eschatology and epistemology’.¹⁸⁷ This is apparent in verses 5–7: one perceives either κατὰ σάρκα—according to the old age standards and with old age faculties—or κατὰ πνεῦμα—in light of the new creation and by the power of the Spirit.¹⁸⁸ Flesh and Spirit entail an epistemological foundation as each influence the basic faculties their subjects possess. To exist in the Flesh is to possess an unfit mind that is unable to discern that which is, according to the Spirit’s standards, befitting. Those who exist in the Spirit have survived an epistemic crisis,¹⁸⁹ wherein the Spirit, through the apocalypse of Christ, has ruptured the former φρόνημα and replaced it with a new outlook. Possessing this new φρόνημα, believers are no longer determined by the powers and standards of ‘this age’. Through a newly created νοῦς, they undergo a process of transformation so that they are able to judge fit (δοκιμάζειν) that which is befitting (12:2; cf. 1:28). This agent stands in stark contrast to the deceived agent of Romans 7, who is oblivious to Sin’s mastery, is disoriented about what is good, and misconceives his own actions.

185 Perhaps in this way, Paul’s ancient beliefs are closer to post-modern sensibilities than to modern ones.

186 Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*, 142–43. On φρόνημα see BDAG; Georg Bertram, ‘φρόν κτλ’, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 232, 234; Keener, ‘“Fleshly” Versus Spirit’, 211. That Paul understands τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος to be an outlook that is determined by God’s Spirit, and not an awakened human capacity, is apparent from v. 9, where those ‘in the Spirit’ are indwelt by the divine Spirit and, in turn, possess the ‘outlook of the Spirit’.

187 See J. Louis Martyn, ‘Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages’, in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997) here 92.

188 On how the cross fits into Paul’s epistemological framework, see Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*.

189 For a description of this crisis through cognitive dissonance theory, see Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*, 157–60; Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 387.

Here we find that God, through the Spirit, conquers the deceiving power of Sin and thereby opens up new noetic possibilities.¹⁹⁰

Obedience and the Indwelling Spirit: For Ezekiel, God's provision of his life-giving Spirit and a heart-transplant would provide the basis for Israel's obedience. Paul's conviction is that through the sending of the Son, God is honouring that promise. Just as Ezekiel foresaw how those inhabited by the Spirit would keep God's requirements (δικαιώμασιν, 36:27), Paul says that as a result of God's act in Christ the righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled by/in/among believers (τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῆ ἔν ἡμῖν, 8:4). Paul's claim has caused interpreters difficulty. The basic interpretative options normally taken divide neatly into forensic and transformative readings. According to the forensic reading 'the requirement of the Law' refers to the Law's penalty which Jesus' death removes. To have this 'fulfilled in/among us' is to have Christ satisfy that demand for us.¹⁹¹ A transformative reading understands the clause not so much as what God has done for humanity, but what he is doing in and through humanity. Accordingly, the fulfilment of the righteous requirement describes the obedience of Spirit-transformed believers.¹⁹² The intertextual background adjudicates between these and helps to solve exegetical dilemmas.

If Paul is drawing on Ezekiel 36:26–36, the forensic reading should be ruled out. Ezekiel foretells how when God releases Israel from slavery, he will send his Spirit to *make* (יִתִּישַׁע/ποίησω) people walk (לַכָּוֶה/πορεύσθε) in his requirements (Ezek 36:27). When Paul proclaims that God's liberating initiative 'in Christ Jesus' sets believers free so that the righteous requirement might be fulfilled in/by those who walk according to the Spirit (cf. 6:6, 18, 22), he follows Ezekiel precisely.¹⁹³ While the passive πληρωθῆ is often understood as a key argument against the transformative interpretation,¹⁹⁴ Ezekiel's agency dynamics help to explain this.

190 See Robin Scroggs, 'New Being: Renewed Mind: New Perception. Paul's View of the Source of Ethical Insight', in *The Text and the Times: New Testament Essays For Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 168–70.

191 On the forensic interpretation, see Moo, *Romans*, 481–84; similarly Leander E. Keck, 'The Law and "The Law of Sin and Death" (Rom 8:1–4): Reflections on the Spirit and Ethics in Paul', in *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman*, ed. James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel (New York: KTAV Pub. House, 1980), 51–53; Käsemann, *Romans*, 217–19; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 487–88; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 211–13; cf., Dunn, *Romans*, 1:423–425.

192 On the transformative interpretation, see, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:384; Jewett, *Romans*, 485–86; and especially Schreiner, *Romans*, 405–06.

193 So Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 168–69.

194 E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 483; Käsemann, *Romans*, 218.

Three points emerge from Ezekiel's construction: 1) Human agency is dependent upon divine initiative. 2) The Spirit does not just make obedience possible; it creates obedient agents. 3) While the relationship between divine and human agency remains obscure, the Spirit's indwelling suggests more than a simple two-step process in which God transforms humans who then obey.¹⁹⁵ Guided by this, in Romans 8:4 a ἵνα clause grounds human action in God's liberating act. By following the ἵνα with an aorist passive instead of an active verb, Paul makes fulfilment directly contingent upon the divine act. At the same time, this de-emphasises human agency. The final clause is thus somewhat surprising: Paul uses περιπατοῦσιν, a present active participle which highlights human action, to define those whose action he has just downplayed!¹⁹⁶ Yet even here human agency does not function autonomously, as it is tempered by being 'according to the Spirit'.

Without denying or effacing human agency, Paul's various qualifications strain to secure divine agency as the basis for obedience. The present active participle combines with the specification κατὰ πνεῦμα to communicate that human obedience is perpetually bound to and dependent on divine agency. Presupposed here is Paul's belief that the resurrected Christ inhabits believers via the Spirit (vv. 9–11). His earlier claim that Christ rose οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν (6:4), also explained as living ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος (7:6), is most comprehensible if predicated upon a dynamic coherency between the agencies of Christ and those in union with him. Through somewhat paradoxical statements, 8:4 intimates this dynamic: The Spirit fulfils the righteous requirement of the Law by vivifying and animating those 'in Christ'.¹⁹⁷ Possession of the Spirit thus assumes a new and non-contrastive relationship between the divine and human agent.

But a question remains: why has Paul abandoned Ezekiel's plural 'righteous requirements' to speak of a singular 'requirement' of the Law? Amongst those

195 See above (pp. 54–57).

196 Though possible, the transformative reading does not require that one take the participial clause instrumentally; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:385. The fulfilment of the Law can simply characterise those who walk according to the Spirit. Cranfield (*Romans*, 1:385), nevertheless, is correct to note that the clause is not to be understood 'as though the meaning were "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, provided we walk..." [contra Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 488] ... , nor yet as describing us as we are independently of... the divine action described in v. 3 (as though our so walking were... our independent and meritorious work)'.¹⁹⁷

197 On the importance of πληρώω in supporting this dynamic, see Stephen Westerholm, 'On Fulfilling the Whole Law', *Svensk exegetisk årsbok* 51 (1986), 229–37. Moo, *Romans*, 485n70, suggests that κατὰ πνεῦμα 'probably has the connotation "directed by"'.¹⁹⁷

who follow the transformative interpretation a variety of hypotheses exists. The righteous requirement could refer to

- 1) the divine will as the unifying principle of the Law;¹⁹⁸
- 2) Torah minus ethnocentric ordinances such as circumcision, sabbath, and food laws;¹⁹⁹
- 3) the love command as a summary of Torah;
- 4) the Tenth Commandment.²⁰⁰

While there may be some logic to View 2 from Paul's letters, it feels arbitrary and in context Paul is not concerned with ethnocentrism. View 4 finds contextual support in that the Tenth Commandment is the closest spoken of (7:7), and also has the benefit of corresponding to the LXX, where δικαίωμα (singular) generally refers to a specific command.²⁰¹ Notwithstanding, fulfilling the command not to covet struggles to fit the general description of Christian living. This leaves options 1 and 3. Since the primary difference between 1 and 3 is the specificity of 3, many who choose option 1 do so on the basis of insufficient evidence otherwise.²⁰²

Evidence for understanding the singular δικαίωμα as a reference to the love command is as follows:²⁰³ First, Romans 8:2–4 and Galatians 5:13–16 hold a similar sequence of thought; the latter says that the singular (ένι) command to love in Leviticus 19:18 fulfils (πεπλήρωται) the whole Law (cf. 6:2). Second, Paul goes on to say that the person who loves fulfils the Law (νόμον πεπλήρωκεν) in Romans 13:8 as well. Thus every other time where the roots πληρόω and νόμος appear in combination in the Pauline corpus, the reference is to love.²⁰⁴ As if to clear up any remaining confusion regarding which 'law' love fulfils in 13:8, Paul

198 Jewett, *Romans*, 485; Schreiner, *Romans*, 407; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:384.

199 Dunn, *Romans*, 1:423; Sanders, *The Jewish People*, 100–02; cf. Longenecker, *Eschatology*, 246–50, who helpfully focuses on the eschatological element.

200 J.A. Ziesler, 'The Just Requirement of the Law (Romans 8:4)', *AusBR* 35 (1987), 77–82.

201 See Ziesler, 'Just Requirement', 78–79.

202 So Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 168; Schreiner, *Romans*, 407. For those who object to this reading because 'love' is not part of the context, see, e.g., Käsemann, *Romans*, 218; Ziesler, 'Just Requirement', 78.

203 H.W.M. van de Sandt put forward the fullest argument for this position in two 1976 articles: 'Research into Rom. 8.4a: The Legal Claim of the Law', *Bijdragen Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie* 37 (1976), 252–69; 'An Explanation of Rom. 8.4a', *Bijdragen Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie* (1976), 361–78.

204 Note the comparison in Sir 2:16: οί φοβούμενοι κύριον ζητήσουσιν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ καί οί ἀγαπῶντες αὐτόν ἐμπλησθήσονται τοῦ νόμου.

follows up his statement with a list of commandments from the Decalogue. These various commands, Paul says, are summed up under (ἀνακεφαλαίω) the single command to love from Leviticus 19:18. Since love does no harm, it can be concluded (οὖν) that the fulfilment of the Law is love (πλήρωμα . . . νόμου ἢ ἀγάπη, 13:10). From this evidence it is quite clear that for Paul the heart of Torah finds its richest expression in Leviticus 19:18; and furthermore to keep that command is to satisfy the demand of ‘the whole Law’. It would only make sense that in Romans 8:4, the only other context in which Paul combines πληρῶω and νόμος, the single command in view is the requirement to love.²⁰⁵

The intertextual background of Romans 8:4 evokes an interpretative tradition which supports this thesis. Romans 8:4 provides an intertextual link to Ezekiel 36:26–27. In the previous chapter, we saw how in Romans 2:25–29 Paul follows an interpretative strategy which reads Ezekiel 36–37 with Deuteronomy 30:1–10. Paul’s assertion about the one who keeps (φυλάσσω) and completes (τελέω) τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου not only draws on the descriptions of the returnees in Deuteronomy 30:10 and Ezekiel 36:27,²⁰⁶ but also sounds strikingly similar to Romans 8:4. While both Ezekiel and Deuteronomy describe the returnees’ obedience in terms of walking in the righteous requirements, in Deuteronomy the returnees’ behaviour is *also* expressed as love (30:6). Deuteronomy then opens up the possibility for its interpreters to summarise the heart-circumcised’s obedience in terms of this single expression.²⁰⁷ On balance, then, given Paul’s own propensity to encapsulate the Law in the love command, it is quite plausible that he accepted Deuteronomy’s invitation and therefore describes believers as the inheritors of the promise who actualise that single righteous requirement. This complies with Barclay’s conclusion that Paul uses πληρῶω ‘to describe the total realization of God’s will in line with the eschatological fulness of time in the coming of Christ’.²⁰⁸ While humanity in the Flesh was incapable of submitting to Torah, in Paul’s mind, the Spirit-generated love of

205 van de Sandt finds analogies to Paul’s statements in Rabbinic summaries of the Law. Though somewhat tenuous, this may indicate that it was unnecessary to mention ‘love’ specifically in the context of Romans 8:4.

206 Compare:

“Deut 30:10: φυλάσσεσθαι καὶ ποιεῖν πάσας τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς κρίσεις αὐτοῦ τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τούτου ἐὰν ἐπιστραφῆς ἐπὶ κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου

Ezek 36:27: καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ποιήσω ἵνα ἐν τοῖς δικαιώμασίν μου πορεύησθε καὶ τὰ κρίματά μου φυλάξησθε καὶ ποιήσητε”

207 1 Thess 4:8–9 might well reflect Paul’s seminal thoughts on this matter.

208 Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 140.

believers fulfils (i.e., accomplishes in a way that fully satisfies) the prophetic characterisations of Torah-obedience at the restoration.²⁰⁹

9.4.3 *Reconstituted Moral Agents in Romans 10:6–8*

Paul's allusion to Deuteronomy 30:1–14 in Romans 10:6–8 is well recognized. In the midst of a discussion about the paradox of Gentile acceptance and Jewish rejection of the Christ (9:30–10:21), Paul asserts that the reason for Israel's failure is that her pursuit of righteousness was not through faith (ἐκ πίστεως) but through works (ἐξ ἔργων, 9:32). Ignorant of the righteousness of God in Christ, Paul's kinsmen sought to establish their own righteousness (10:3). God has revealed, however, that Christ is the τέλος of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes (10:4). Paul goes on to bolster his case with references to Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11–14:

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the Law, that the person who does these things shall live by them. But/and (δέ) the Righteousness based on faith says: 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down) 'or "Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim) (Romans 10:5–8)

Paul's side-by-side comparison of these two passages raises significant questions.²¹⁰ What is the relationship between Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy

²⁰⁹ Cf. Betz, *Jesus, der Herr der Kirche*, 169, 178, 183–184; Westerholm, 'Fulfilling the Whole Law', 236. Focusing on 2 Cor, Blanton, *Constructing a New Covenant: Discursive Strategies in the Damascus Document and Second Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 188, 204–205, 210–212, sets Paul in stark contrast to Jubilees, 1Qs, and Hebrews, arguing that while the latter retain the connection between new covenant, spirit, and Torah—disputing only over the *contemporary application* of Torah—Paul disconnects Torah from new covenant and spirit (cf. 207). Yet we see here that Paul is closer to his contemporaries than Blanton makes out. Instead of cutting out Torah altogether, Paul believes that the scriptural witness shows how the rule for the eschatological application of Torah is love. See Betz, *Jesus, der Herr der Kirche*, 174–78, who rightly notes Torah's eschatological nature. Compare Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung*, 21, who believes freedom in the new creation entails absolute freedom from Torah. On the prophetic connotations of πληρόω, see Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 138–42; C.F.D. Moule, 'Fulfilment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse', *NTS* 14 (1967), 293–320.

²¹⁰ And these do not include the difficult text-critical issues raised in 10:5, on which see especially Andreas Lindemann, 'Die Gerechtigkeit aus dem Gesetz: Erwägungen zur

30:11–14? Is Paul pitting the two texts against one another antithetically,²¹¹ or does he believe that the two present a unified message?²¹² Furthermore, what are we to make of Paul's drastic, christological rewriting of Deuteronomy 30:11–14? Has he arbitrarily ignored the original context and meaning of Deuteronomy 30:11–14?²¹³ At first blush it appears so. Without answering every vexing question this text raises, our investigation of Paul's reading of restoration narratives does promise to shed some additional light on Paul's employment of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 in Romans 10:6–8.

Thus far it has been argued that Paul reads Deuteronomy 30:1–10 along the lines of a divine-priority hermeneutic, as a promise about God's initiative to free and capacitate human agents by bringing them into dynamic relationship with Christ's own agency. Paul's first alteration to Deuteronomy 30:11–14 is suggestive when read in this light. Rather than begin with a phrase that speaks about the accessibility of the commands, Paul opens the quotation with an expression from Deuteronomy 8:17 and 9:4: 'Do not say in your heart'. These verses summon a narrative that reinforces the primacy of God's saving initiative:

When the Lord your God eliminates these nations before you, do not say in your heart, saying: 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to inherit this good land', but because of the impiety of these nations the Lord will destroy them utterly before you. It is not

Auslegung und zur Textgeschichte von Römer 10.5', *ZNW* 73 (1982), 231–50; Moo, *Romans*, 643n2. Stances on those issues do not determine the conclusions presented here.

- 211 For those who understand a sharp contrast between the righteousness from Law in verse 5 and the Righteousness from faith in verses 6–8, see Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 326–30; Moo, *Romans*, 627; Gundry, 'Staying Saved in Paul', 16–17; Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 330–31; Käsemann, *Romans*, 283–92; so also Dunn, *Romans* 2: 612; Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 161–168 but for quite different reasons.
- 212 For those who see a coherence between the righteousness from Law in verse 5 and the righteousness from faith in verses 6–8, see Hays, *Echoes*, 76–77; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul 'in Concert' in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 158–64; Keck, *Romans*, 254; Wright, *Romans*, 645–46, 655, 658–63; Robert Badenas, *Christ, the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, JSNTSup (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 189–98; Edith Humphrey, 'Why Bring the Word Down? The Rhetoric of Demonstration and Disclosure in Romans 9:30–10:21', in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven Soderlund and N.T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 142; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:522.
- 213 So Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 330–31, 335–340, 437–38; Hays, *Echoes*, 74, 79–82; R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Westminster/John Knox, 1988), 167.

because of your righteousness or the holiness of your heart that you are going in to inherit their land, but because of the impiety of these nations the Lord will destroy them utterly before you, and in order that he may uphold the covenant that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And you shall know, today, that it is not because of your righteousness the Lord your God is giving you this good land to inherit, for you are a stiff-necked people. (LXX Deuteronomy 9:4–6)

With the phrase, 'Do not say in your heart', Paul amplifies his own divine-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30. As Hays notes: 'Paul . . . has deftly chosen the words "Do not say in your heart" . . . because these words evoke an earlier word of God to Israel, in which the Lord God warns them against the presumption of their own righteousness and reminds these "stiffnecked" people that the initiative in deliverance and covenant-making is his, not theirs'.²¹⁴ Particularly germane for Paul is that it was emphatically not because of their righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) or the holiness/dedication of their heart (τὴν ὁσιότητα τῆς καρδίας) that they were to inherit the land. In fact, the grounds given in Deuteronomy for attributing salvation to God's initiative over against human agency is that the people are 'stiff-necked' (σκληροτράχηλος), one of the very things heart-circumcision removes.

Paul's strategy opens up further when viewed in light of LXX Deuteronomy 8:17–18:

Do not say in your heart, 'My strength and the might of my hand have produced for me this great power.' And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you strength to produce power—and so that he may uphold his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as today.

The agency issues that these verses raise are potent. Moses' warning challenges any illusions of an independent, moral competence. Neither human 'strength' (ἰσχύς) nor human 'might' (κράτος) have brought forth 'this great power' (τὴν δύναμιν τὴν μεγάλην ταύτην). Rather, the text insists, human competency is given by God: God himself gives 'strength' (ἰσχύν) to bring forth 'power' (δύναμιν).

One can see why Paul opens his quotation by omitting a statement from Deuteronomy 30:11 about the accessibility of the commandment and replaces it with an allusion to Deuteronomy 8:17 and 9:4. Philo bears witness that, at least for some Jews, Deuteronomy 30:11–14 incontrovertibly establishes the

214 Hays, *Echoes*, 79; see also Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter*, 155.

competence of human agents to fulfil Torah (*Praem.* 80; *Virt.* 183; *Prob.* 69).²¹⁵ On the surface, Deuteronomy 30:11 suggests that the very possession of the commands implies one's capacity to do them. For Paul, however, accessibility could never imply capacity. Something greater is necessary if humans are to live in obedience to God.²¹⁶

On Paul's reading strategy Deuteronomy 30:11–14 stands true not because possession of the commandments proves that Torah can be fulfilled, but because Moses' prophetic word in Deuteronomy 30:1–10 has been eschatologically realised in the Christ event.²¹⁷ Since God is now circumcising hearts by bringing people into union with Christ through the proclamation of the gospel, Paul can insist: 'the word *is* [eschatologically now] near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (Rom 10:8).²¹⁸ Paul's interpretation provides a direct polemic against an Israelite-priority reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–14 and any attempt to usher in the Messianic age through Law-keeping.²¹⁹ God's apocalypse renders the human quest for salvation futile and senseless.²²⁰ There is no

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- 215 For a discussion which situates Paul's reading in its Jewish exegetical context, see Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 53–81.
- 216 For those who see human ineptitude to be at issue, see, e.g., Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 326–30; Moo, *Romans*, 627; Gundry, 'Staying Saved in Paul', 16–17. Sprinkle (*Law and Life*, 181n60) follows Dietrich Alex (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*, BHT 69 [Tübingen: Mohr, 1986], 296n35) and insists 'the point is not that the law is impossible to do but that it is simply unnecessary'. To my mind this assessment fails to take into account the implication of Paul's allusion to Deut 8:17 and 9:4, where the grounds for divine-initiative is the stubborn nature of the people, as well as the role Deut 30:11–14 plays for Paul's contemporaries in discussions about the capacity of moral agents.
- 217 For a similar interpretation, see Coxhead, 'Prophecy of the New Covenant', 315–19; Hans Joachim Eckstein, "'Nahe ist dir das Wort": Exegetische Erwägungen zu Röm 10 8'; *ZNW* 79 (1988), 215–16. Moo (*Romans*, 652) rejects this option because of the 'clear' transition to the present in Deut 30:11, leaning upon the tenuous arguments of Driver. Waters (*The End*, 166, 179, 183) follows Moo regarding 30:11, but still thinks Paul read vv. 12–14 eschatologically, and Moses' word as prophetic; see also Thielman, *Paul*, 208–10; cf. Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter*, 158–59.
- 218 The close relationship Paul sees between Christ and the preached gospel is evident in the way 'Christ' in vv. 6–7 metonymically elides into 'the word of faith' in v. 8 (so Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter*, 156).
- 219 See Jewett (*Romans*, 625–27), who notes how Paul's reference to ascending into heaven 'to bring Christ down' is 'a historically apt depiction of the goal of some of the Jewish parties in Paul's time', who sought to usher in the Messiah 'by religious programs associated with the law' (626–627); cf. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 799–800.
- 220 So Barrett, *Romans*, 199: 'the Messiah has appeared, and it is therefore impossible to hasten his coming (as some devout Jews thought to do) by perfect obedience to the law

need to ascend into heaven as if to bring the Messiah down. God has sent his Son (Rom 1:3; 8:3)! There is no point in wondering if anyone can descend into the abyss as if to bring the Messiah back from the dead. God raised his Son (Rom 1:4)! For Paul, it is on the sole basis of God's saving initiative that humans are now competent moral agents.²²¹

We can now see why Paul systematically bypasses references to 'doing the commandments' and in its place has the presence of Christ as proclaimed in the gospel.²²² On the one hand, Paul substitutes Christ for *the commandments* because the word of the gospel is God's eschatologically revealed will, which has drawn near (10:8; cf. 10:17).²²³ In Hebrew idiom, to have the Law in the mouth is to have internalized the Law to such a decree that one keeps it (e.g., Ps 119:43–45; Mal 2:6–7);²²⁴ for the Law to be on the heart is to be predisposed towards obedience (Prov 4:4; Jer 31:33; cf. Jer 17:1). Thus, for Paul, God's eschatological Torah is the Gospel which is put on the mouths and written on the hearts of Christian believers (cf. Rom 6:17).²²⁵ On the other hand, Paul disregards references to *doing* not because he is unconcerned with doing per se. Again and again we have noted that Paul is deeply concerned with obedience (e.g., Rom 2:25–29, 6:17, 8:4, 13:8).²²⁶ Rather, Paul's omission stems from his anxiety to rule out human agency and initiative as a basis for righteousness, as well as to insist that moral competence is a divine gift which is never independent of God's own agency.²²⁷ To assume otherwise would be in Paul's perspective to live ἐξ ἔργων (9:32). In light of his allusion to Deuteronomy 8:17 and 9:4,

and penitence for transgressions', though the thought of perfection need not be at play. See also Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 340–41.

221 So Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 811.

222 Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 163: 'Paul studiously omits every reference to "doing" and substitutes for Deuteronomy's αὐτή (= ἡ ἐντολή αὐτή, ἣν ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι σοι σήμερον, Deut 30:11) the name "Christ"'. See also Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 339–40.

223 See Coxhead, 'Prophecy of the New Covenant', 315–19, who speaks of Christ as God's 'eschatological torah'.

224 So Coxhead, 'Prophecy of the New Covenant', 309.

225 To have the word in the mouth is also associated with prophesying (e.g., Num 22:38; 23:5, 16; Deut 18:18; 1 Kgs 17:24; see Coxhead, 'Prophecy of the New Covenant', 308). Perhaps Paul is here reading Deut 30:14 alongside Joel 2:28 (cf. Rom 10:12; Acts 2:17).

226 So Hays, *Echoes*, 76.

227 By putting the matter this way, I do not intend to deny the Jew-Gentile issues that are at stake. The ethnic character of Jewish 'works', however, does not justify a dismissal of the agency issues behind these verses; cf. Bekken, *The Word is Near You*, 161. As Paul's allusion to Deut 8:17 and 9:4 in Rom 10:6 indicates, he contrasts a righteousness established by divine and human agencies, respectively. God's act in Christ renders all human attempts to usher in the eschaton at best passé and at worst a supreme form of ingratitude. See also Barrett, *Romans*, 199; Jewett, *Romans*, 626–27.

ἐξ ἔργων at least implies living out of human resources which are under the power of Sin and doomed to fail. The presence and agency of Christ, however, radically transform the way 'doing' is conceived. If Paul can substitute Christ's presence for doing the commands, it is because the former engulfs and reshapes the latter in such a way that it is no longer humans who 'do', but Christ who 'does' in and through them (cf. Gal 2:20).²²⁸ And this moral competence, gained through a circumcised heart and found in union with Christ, is received by faith. ἐκ πίστεως and ἐξ ἔργων thus represent two power-sources (9:32), one sourced in the saving righteousness of God and the other sourced in the anthropological resources of humans.

Perhaps this interpretation has something to contribute to the relationship between 10:5 and 10:6. Does Paul set Leviticus 18:5 in contrast to or in correlation with Deuteronomy 30:11–14? While there are many substantial arguments in favour of a correlative approach, and while Paul's divine-priority hermeneutic of Deuteronomy 30 does not necessitate an antithetical interpretation,²²⁹ it is especially supportive of one.²³⁰ But in this case the antithesis is not found, in that Leviticus 18:5 presents a legalistic program for salvation while Deuteronomy 30:11–14 does not. The contrast Paul sees, rather, is an eschatological one.²³¹ Whereas Leviticus 18:5 speaks of covenant obedience to a Mosaic code that remains under the power of Sin (Rom 7:7–13), Deuteronomy 30:11–14 bespeaks a situation wherein humans are made competent agents through the liberating work of Christ. Doing the righteous things of Torah remains a dead end because such activity lies outside of God's saving agency.

If this assessment is correct, then it is erroneous to assume that Paul is not really interpreting Deuteronomy 30:11–14 in Romans 10:6–8.²³² Nor is he rewriting a passage that he finds distasteful and at cross-purposes with his own theology. Nor is it altogether accurate to conclude that Paul blatantly and

228 For Paul it is not the simple matter of the human agent contributing his or her own part.

229 For Wagner (*Heralds of the Good News*, 165–165) and Hays (*Echoes*, 76–77), Paul's reworked citation of Deut 30:12–14 essentially provide commentary on Leviticus 18:5: To do the law is to hear and believe the gospel. It is also possible to surmise that Rom 10:5 and 6 are correlative because, following the conclusions here, one is able to do the law and thereby live (Lev 18:5) precisely because God has now initiated his saving plan and written the law on people's hearts.

230 For a summary of the arguments in favour of an antithetical approach to verses 5 and 6, see Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 170–73.

231 So Coxhead, 'Prophecy of the New Covenant', 313n24.

232 Contra Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 588; Hübner, *Law*, 85–91. Mark A. Seifrid, 'Paul's Approach to the Old Testament in Romans 10:6–8', *TrinJ* 6 (1985), 35, and Moo, *Romans*, 653, understand Paul to be posing an analogy.

intentionally ignores the original context and meaning of Deuteronomy 30.²³³ To be sure, Paul *has* rewritten various features of Deuteronomy 30:11–14; but he has done so according to his understanding of what God's apocalypse has now revealed those verses to foretell. By filling Deuteronomy's gaps and rewriting its expressions according to christological content, Paul makes explicit what he now sees implicitly latent in the text. Of course, what Paul sees others will not see and over these differences of perspective there is plenty of room for debate. Nevertheless, Paul's employment of Deuteronomy 30 here betrays his christologically-informed, divine-priority reading of that sacred text.²³⁴

9.5 Summary and Conclusions

Our consideration of the other side of Paul's contrast in 7:6 has shown how the incompetence of the Flesh to produce anything other than death has found its solution in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This solution was testified to in the restoration narratives of Deuteronomy 30, Jeremiah 31, and Ezekiel 36–37. Paul maintains a divine-priority reading of those texts throughout as it is only by God's liberating initiative of sending Christ and Spirit that humans are set free from the hopeless existence depicted in 7:5. The divine acts of heart-circumcision and Torah-inscription signal to Paul that far from being morally incompetent, those in Christ have been newly created as competent moral agents, possessing faculties that are able to hear and respond to God. Further, God's sending of the Spirit into human hearts suggests that human agency is permanently bound up with and dependent upon divine agency. Phrases like ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς, ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος, and κατὰ πνεύμα evoke this dynamic relationship. Such Spirit-established lives, characterised as they are by love, meet God's intention for humanity.²³⁵

233 So Dunn, *Romans*, 2:605; contra Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 180; Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 336–341, 437.

234 Compare with Hays, *Echoes*, 81–82 and Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter*, 157–58.

235 Rightly, Dunn (*Romans*, 1:418) sees 8:4 as a fulfilment of God's 'original creative purpose in making man'.

Paul's Reading of Restoration Outside Romans

Though Romans has served as our focal point, Paul's reading of these restoration narratives stands behind other texts in which the issue of divine and human agency arises. Three examples will serve to supplement these conclusions: 2 Corinthians 3:5–6; Philippians 3:3; and, the disputed, Colossians 2:11. Without an exhaustive examination of these texts, I aim to demonstrate that themes in all three resonate with the findings above.

10.1 Competency and the New Covenant: 2 Corinthians 3:5–6

The various issues which brand 2 Corinthians 3 as a battleground for Pauline studies cannot be addressed here. Our present goal is twofold: 1) to establish that Paul reads Ezekiel 36–37 with Jeremiah 31:31–34; and 2) to relate this scriptural reflection to his view of moral competence.

The reverberation of Jeremiah's new covenant is commonly accepted: διαθήκην καινήν is mentioned only in LXX Jeremiah 38:31, and 3:3 mentions writing on the heart (ἐγγεγραμμένη... ἐν... καρδίαις, 3:3; cf. LXX Jer 38:33). Paul's contrast between 'stony' (λίθινος) tablets and tablets of 'fleshy hearts' (καρδίαις σαρκίαις, v. 3) also intimates Ezekiel 36:26.¹ Although Ezekiel lacks a reference to πλάξ, God will replace the 'stony heart' (καρδίαν τὴν λιθίνην) with a 'fleshy heart' (καρδίαν σαρκίνην) and in the LXX, καρδία, λίθινος, and σάρκινος intersect only in Ezekiel's restoration promise. Moreover, in verse 6 Paul says that the Spirit gives life (ζωοποιεῖ), reminiscent of the connection between Spirit and life in Ezekiel 37.² Again, Paul manifests an interpretative trend which reads Ezekiel's promise with Jeremiah's new covenant.

Paul draws on these texts to explain his ministerial competence.³ The varied adjectival, nominal, and verbal forms of ἱκανός in verses 5–6 highlight

1 Räsänen, *Paul*, 243; Hays, *Echoes*, 128–29. While Ezek 11:19 coheres with 36:26, the latter is more likely in view (Yates, *Spirit and Creation*, 109).

2 See Carol Kern Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3:1–4:6*, AnBib 116 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 67–70.

3 See Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 29–35, 97; Blanton, *Constructing a New Covenant*, 201–02.

Paul's subject as he continues to address the question: *καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός* (2:16b)?⁴ The energy which founded the Corinthian community is not naturally sourced in humans: it is not derived 'out of themselves' (*ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν*), and as such, nothing (*τί*) should be 'regarded' (*λογίσασθαι*) as coming 'from themselves' (*ἐξ ἑαυτῶν*).⁵ Apostolic competence, rather, comes from (*ἐκ*) God. This final affirmation corrects the two previous statements.⁶ Consequently, *neither* ministerial competence *nor* its results come from ministers.⁷ While Paul seems to imply 'the basic incapacity of the instrument chosen by God',⁸ he continues, somewhat surprisingly, to affirm the competence that the apostles genuinely possess: God 'made them competent' (*ἱκάνωσεν*, v. 6); they 'have' it (v. 5a); it is theirs (v. 5c).⁹ What accounts for Paul's denial in verse 5b? Would it not be

4 Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 177.

5 1 Cor 3:5 is the only place where Paul uses *ἀπό* or *ἐκ* + reflexive pronoun. Elsewhere in the NT, the former construction is used to denote acting on one's own authority (Lk 12:57; Jn 5:19; 5:30; 7:17–18; 8:28; 16:13). At other times it describes an independent agency. The construction is set in contrast to the Father abiding and working in Jesus (Jn 14:10). Likewise, no branch is able to bear fruit 'of itself', but must draw its life from something else (15:4). One can see or think 'for oneself' (Lk 21:30; Jn 18:34). In Jn 10:18 the construction denotes both authority and agency. *ἐκ* + reflexive pronoun is used only one other time and denotes authority (Jn 12:49). In Philo, the statistics are inverted: *ἐκ* + reflexive pronoun appears 100x and *ἀπό* 35x. *ἐκ* can be used to speak of accomplishing something by intrinsic power (*Opif.* 9, 23) or qualities (*Opif.* 21–22). *ἀπό* + reflexive pronoun denotes independent agency, working out of one's own resources (*Opif.* 72).

6 *ἐκ* links the clause back to 5b, while *ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν* links to 5a (*ἱκανοὶ ἔσμεν*).

7 Thus, with Thrall, I understand *τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν* as a sense unit to mean 'any part of his apostolic work' (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 1:229–230; see also C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC [London: Black, 1973], 109, 111; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 173; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC [Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986], 44). Yet it is inaccurate to say 5a–b represents 'a conflation of two ways of expressing the same basic thought' (*pace* Thrall, 230).

8 Ernst Käsemann, 'The Spirit and the Letter', in *Perspectives on Paul*, NTL (London: SCM Press, 1971), 150.

9 The question of what kind of answer 2:16b implies misses the point. On the positive side, see Thrall, *Corinthians*, 2:209–10; Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of his Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14–3:3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 90; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994), 298; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 52–53; for a qualified negative, see Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 190; Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 103–104, 111. Paul's views of agency presented in vv. 5–6 make it so that a simple yes or no are both inadequate. The fullest answer is found in a qualified yes *and* no.

more reasonable to assume that since being made competent, the agency of these ministers effect results?

The answer lies precisely in the fact that they are ministers of *the new covenant*, which is characterised by the life-giving Spirit.¹⁰ As effective agents, new covenant ministers ally with God in a non-contrastive, yet wholly dependent way. While they co-labour (συνεργέω) with God (6:1), the eschatological communities resulting from *their* work (διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν) originate *from* Christ *through* the Spirit (3:3).¹¹ To simply say that God works alongside them, however, would be inadequate since God reveals his knowledge *through* (διὰ) them (2:14). Whatever else remains puzzling, new-covenant-competency is a dependent competency by definition, with the ground of its confidence secured 'through Christ and before God' (v. 4).¹² And such agency dynamics rule out the possibility that those made competent by God ever become independent actors.¹³ Thus while Käsemann is correct when he says that God 'always works with instruments which are in themselves incapable of serving him',¹⁴ new covenant ministers are never 'in themselves'.¹⁵ This brings us to matters at the core of Paul's letter/Spirit contrast.

10.2 Brief Excursus on Letter/Spirit Contrast

Having dealt with all three contexts (e.g., Rom 2:29; Rom 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6), we can unpack the letter/Spirit antithesis more fully. The various interpretations

¹⁰ So Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 304.

¹¹ With most, I take ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ to denote origin or source; πνεύματι as instrumental.

¹² On the theme of being in God's presence via the Spirit, see David A. Renwick, *Paul, the Temple, and the Presence of God*, BJS 224 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 61–74.

¹³ Compare Jeffrey A. Crafton, *The Agency of the Apostle: A Dramatistic Analysis of Paul's Responses to Conflict in 2 Corinthians*, JSNTSup 51 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 62, whose agent/agency distinction ends up denying Paul's competence altogether (see esp. 79n1). Under his definitions, an agent is someone who performs an act, while agency is the means or instrument of another's action (28–28, 61). But Crafton fails to consider how Paul could function as both *at the same time in the same act*. The argument of this thesis is that reconstituted persons in Christ are agents precisely as they function as God's agency. Vollenweider (*Freiheit als neue Schöpfung*, 271, 283) manifests a similar tendency to downplay Paul's agency.

¹⁴ Käsemann, 'Spirit', 150.

¹⁵ If in 3:3 Paul is suggesting that he was an amanuensis, then Thrall (*Corinthians*, 225) believes this conflicts with the letter being inscribed by the Spirit. Once we conceive of divine and human agency in non-contrastive terms, however, this tension disappears.

of Paul's *γράμμα/πνεῦμα* antithesis divide into subjective and objective approaches. Understood subjectively, *γράμμα* and *πνεῦμα* depict two hermeneutical strategies. In its historically prominent form, Paul contrasts the plain, literal sense (*γράμμα*) with the inward, spiritual meaning (*πνεῦμα*). More plausible to modern interpreters is the view that takes *γράμμα* as a misinterpretation or misuse of Torah—when one reads the text legalistically to promote external performance—whereas *πνεῦμα* suggests a correct understanding of Torah.¹⁶ In the objective interpretation, *γράμμα* and *πνεῦμα* stand either for two approaches to salvation—Law and Gospel—or metonymically for two covenants.¹⁷

The present context as well as the eschatological elements in Paul's other uses support an objective interpretation. Here, *γράμμα* serves as a word-play that links back to Paul's comparison between two forms of writing (*ἐγγεγραμμένη*, v. 3).¹⁸ The juxtaposition concerns both the instruments used for writing (Spirit or ink) and the tablets upon which the letters are written (hearts or stone).¹⁹ Since the reference to stone tablets foreshadows a discussion of the Mosaic covenant (3:7–18), *γράμμα* most naturally refers to Torah, particularly as it exists in a written form. As an engraved document, Torah kills (vv. 6–7). *πνεῦμα* also refers back to verse 3, but to *πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος*. God's Spirit, which incises believers hearts, gives life (v. 6). As such, *γράμμα* and *πνεῦμα* represent aspects of the old and new covenants respectively (vv. 7–8).²⁰ But the question remains: What is the precise contrast that Paul highlights between these covenants?

Since Torah was written by God (cf. Ex 31:18; Deut 5:22; 9:10–11), the contrast cannot be found in their respective authors.²¹ S. Westerholm sees the difference in covenantal obligations.²² The weakness in this approach becomes apparent when he spells out the contrast as 'obligation to the laws of Torah

16 See, e.g., Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112–13; Käsemann, 'Spirit', 146–47; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:339–340.

17 Similar is Vollenweider (*Freiheit als neue Schöpfung*, 271), for whom there is a contrast in Powers.

18 Hays, *Echoes*, 130.

19 Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 195.

20 Cf. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 'A Ministry Beyond the Letter (2 Cor 3:1–6)', in *Paolo, ministro del Nuovo Testamento (2 Co 2, 14–4, 6)*, ed. Lorenzi De, Lorenzo, Serie monografica di Benedictina Sezione biblico-ecumenica (Abbazia di S. Paolo, Roma: Benedictina Editrice, 1987), 116–17.

21 See further Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 282–86.

22 Westerholm, 'Letter', 241.

(...) as opposed to service by God's spirit'.²³ The disparity in this formulation is telling: if the contrast were simply about obligations, then obligation to the laws of Torah would most naturally oppose *obligation to the Spirit's demands*. But this is problematic; for Paul, the fruit of the Spirit eschatologically satisfies one of Torah's commandments (Lev 19:18)!²⁴ On the other hand, service *by the Spirit* (i.e., service empowered by the Spirit) is more naturally opposed to service empowered by Torah. Such a contrast is more promising since it is better suited to both the context and scriptural background.

First, Paul's discussion concerns the competence of new covenant ministers as eschatologically established Spirit-ministers (v. 6). In verse 7, Paul develops his point that the 'the letter kills' by noting how ministry characterised by the engraved document represents ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου.²⁵ Likewise, 'the Spirit gives life' is important because ministry characterised by the Spirit is ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης (v. 9), which might also be labelled ἡ διακονία τῆς ζωῆς (cf. Rom 8:10). As in Romans 7:6, Paul is here speaking about two types of service/ministries as they operate in two distinct aeons.²⁶

Second, the scriptural background supports the theory that the essence of Paul's antithesis lies in the covenants' respective abilities to empower their members. Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31 promise a time when people will obey God, not because there will be different requirements, but because God will renovate people, supplying them with new resources for fidelity. In verse 3, the foundation of the antithesis, the new covenant is set apart in that it was written by the Spirit and on human hearts—both animate and active. Old covenant ministry, however, is written with ink and on stone—both inanimate.²⁷ The new covenant lies on the animate side of the comparison. Since the Spirit alone can write on the human heart, vis-à-vis γράμμα, πνεῦμα plays up a contrast between the agencies of the two covenants:²⁸ The *agency* of the new

23 Westerholm, 'Letter', 239–240, here 240, regarding 7:6.

24 See the discussion on Rom 8:4 above (pp. 265–269).

25 As Watson (*Hermeneutics of Faith*, 286–91) has argued, the events of Ex 32 best explain Paul's dictum. Nevertheless, the import of the dictum cannot be confined to those events.

26 So Westerholm, 'Letter', 240. Consequently, the genitives γράμματος and πνεύματος most likely refer to the *ministry* of the new covenant, not simply the new covenant; see further Westerholm, 'Letter', 247n32; Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 157–58. The difference, however, is not so substantial (Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 158n197).

27 As noted by Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 264.

28 Similar to Hafemann's 'functional contrast' (*Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 172–73).

covenant includes a creative *Agent*.²⁹ So those who serve in Spirit-ministry are preternaturally equipped to effect transformation because the divine agent is directly involved in their ministry endeavour.³⁰ Via the Spirit, new covenant communities experience an unflagging glory whereby they are sustained and transformed (v. 18).³¹ The Mosaic covenant, however, lacks this ongoing vitality; its glory is fading and powerless to effect lasting change (vv. 7–14).³²

Thus while strictly speaking the terms *γράμμα* and *πνεῦμα* denote an objective antithesis between two covenants in eschatological contrast, Paul betrays an interest in their subjective implications. The contrast differentiates between Torah-human and divine-human activity; for while *πνεῦμα* entails God's power operating in and through human existence, *γράμμα* does not.³³ Therefore, the fact that *γράμμα* does not stand for the legalistic perversion of Torah does not preclude its association with 'purely human achievement'.³⁴ Neither is Paul's use of the antithesis unrelated to hermeneutics; as R. Hays notes, 'when God's Spirit-inscribed people encounter Scripture, a transformation occurs that is fundamentally hermeneutical in character',³⁵ which is no doubt related to the epistemological reshaping that comes through encountering the cross (vv. 14–18). In other words, the agency of the Spirit effects the competency of the reader, just as it does the competency of the minister (vv. 3–13) and the competency of the Christian community (Rom 2:25–29; 7:5–6). This is unsurprising: it is Paul's christologically-informed, Spirit-inspired reading of Scripture that breathed life into these very ideas.

29 Rightly, Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 205: 'The basic objection Paul has to the Mosaic Law is not that it was not interior, but that it is not God'.

30 Thrall, *Corinthians*, 1:234–235.

31 On the permanence of new covenant glory in comparison to the old, see Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 291–98.

32 Though he plays down the objective and ontological features of the contrast, my conclusions are very similar to those of Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 163–173, 177–184; see also Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 203–07; Ehrhard Kamlah, 'Buchstabe und Geist: Die Bedeutung dieser Antithese für die alttestamentliche Exegese des Apostles Paulus', *EvTh* 14 (1954), 276–82.

33 Rightly, Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 113.

34 Cf. Thrall, *Corinthians*, 1:235.

35 Hays, *Echoes*, 131. See also Stochkausen (*Moses' Veil*, 8–9), Betz (*Jesus, der Herr der Kirche*, 181), and Watson (*Hermeneutics of Faith*), who develop and refine the earlier hypothesis that for Paul Scripture speaks with a two-fold voice; see Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 331–53; Käsemann, 'Spirit', 138–66; Kamlah, 'Buchstabe', 138–66.

10.3 Heart-Circumcision and Worship in Spirit: Philippians 3:3

Reflecting on other situations and in an effort to offer some preventative medicine, Paul warns the Philippians about the ‘dogs’, ‘the workers of evil’, ‘the mutilators’ (3:2). With the mention of ἡ περιτομή in verse 3, it becomes apparent that his exhortation concerns those who advocate Jewish customs. In shocking reversal, Paul identifies these advocates with unclean dogs and reduces their circumcising to mutilation. ‘We [Christians]’ (ἡμεῖς), Paul says, stand in the sharpest contrast to the mutilators.³⁶ Rather than being unfit for service, ‘we’ serve (λατρεύω) by the Spirit;³⁷ rather than relying on the Flesh, ‘we’ boast in Christ (v. 3). Not giving an inch, Paul believes that the epithet ἡ περιτομή most aptly applies to Spirit-filled communities,³⁸ uncircumcised Gentiles and all!³⁹

While it is difficult to draw a direct link between Philippians 3:3 and any particular text from Paul’s heritage, there are striking similarities between this text and his reading of the restoration narratives above. Paul’s bold redefinition of the people of God, particularly as it concerns circumcision, reminds one of Romans 2:28–29, where the only circumcision that ultimately matters is associated with the Spirit.⁴⁰ Spirit rivals Flesh in both texts. As noted earlier, Romans 2:25–29 evokes a narrative wherein God circumcises the heart to render those in Christ competent moral agents. Any empowerment that might be circumscribed within circumcision-boundaries Paul reassigns wholly to the Spirit. Defining the people of God there is intimately connected with the constitution of God’s people, with their capacities in the Spirit over against the Flesh. We heard remixes of this song play through Romans 7:5–6 and 2 Corinthians 3:3–6, both of which assert that only living under the eschatological power of grace equips one for service. Are similar concerns at work here?

We can answer this question by looking at the contrast in verses 2 and 3. The marks that distinguish Pauline communities from their opponents as ‘the

36 While Fowl, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 148, warns that ‘we should be careful of assuming that every assertion Paul makes here is directly designed to counter some assertion made by “the mutilators”’, Paul’s emphatic ἡμεῖς, along with his use of κατατομή and περιτομή set verse 3 in contrast to ‘the mutilators’.

37 While I think text-critical considerations favour οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες, the variant textual traditions have little bearing upon our purposes.

38 Markus N.A. Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1997), 185.

39 ἡμεῖς suggests that Paul is not simply referring to uncircumcised Gentiles, but to the character of Christian communities generally, for he is circumcised.

40 See the discussion in the previous chapter (pp. 217–221). Note the similar juxtaposition between Spirit and circumcision in Gal 3:2–3 (though the term is not used).

circumcision' are Spirit-service and Christ-boasting. In the LXX, λατρεύω most often denotes Levitical 'service' in the temple cult.⁴¹ Paul's metaphor suggests that Christians are qualified for lives set apart in devotion to God (cf. Rom 12:1–2), whereas the mutilators are not.⁴² What distinguishes Christian service is that it materialises πνεύματι θεοῦ. As G. Fee has argued, the most natural way to take the dative is instrumentally.⁴³ God's empowering Spirit thus distinguishes Pauline communities from 'the workers of evil' (τοὺς κακοῦς ἐργάτας).⁴⁴

Aimed at advocates of Jewish customs, κακοῦς ἐργάτας probably intends a specific critique of their ἔργα νόμου ('works of the Law', Gal 2:15, 3:2, 5, etc.).⁴⁵ Over the last 20 years, ἔργα νόμου has been commonly understood as a reference to ethnic boundary and status markers. When this is emphasised, the confidence that the advocates place in the Flesh is interpreted as an exclusive ethnic boast.⁴⁶ But to restrict Paul's critique to nationalistic pride becomes problematic when all the contradistinctions are taken into account. By contrasting the advocates with οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες, Paul critiques the *entire lives of his opponents as engendered by the Flesh*. While the confidence placed in the 'Flesh' in verse 4 is doubtless connected to the circumcision being imposed on Gentile Christians, Paul saw behind this imposition 'a total mindset that is opposed to the Spirit'.⁴⁷ Failing to recognise and trust in God's eschatological provision, circumcision advocates necessarily depend upon, and lead their disciples to depend upon, resources that remain captive to Sin.⁴⁸ Paul thus contrasts two types of competency: a competency which is dependent on

41 Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 299–300.

42 See Morna Dorothy Hooker, *The Letter to the Philippians*, New Interpreter's Bible Commentary 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 524, who notes how Lev 21:5, 18–23 and Deut 23:1 exempt those with physical deformity from priestly service; see also Fowl, *Philippians*, 148. Significantly, Israel's charter called her to be a royal priesthood (Ex 19:6).

43 Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 21–24, 753.

44 Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 192.

45 Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 147–48; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 188–89.

46 See, e.g., Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 188–89.

47 See the astute observation by Silva, *Philippians*, 149. Note also Hooker, *Philippians*, 525: "The argument in this chapter seems to suppose a more subtle danger, that of putting confidence "in the flesh." "

48 See Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 752; Silva, *Philippians*, 149. Compare Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 191–93: "[T]he contrast is between the true circumcision whose service is empowered by and directed towards the Spirit of God, and those whose service is narrowly-mindedly focused on the "works of the law" as defining their service and status before God' (192).

and empowered by the Flesh, and one which relies on and is empowered by the Spirit.

Bockmuehl and Fowl insist that Paul is not setting Christianity as over against Judaism here, as if his communities have somehow replaced Israel or become the 'true' Israel.⁴⁹ Rather, 'Paul's assertion seeks to locate the worship of the Christian community in Philippi already within the true worship of the God of Israel apart from circumcision'.⁵⁰ While this may be, we should not confuse the issue. Although Paul is not here setting Christianity in antithesis to Judaism, he *is* setting those who live by the power of the Spirit in opposition to those who live by the power of the Flesh. For Paul, this opposition stands whether those who live by the Flesh are Jewish-Christians (like his opponents) or something else. That this holds for non-Christian Jews is apparent in verses 4–11. There, as Westerholm notes, 'Paul equates [his opponents'] position with his *pre-Christian past*'.⁵¹ Whatever achievements Paul had under the Torah were gained ἐν σαρκί.⁵² Paul was acting neither *with*, nor *in*, nor *before*, but *against* God (v. 6a; Rom 8:7–8)!⁵³ Under the lordship of Christ (3:20–21), however, Paul and his communities have received from God a new moral competence, one which remains in dynamic-dependence upon the agencies of Christ and Spirit (1:11; 2:12–13; 3:9–10; 4:13).

10.4 The Circumcision of Christ: Colossians 2:11–12

While the authorship of Colossians is the most hotly contested of all the books that bear Paul's name, most scholars assume that it is closely related to Paul.⁵⁴ Whether one is convinced of Pauline authorship or not,⁵⁵ Colossians shows

49 Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 191; Fowl, *Philippians*, 147.

50 Fowl, *Philippians*, 148.

51 Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 384n47, emphasis original.

52 Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 403.

53 Paul's 'blameless' Torah-righteousness must be assessed through this hermeneutical lens.

54 See Raymond Edward Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 610–17; John M.G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 18–35; James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 19–20, 35–39.

55 For a defense of Pauline authorship, see, e.g., Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 340–46; Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), xli–xlix; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 28–41. For a disputation of Pauline authorship, see Walter Bujard, *Stilanalytische*

us where Pauline thought stood either towards the latter part of his ministry or, at the very least, in the memory of his earliest disciples.⁵⁶ The hands-free circumcision motif in Colossians 2:11 thus provides one more data point for the Apostle's theology of 'spiritual' circumcision. Though the value of this study does not rest on Pauline authorship, I proceed on the assumption that Paul authorised the letter.

In Colossians 2:8–15, Paul warns the church not to be taken captive by 'philosophies', 'human traditions', and 'empty deceit', which are according to the στοιχεῖα (elemental powers) and not according to Christ (v. 8). The Colossians must continue to hold fast to and seek after Christ since he is more than sufficient to provide for their needs (vv. 9–15). As Paul expounds all that the Colossians now possess in Christ, he reminds them that they have received a peculiar type of circumcision: 'in him you also were circumcised with a circumcision without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ' (2:11). Since physical circumcision occurs 'with hands' (χειροποίητος; cf. Eph 2:11), a circumcision without hands (ἀχειροποίητος) most likely corresponds to heart-circumcision (though the word is not used).⁵⁷ Noteworthy is that ἀχειροποίητος designates divine rather than human agency and origin (e.g., 1 Cor 5:1; Mark 14:58),⁵⁸ while throughout the LXX and NT χειροποίητος carries overtones of idolatry.⁵⁹ Without a direct reference to hand-made-circumcision, it is difficult to know whether ἀχειροποίητος represents a direct polemic against that ritual (cf. Gal 5:2–12). The passing references in 2:16–17 to other Jewish observances that Paul now deems as obsolete with the coming of the Messiah suggest as much (cf. Gal 4:9–10).⁶⁰ What is clear is that

Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973), who is followed by Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians: a Commentary*, trans. Andrew Chester (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 15–24; cf. Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon: a Commentary* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 84–91.

56 Dunn, *Colossians*, 19.

57 Dunn, *Colossians*, 156; Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 172.

58 Schweizer, *Colossians*, 140; Dunn, *Colossians*, 156.

59 See Eduard Lohse, ἡρακτῆρ, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 436; G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 192.

60 For those who think this is a polemic against the practice of circumcision, see, e.g., G.K. Beale, 'Colossians', in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 861–63; O'Brien,

περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτω together with the passive περιετμήθητε communicate that hand-free circumcision is the result of God's own agency and, as can be seen in the σκιά/σῶμα contrast (2:17), this provision is an eschatological reality.⁶¹

But what is the precise nature of this eschatological, divine act? The answer depends on the meaning of the next two clauses. Paul says that this hand-less circumcision consists 'in putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ' (ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). The previous references to σαρκός in the letter warn against taking 'flesh' in the full-scale negative Pauline sense (1:22, 24, 2:1, 5; cf. Rom 8:4–13).⁶² In 1:22 Paul uses a very similar phrase (ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκός αὐτοῦ) to describe Christ's physical body. Likewise, in 2:11 σαρκός denotes the physical body, but takes on the specific sense of the old Adamic humanity in its fallen mortality.⁶³ 'To put off the body of flesh' then is a reference to death.⁶⁴ But when did the Colossians experience this death? Obviously these believers had yet to experience physical death in their personal histories. If we remember that Paul is in the midst of a discussion about incorporation into Christ, it is natural to interpret the reference as Christ's own death (cf. 1:22), a death in which believers presently participate through union with him. The phrase 'circumcision of Christ' helps to substantiate this interpretation.

While some take the genitive phrase περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ subjectively, to mean a circumcision which Christ performs,⁶⁵ it is difficult to find a case where

Colossians, 116; cf. Lohse, *Colossians*, 102. For those who are skeptical, see Schweizer, *Colossians*, 142; Dunn, *Colossians*, 156.

61 On the eschatological nature of hand-free circumcision, see Beale, 'Colossians', 862–63; Schweizer, *Colossians*, 142; Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 221.

62 See Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 40–42.

63 See further Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 174–75; Dunn, *Colossians*, 157–58 and his 'The "Body" in Colossians', in *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, NTS (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 167–70.

64 This interpretation also fits nicely with Paul's use of ἀπεκδύομαι in 2:15. Another line of interpretation is to take 'the body of the flesh' as a reference to the sinful nature (see, e.g., Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty* [Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1972], 76–77; Lohse, *Colossians*, 103). On the one hand, the problems with this view are adequately exposed by Gundry (*Sōma*, 40–42) and Dunn (*Colossians*, 157–58). On the other hand, I do not question that Paul intends to describe the stripping off of the sinful nature. The question is: how does that happen? And the answer here, as in Romans 6, is through a complete death, not simply a 'spiritual' one; cf. Moo, *Colossians*, 200.

65 Schweizer, *Colossians*, 143; Lohse, *Colossians*, 103.

περιτομή + a genitive is used and the genitive does not represent the thing acted upon.⁶⁶ The grammar thus suggests an objective interpretation which complies with taking 'putting off the body of the flesh' as a reference to Christ's crucifixion. Furthermore, in Romans 6:3–4 Paul says that believers are united to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. A similar pattern emerges in Colossians 2:11–12, only with circumcision corresponding to Christ's death.⁶⁷

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the *circumcision of Christ*, having been *buried with him* in baptism, in which you were also *raised with him*.

In sum, 'the circumcision of Christ' refers to Christ's own violent circumcision-crucifixion, whereby he was 'cut off' under the curse of the Law (2:13–14; cf. Gal 3:13).⁶⁸

Colossians 2:11 thus speaks of a divinely enacted circumcision which believers receive by means of their union with Christ's own circumcision-death.⁶⁹ To receive a circumcision without hands is equivalent to being crucified with Christ (cf. Gal 2:20). Believers are thereby cut off from the old world and from the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (2:8, 20). From this rupture emerges a new moral Self, which in Colossians has already been raised with Christ (2:12–13; 3:1, 9–10) and which provides the theological rationale for the moral imperatives that follow (e.g., 2:18; 3:1–10).

Beetham has recently argued that Colossians 2:11 echoes Deuteronomy 30:6, since Deuteronomy 30:6 is the only unambiguous place in the Jewish Scriptures which speaks of God accomplishing circumcision.⁷⁰ While Beetham's proposal is attractive, it must be admitted that a lack of criteria prevent us from firmly

66 As Beetham points out (*Echoes of Scripture*, 177). He lists LXX Exod 4:25–26; Jer 11:16; Rom 2:25, 29; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.192, 8.262, 12.241, 13.319; *Ag. Ap.* 2.137–38; Philo, *Spec.* 1.2.

67 See, esp., Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 71; O'Brien, *Colossians*, 117–18.

68 See the intriguing interpretation of Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, 45–47, 70–73. See also Dunn, *Colossians*, 158; Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 177; Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. Astrid B. Beck (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 364–65; O'Brien, *Colossians*, 117.

69 Dunn, *Colossians*, 158; Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 177; Beale, 'Colossians', 862.

70 Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 157–8, 173. See also Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Kolosser; Der Brief an Philemon* (Gütersloh Würzburg: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn Echter Verlag, 1993), 129.

linking Colossians 2:11 with Deuteronomy 30.⁷¹ Nevertheless, there are certain similarities between the reference to hand-free circumcision in Colossians 2:11 and Paul's theology of heart-circumcision elsewhere. As with heart-circumcision, a circumcision without hands is understood as an eschatological phenomenon that is accomplished by God himself (cf. Rom 2:28–29). Further, it is by having one's heart circumcised in union with Christ by the Spirit that one is enabled to obey God (cf. Rom 2:27–29; Phil 3:3). While links between Romans 2:28–29 and 7:5–6 suggest connection between heart-circumcision and co-crucifixion, the two are identified in Colossians 2:11. Romans 6–8 develops this theology in a way similar to Colossians. Through co-crucifixion, believers have been completely cut off from the old world of Sin and Death (Rom 6:1–11). Though Colossians takes the logic of Romans a step further by saying that believers are presently raised with Christ, in both it is the connection to Christ's eschatological existence that provides the basis for a believer's moral competence (cf. Rom 6:4, 11; 7:6; 8:10–11). This entire experience is directly related to baptism (Col 2:12a; cf. Rom 6:3–4) and provides the rationale for new ethical imperatives (cf. Rom 6:1–11; 7:5–6). Colossians thus presents a highly condensed and slightly developed version of Paul's theology of heart-circumcision elsewhere. If a direct link cannot be established between Colossians 2:11 and Deuteronomy 30, perhaps we can say that the two were unconsciously associated, as so much of what is said here is linked to Paul's reading of restoration narratives elsewhere.⁷²

10.5 Summary and Conclusions

Our brief consideration of 2 Corinthians 3:5–6, Philippians 3:3, and Colossians 2:11 confirms and develops the conclusions reached with regard to Romans.⁷³ Even while the terms Paul chooses to borrow fluctuate, his allusions show how the three-fold witness of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel attests to what God is now accomplishing for those in union with Christ. If Paul understood the Christ event as the solution to human incompetence, then Paul's interpretation of the significance of that event takes shape under the guidance of these ancient voices. Among other things, those texts influence Paul's Flesh/Spirit and letter/Spirit antitheses, which set anthropology and agency

71 Beetham argues on the basis of availability and rare concept similarity (*Echoes of Scripture*, 157–8, 173).

72 As suggested by Beale, 'Colossians', 863.

73 Similarly, see Käsemann, 'Spirit', 146.

in eschatological contrast. To live in the Flesh is to live under the old aeon, void of the Spirit's creative energies. Independent from the Spirit, humans necessarily rely on their own debased faculties, which are themselves under the jurisdiction and influence of Sin. Letter, closely connected with Flesh, describes human agency as it is empowered by the Law. Since the Law cannot empower, like physical-circumcision, service in the letter is a purely human enterprise. Spirit, on the other hand, evokes God's dynamic activity which initiated a new world and summons incompetent agents into that world. This process of 'world-switching' grants believers fresh ontological grounding for obedience:⁷⁴ the anthropological framework of those who were once inhabited by Sin (Rom 7:17) is now being restructured according to Christ's eschatological status (Gal 4:19).⁷⁵ Through the indwelling Spirit, recreated believers no longer live according to the Flesh, but according to Christ's Spirit which indwells them, and according to the new creation which the Spirit typifies.

74 For the term 'World-switching', I am indebted to Scroggs, 'New Being', 170.

75 So Käsemann, *Romans*, 223: 'If the indwelling of the Spirit is spoken of here as sin is in 7:17ff., in both cases radical possession is indicated which also affects our will according to 5:5'. Lutheran sensitivities prevent Käsemann from affirming any ontological change in the believer (*Romans*, 167). For a discussion of the ontological implications of participation in the new creation, see Stuhlmacher, 'Charakter', 1–35; Schnelle, 'Transformation und Partizipation', 67–69.

PART 4

Conclusions



This study has sought to show how Paul's reading of Scripture informed his conceptions about divine grace and human agency. At the same time, it has endeavoured to set those conceptions into Paul's ancient context and ask how they have been reshaped according to his particular experience of God's grace in Christ. As such, this analysis addresses two underdeveloped topics in Pauline research and the interplay between them. I now offer some conclusions about these themes and reflect on how they might contribute to larger discussions.

Conclusions

11.1 Conclusions Regarding Paul's Reading of Scripture

On one level, this work represents an investigation into Paul's reading of Scripture. We have seen that Paul, like other Jews, read Ezekiel's expectation of a Spirit and Jeremiah's hope of a new covenant together with Deuteronomy 30:1–10. In those texts an act on the heart rectifies the moral competence of the human agent, which gives rise to the following pattern:

An act on the heart > *leads to* obedience > *leads to* Life.

This is no less true in Paul. But he believes those narrative promises have expressly come true in God's sending of Christ and Spirit. We can summarise Paul's interpretation by answering the following questions:

1) *What agent performs the transformative act?* For Paul the agent who transforms human existence is God himself. It is God who pours out his love into human hearts, gifts people with his Spirit, and by that same Spirit circumcises hearts and implants in them a faithful disposition. Though Paul would share this conviction with some Jewish interpreters (Bar, Jub, 4 Ezra), would distance him from others who conceive of the act in some synergistic fashion, whether that is understood in terms of one agent and his understanding then Another (2 Baruch) or one agent with Another (the Scrolls, Philo).

2) *When do these things take place?* Like the authors of 2 Baruch (78:6–7) and 4 Ezra (6:25–28),¹ Paul understood the hope of restoration as a thoroughly eschatological phenomenon associated with the age to come. Yet he also believes that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the giving of the Spirit, new creation encroached upon the present age. Thus unlike 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, Paul proclaims God's *transformative* grace here and now.

3) *What does Paul understand the scriptural metaphors to signify?* For Paul, the scriptural metaphors point to and illuminate life in Christ. The violent act of heart-circumcision that would cut away all that is stubborn and callous finds its fullest expression in the terrifying yet liberating experience of being co-crucified with Christ. At that rift the rebellious 'I' dies: it is severed from

¹ Possibly Jub 1:15–24.

the world with which it so identified and is now determined by God's new creation (Gal 2:20; 6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17; cf. Col 2:11–20). Ezekiel's gift of a divine, life-giving Spirit has been revealed as none other than the Spirit of the risen Lord (1 Cor 15:45), who inhabits believers and energises their existence (Rom 8:2–11). The promise of Torah that is written on hearts to make people predisposed to its demands is fundamentally realised in believers living out the love imprinted within them. Those who receive these gifts are thereby enabled to fulfil God's created intention for humanity as they worship him and love one another. Their end is eternal Life.

4) *Whose agency and initiative is being prioritised?* On Paul's reading, in contrast to most Jews, Scripture confirms the horrific reality that human agents are utterly incompetent. Bereft of eyes that see, ears that hear, or understanding hearts, they lack the faculties to respond to God effectively. Given this situation, resolution could not be on account of any acceptable human act. Rather, for Paul, human emancipation must be born out of God's unconditioned saving intervention as expressed in the Christ event.²

From these answers it becomes apparent that what is primarily distinctive about Paul's reading strategy is its thoroughly christological shape. Though Paul will occasionally use scriptural language to speak of God's grace in Christ (e.g., heart-circumcision; teaching being inscribed on the heart; God's Spirit-gift; wholehearted obedience; a new covenant), most often he chooses terms from the Christ event itself: of being crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20, Rom 6:6); united to Christ in his death and burial (Rom 6:3–5); of being clothed with him (Gal 3:27); of Christ in you (Rom 8:10; Gal 4:19); of beholding his glory (2 Cor 3:18, 4:6); of participating in his resurrection power (Rom 6:4–5, 11; Phil 3:10); and of new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:14–15). If in many of these cases the lines between promise and fulfilment blur, this simply strengthens the assumption that a dynamic relationship exists between Paul's Christian convictions and the Scriptures he read: neither is dispensable; both mutually inform one another.³

And yet one senses that the functional influence that Christ and Scripture had upon one another is not equally weighted. If Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 30 does not violate the text, neither is it straightforward. By attributing the saving initiative to God, by inferring circumcision's dispensability, and by

2 For a comparison of Paul with other Jews at this point, see the summary sections on pp. 221–223 and pp. 251–253 above. Here lies one crucial difference between this study and that of Thielman, *Paul*, 245, who believes that the differences regarding Paul and his contemporaries understanding of Israel's story had to do with which act they were living in. Our study has shown that the disagreement is also over whose agency initiates the redemptive event.

3 See Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 16–24.

understanding the concealed things as a reference to God's work in the inner man which encompasses Gentiles, Paul reads Deuteronomy in a very peculiar fashion. But this is not to conclude that Paul arbitrarily imposed his experience upon these texts; that would deny the very thing he believed still gave those writings validation, namely the potential for his ancestral tradition to reveal more to him about the gospel than he had previously known. This study, then, confirms Watson's central thesis that in searching the Scriptures for their witness to the gospel, Paul was at the same time shaped by those Scriptures.⁴ Where this study disagrees with Watson is in his conclusion that Deuteronomy 30:1–10 is excluded from the christological harvest of texts from which Paul gleaned. For we have seen how Paul believes that the voice of the righteousness by faith resounding through Deuteronomy 30:11–14 is also present in 30:1–10. That scriptural hope has become a Christian reality via Christ and Spirit.

11.2 Conclusions Regarding the Pauline Integration of Grace and Agency

Our investigation into Paul's reading of Scripture has brought issues regarding the relationship between grace and obedience into clearer focus. Any adequate analysis of how Paul integrates these two fundamental elements must take into consideration his conceptions of moral competence, human transformation, and the multiplex way in which he structures divine and human agency.

11.2.1 *Moral Competence and Human Transformation*

For Paul, there are fundamentally two types of moral agents, absolutely distinguishable by their competence. First, there is the Adamic agent. Though at one time possessing capacities sufficient to bring about obedience, the Adamic agent's misuse of those capacities led to their termination. Handed over to the anti-God powers, Adamic humans are now determined, inside and out, by those powers' influence. A debased constitution exacerbates the dilemma: a corrupt will accounts for their continual insubordination; a deceived mind explains why they are incogniscent of this reality. Thus we see how God judged Adamic rebellion by removing the creaturely capacity for obedience.

Unlike post-Kantian perspectives, Paul's apocalypticism does not oblige him to think that a moral 'ought' implies a human 'can'.⁵ While obedience

4 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 16; cf. Hays, *Echoes*.

5 This phraseology is taken from an unpublished paper given by J.L. Martyn entitled: 'The newly created moral agent in Paul's letters' (SBL, 2007).

may come as a command, obedience is emphatically not an option. If Adamic agents are ever to be sufficient, competent agents, it would take nothing short of an act of new creation. Fortunately for Paul, the God who removed creaturely competence also raises the dead, provides hope beyond all hope, and calls things that do not exist into existence (Rom 4:17–18). By that same call, Paul believes, God is eschatologically recreating moral agents.

Paul's vision of transformation, understood in terms of conformity to Christ, holds anthropological ramifications. As believers are transferred into the realm of the Spirit via Christ's death and resurrection, they begin to participate in this new world and be reshaped by it. With renewed minds and transformed hearts, these agents are capable of both thinking and willing in ways that please God. With hearing ears and understanding minds they are morally addressable.⁶ While most fundamentally transformation is depicted as a one-time-event—a definitive moment when believers die with Christ, are circumcised of heart, epistemologically reoriented, and indwelt by God's Spirit—this definitive event enlists believers' active participation in an ongoing process of recapitulating the self-giving and life-receiving pattern embodied in the Christ event (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 4:16), a narrative trajectory which culminates in bodily transformation at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:51–52; Phil 3:20–21). For Paul, it is this reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving, a relationship set in motion by the divine initiative, on which human competency is founded. Paul's perspective, it would thus appear, sits uncomfortably with many substantialist notions regarding the Self: a Self which exists complete, apart from the acts and relations which make up this new existence.⁷ Rather, Pauline imperatives are predicated upon the fact that, clinging to God through Christ, his communities have been *freed* to obey, and are *continually freed* to obey by the Holy Spirit.⁸ In addressing the problem of sexual control, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that God continually gives (διδόντα) the Holy Spirit to them (1 Thess 4:8). As J. Levison concludes: 'There may have been radical conversion in the past, and there may be the hope of resurrection in the future; but at the moment the struggle for sexual purity is grounded in the ongoing gift of God's

6 Martyn, 'De-apocalypticizing Paul'; 91: 'Paul is confident that every one of his imperatives is spoken to persons in a community inspired by the Spirit of Christ, and for that reason addressable in the sense of being able obediently to hear God's imperative, to be thankful for it, and to act on it'.

7 For a discussion of substantialist ontology, although his work has a particular concern for agency questions in Barth, see Bruce L. McCormack, 'Barths grundsätzlicher Chalkedonismus?', *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18 (2002), 149–56.

8 This way of putting it is indebted to Nimmo, *Being in Action*, 99.

holy spirit'.⁹ The newly created moral agent is constituted as such precisely as she stands in ongoing relation to God through the reception of his gift (cf. Gal 3:2–5); and, for this very reason, the reconstituted agent can never and will never be an autonomous agent.

Here is the point at which Paul would seem to differ most sharply from Baruch, two authors who otherwise share much in common. Though Baruch believes that incompetent Israel will be reconstituted by God as a competent moral agent, he shows little concern over the issue of whether or not divine agency and recreated human agency coincide or coinhere in human obedience. Paul, on the other hand, seems everywhere at pains to make clear that though recreated human agents are competent agents, they are in no sense independent agents.

11.2.2 *Human Obedience and Divine Agency*

If for Paul believers are summoned into an active participation in relationship with God, such participation being an integral component of salvation and necessary condition for eschatological life, this activity must be understood in light of the particular way God's grace takes shape in Christ and Spirit. We have seen that on the basis of Ezekiel Paul understands the Spirit-gift as part and parcel of union with Christ. Consequently, in Pauline thought God's agency remains affixed to human agency long after the initial recreative work is done. Two things are notable about this bond, both of which contribute to our understanding of obedience in Paul.

11.2.2.1 Human and Divine Agency in Dynamic Integration

First, we see how Paul creatively strains various grammatical and linguistic techniques to communicate that divine and human agency exist in dynamic integration. Most prominent is probably his startling employment of active and passive verbs. In Romans 8:3–4, those who actively walk according to the Spirit have the requirement passively fulfilled in them. This describes in miniature the substratum of Galatians 5:13–6:10, where the fruit of the Spirit is realised precisely as believers actively walk (*περιπατέω*) and are passively led (*ἄγασθε*) by the Spirit (5:16, 18, 25).¹⁰ Even so, only those who sow to the Spirit reap Life (Gal 6:8). Later in Romans, Paul will urge his hearers to 'be transformed' (*μεταμορφωθῆτε*, 12:2). He will speak of the Galatians 'coming to know God' (*γινόντες θεόν*), only to re-express this as 'being known by God' (*γνωσθέντες*

9 Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 266.

10 See Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency', 383; *Obeying the Truth*, 225–27. See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 531–32, 42–43.

ὑπο θεοῦ, Gal 4:8). And while Paul speaks of being passively *co-crucified* with Christ (συνεσταυρώθη, Rom 6:6; Gal 2:19) so as to be no longer held captive to the Flesh and its ‘passions’ (πάθημα, Rom 7:5), he is certain that those who belong to Christ *have themselves crucified* (ἑσταύρωσαν) the flesh with its ‘passions’ (παθήμασιν, 5:24). All these examples suggest that a believer’s works arise out of two interconnected agencies.

The divine agent’s connectedness to the human agent in Christ is also expressed through a variety of prepositions. Paul says that the divine agent acts with (σύν, 1 Cor 15:10), in (έν, Phil 2:13; Gal 2:20; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Cor 13:3; cf. Col 1:29) and even through (διά, 2 Cor 2:14; Rom 15:18) the human agent. So intimate is this relationship that Paul can even make divine and human agents effectively the subjects of the same act. The Corinthians are in some senses both Christ’s and Paul’s letter (2 Cor 3:3). And it seems that it is exactly as Paul taught the Thessalonians that they were taught by God (1 Thess 4:1, 9; cf. 1:5, 2:13). Paul’s own striving with the Philippians for their progress constitutes the good work that God is working in them (1:6, 25–26).¹¹ It is as Paul is suffering in labour that God forms Christ in the Galatians (Gal 4:19).¹² *When* we cry ‘abba’, the Spirit bears witness (Rom 8:15–16), and cries ‘abba’ (Gal 4:6). Divine and human agencies coincide in these effects.

So deeply does the divine agent work within the human that in some places Paul will seemingly even deny human agency altogether. So, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul’s own labours substantiate how God’s grace took effect in his life. While initially he seems to view these labours as the *evidence* of God’s grace in so far as he worked in grateful *response* to God (who gifted him in spite of his persecuting the Church), surprisingly we learn that the subject of the labours is οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί. To describe these labours as ‘response’ is somewhat inappropriate, as it is not Paul, the independent agent, who acts, but grace with him. And if this is evidence of saving grace, then it is *direct evidence*, in no way inferential by being one step removed from the grace itself. Possibly more radical is Galatians 2:19–20.¹³ Co-crucifixion eradicates the agency of the pre-Christian Paul so that it is no longer Paul who lives. On the other side of execution stands a reconstituted Self, not independent from, but in inseparable union with Christ. Thus for Paul co-crucifixion results in co-habitation so that the life the Christian now lives is a life penetrated and animated by Christ and Spirit.

11 Eastman, *Paul’s Mother Tongue*, 11.

12 See Eastman, *Paul’s Mother Tongue*, 118–21.

13 Barclay, ‘Grace and the Transformation of Agency’, 379: ‘Here it is not a case of who is “working” but, more basically, who is “living”’.

These statements do not undermine the integrity of human agency. Paul is not an occasionalist who thinks that humans are simply the vessel for divine acts.¹⁴ A denial of human agency would make incomprehensible much of what we have seen above regarding a human's necessary work. Furthermore, in some sense Paul can still say that *he* labours harder than any; that *he* now lives in the flesh; and that *he* ministers and teaches. The function of 1 Corinthians 15:10 and Galatians 2:19–20 is not to deny human agency, but to rule out the notion of autonomy, as well as to secure God's agency as the foundation for Christian lives. But in Paul's mind the agency of the Spirit reinforces rather than negates human responsibility,¹⁵ because the two agents exist in an essentially non-contrastive relationship: they neither relate in inverse proportion, nor in simple one-plus-one addition. They coinhere, yet the basic integrity of each remains.

11.2.2.2 Human Agency is Ultimately Dependent on Divine Agency

No matter how much one insists that divine agency does not damage the integrity of human agency for Paul, nevertheless his agency conceptions are not egalitarian, either. It is notable that Paul's negations do not run the other way round. We could not imagine him saying: 'it was not grace that worked, but me alongside grace'.¹⁶ For Paul, the human agent always remains dependent on the divine agent. Thus, in Philippians 2:12–13 both the willing and doing of Christian work is grounded in (γάρ) God's working in them. A chapter later Paul says that he vigorously seeks to apprehend (καταλάβω) the goal precisely because (ἐφ' ᾧ) he has been apprehended (κατελήμφθην) by Christ (Phil 3:12).¹⁷ Human love and obedience flow from the heart because God has poured out his love into and circumcised human hearts (Rom 2:26–29; 5:5; 6:17). Human ability is secured in the one who endues strength (Phil 4:13). Since God is powerful in the Corinthians (δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν), they live by his power (ἐκ δυνάμεως, 2 Cor 13:3–4). It is only because the Spirit bears the fruit of goodness and gentleness (Gal 5:22–23) that Paul expects the Galatians to restore in gentleness (Gal 6:1) and do good to all (6:10).¹⁸ In these examples, divine and human agency are set in a direct, positive relationship. As God's activity increases so

14 See Tanner, *God and Creation*, 85–86. If by calling human works 'evidential' one implies that humans are an inactive conduit of divine acts, this is yet another sense in which 'evidential' may be misleading.

15 Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 226.

16 So also Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency', 384.

17 On taking ἐφ' ᾧ causally, see Rom 5:12; 2 Cor 5:4; see further Silva, *Philippians*, 176.

18 Eastman, *Paul's Mother Tongue*, 171.

does humanity's. Even still, so much is ministerial competence not derived out of (ἀπό) humans that even after God makes them competent the effects of their works remain in an important sense not 'of them' (2 Cor 3:4–5). The self-determination of the moral agent finds its beginning and basis in God's own non-coercive, self-determining love.¹⁹

In sum: Paul believes that human agents are remade as competent moral agents in relationship to Christ. He expects that believers can accomplish the Spirit's demands of wholehearted love and obedience. This is not to say that vis-à-vis the divine agent recreated agents are ever sufficient in themselves; only to say that they have been newly created as sufficient causes in relation to the rest of the created order. Nevertheless, when divine agency is taken into account, believing agents are not in and of themselves sufficient. They relate to God in a non-contrastive, yet wholly dependent (asymmetrical) fashion. God enables, but God does not simply enable. God empowers, but God does not simply empower. The divine agent is presently and permanently active in effecting the believer's obedience.²⁰ Put differently, with respect to obedience God is not the first link in the chain of related causes; rather, God is the sustainer of those created causes, whose agency even extends to created causes' created effects. Correspondingly, divine and human agency coinhere, but this in no way damages the integrity of the human agent.²¹ On Paul's count, eschatological agents do not become less, but more fully human as God acts, and are constituted as agents precisely as they function as God's agency.

If then Paul employs various modalities, terms, and conceptions, it is only because the subject matter is captured by none but potentially illumined by all.²² Though in many ways it strains our language just as much as it strained Paul's to describe the precise integration of divine and human agency, by ruling out some common ways of framing the two we can sharpen our focus. First, Paul does not believe that divine and human agency are in competition with one another so as to relate in inverse portion. Divine agency negates neither humans' agency nor their responsibility (Phil 2:12–13; Gal 6:8). Neither does

19 Nimmo, *Being in Action*, 99.

20 Commenting on 1 Thess 4:8, Deidun (*New Covenant Morality*, 56) writes: 'God's interior activity is here seen as continuous (διδόντα, present tense). God's intervention is not simply a single act that affected the Christian in the past, but a divine activity that is constantly impinging on the core of his personality. Through Baptism, man is not simply sanctified and then left *alone* with his (now transformed) personality; rather, he remains in *constant* union with a divine source of activity'.

21 Hays (*The Faith of Jesus*, 224) speaks of an 'overlay of Subjects'.

22 My language is indebted to Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 202.

Paul believe that the two agents work alongside one another, offering two independent contributions. Nor even do the two agents synthesise into a third new thing. Rather than conceiving divine and human agency as ‘one or the other’ or ‘one plus the other’, ‘one beside the other’, or ‘one becoming the other’, for Paul human works are taken up and established in the divine work: ‘one in the other’.²³ In this way Paul’s principal belief about grace—that humans participate in Christ—transforms his understanding of obedience.

11.3 Implications for Pauline Theology

We can begin to see how Paul’s re-conceptualisation of human agency in Christ has implications for the ways in which grace and works are conceived in Pauline Theology.

11.3.1 *Understanding the Pauline Antithesis*

If Paul does not fundamentally conceive of divine and human agency in competitive terms, where does that leave his antithetical statements about grace/faith and works/law (Rom 4:4–6, 16; 9:16, 32; 11:6; Gal 3:2). On a traditional reading these antitheses encapsulate the way Paul radically dichotomises divine and human agency, making salvation wholly dependent on the former.²⁴ More recent attempts to place Paul in his historical context are suspicious of the traditional reading. For K. Stendahl, questions about divine and human agency arise out of later Western concerns and ‘Paul’s references to the impossibility of fulfilling the Law is [sic] part of a theological and theoretical scriptural argument about the relation between Jews and Gentiles’.²⁵ Similarly, N.T. Wright insists “Justification by works” has nothing to do with individual Jews attempting . . . [to pull] themselves up by their moral bootstraps’; Paul’s debate

23 Schnelle, ‘Transformation und Partizipation’, 68, locates the believer ‘im Wirkungsfeld’ of God.

24 Francis Watson, ‘Constructing an Antithesis: Pauline and Other Jewish Perspectives on Divine and Human Agency’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS 335 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 99.

25 Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 81, 131, which is a republication of ‘Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West’, *HTR* 56 (1963), 199–215. Compare Räisänen, *Paul*, 169–77. Likewise Engberg-Pedersen, ‘Response to Martyn’, 127, 139.

is unconcerned with the issue of 'nomism' or '*Menschenwerke*'.²⁶ In other words, the proper relationship between divine and human agency was not at stake. How could it be? Paul himself expects works.²⁷ What distinguishes Paul's concerns from fellow Jews are the particular works required.²⁸ As Watson notes:

The antithesis between faith and works does not express a general theoretical opposition between two incompatible views of the divine-human relationship. Rather, it articulates the Pauline conviction that the church should be separate and distinct from the Jewish community. . . . There is no question of an antithesis between a passive reception of the gift of salvation followed by secondary active consequences. . . . The faith/works antithesis not an antithesis between faith and morality-in-general, but an antithesis between life as a Christian, with its distinctive beliefs and practices, and life as an observant Jew.²⁹

The current tendency is thus to soften the grace/works antithesis, warning against reading modern considerations about agency into Paul. In the current climate, one senses that anyone trying to relate the antitheses to the issue of human salvation out of a common predicament is automatically regarded as deeply misguided.³⁰ How does the present study contribute to this debate?

26 N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Oxford: Lion, 1997), 119; see also his 'The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith', *TynBul* 29 (1978), 71; *Romans*, 479.

27 The objection felt by many is voiced by Stowers, *A Rereading*, 188: 'Usually commentators take "works of the law" as equivalent to doing the law or living by the law. Often they further abstract "works of the law" to mean human effort, activity, or achievement. But Paul assumes that activity, religious achievement, and good works are both proper and essential'; see also Räisänen, *Paul*, 184, 186.

28 See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 355; Dunn, 'New Perspective', 105. Others now take πίστις as faithful obedience, which further undermines any distinction in agency; see, e.g., Stowers, *A Rereading*, 199–203. Compare Karl Kertelege, '*Rechtfertigung*' bei Paulus (Münster: Verlag Aschendorf, 1966), 225.

29 Watson, *Beyond the New Perspective*, 122–23. Nevertheless, Watson is more nuanced than most. He notes how the two communities conceive of agency dynamics differently because Paul has a conversionist theology and thus a dynamic view of grace as opposed to a static one. He rightly highlights how in Paul 'faith is dependent on and generated by the kerygma . . . and not a spontaneous decision that any one could in principle make, entire of their own volition' (122). Nevertheless, for Watson this is not what Paul's antitheses are about.

30 See Stendahl, *Paul*, 26, 86.

This study has attempted to set Paul's view of agency in its ancient context. In doing so, we have seen that for Paul human agents are always caught up into larger networks of power and function within 'other totalities within the cosmic order'.³¹ These totalities affect humans in at least two ways. First, human anthropology is inextricably bound up with cosmology. The Adamic agent is ψυχικός, a component of the world which is consigned to Sin (Gal 3:22). The Christian, however, is πνευματικός, a component of God's new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Second, the totalities within the cosmic order include other active agents, whose agencies are set in a direct, positive relationship to human agency.

Putting Paul's views in their ancient context holds two important implications for the current discussion on the Pauline antithesis. On the one hand, dichotomies between divine and human agency are not unqualified. Paul's denials of human agency in sinful acts (Rom 7:17, 20) and in good works (1 Cor 15:10; Gal 2:20) should not be understood as absolute denials,³² but serve a particular function of highlighting human agency's entanglement with higher powers. On the other hand, Paul believes that there are *two* worlds with *two* sets of powers. These worlds and powers stand in the starkest contrast to one another. In so far as persons are aligned with one power, they are at enmity with another. Human freedom is always simultaneously a form of slavery and conversely, human slavery entails some kind of freedom (Rom 6:18, 20, 22).³³ Thus we find an antithesis in Paul that lies more along the axis of world-powers than between divine and human agencies.

Nevertheless, those who are enmeshed in Sin are necessarily at enmity with God. Until humans have been liberated by being brought under God's saving reign, their agency must be set in antithetical relation to God's agency so that one is either justified by works of law or by faith of Christ. With respect to God's justifying act, initiative and priority, it would seem that Paul *does indeed* play off divine grace over against human works.³⁴ But now, God has begun to

31 Warne, *Perspectives*, 58–59.

32 Compare Stendahl, *Paul*, 93, who thinks Paul's argument in Rom 7 acquits the 'I'. See also Martyn, 'De-apocalypticizing Paul', 95.

33 Schnelle, *Human Condition*, 86: 'If in antiquity freedom and slavery were mutually exclusive, in Paul they are mutually dependent'.

34 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 179: '[T]he contrast "faith" and "works," ... is not to be understood in any other way than as a contrast between the grace of God on the one hand and human achievement as the ground of justification on the other. That faith and works, however, are mutually exclusive only in this sense, but for the rest, where meritoriousness is not in question, belong inseparably together, is evident from the whole of Paul's preaching'.

create of his own power and initiative agents that work in concert with the divine will.³⁵ And so in large agreement with Watson:

In the (more numerous) passages that speak of the practice of the Christian life, there is little if any sense of a potential tension between appeals to human and to divine agency. It is therefore wholly misguided to seek to impose the characteristic structure of Paul's righteousness by faith language on Pauline discourse in its entirety.³⁶

And yet even in descriptions about the Christian life, as our investigation of the Flesh/Spirit antithesis has shown, Paul retains an unyielding conviction that humans are ever dependent on divine agency, that this dependence corresponds to their initial reception of grace (Gal 3:2–5), and that this life of dependent-competence can be pitted against self-reliant-incompetence.³⁷ This study, then, supports and even intensifies a Pauline antithesis between divine and human agency, while at the same time limiting its scope.

11.3.2 *The Place and Value of Christian Works in the Pauline 'Pattern of Religion'*

God's participation in human agency fundamentally alters the character of Christian 'works'. For Paul, obedience does not function as a human's independent offering to a get-in-by-grace, stay-in-by-works scheme. One problem with discussions about the necessary role of obedience in Paul is that they often conceive of grace in either negative or static terms: grace *Cancels* the penalty of sin or simply functions as a status which one maintains through proper living in order to escape judgement. On this understanding, to 'fall from grace' is to remove oneself from the sphere of those who will be forgiven. But in Paul, grace is limited neither to an offer of salvation, nor to God's present or future justifying act, nor even to God's initial reconstituting work itself. Grace is that

35 So Eastman, *Paul's Mother Tongue*, 59, who notes how 'in Christ' softens the 'absolute distinction' between divine and human agency.

36 Watson, 'Antithesis', 102.

37 Compare Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 240–42. Barclay goes on to insist that 'in Galatians and in Romans there are no clear indications that Paul is concerned with individual legalistic attitudes' (251, emphasis original). But this all depends on what constitutes 'individual legalistic attitudes'. If legalism is reliance upon a power which is 'merely human', Barclay's definition of the Flesh (240), then it is hard to escape the conclusion that in Paul's perspective non-Christians (including Jews) were legalistic by default.

dynamic, creative and recreative power which operates in and through believers, founding their will to act and even bringing those acts to fruition.³⁸

Recently, Dunn has queried whether it might be appropriate to call the Pauline pattern synergistic, since Paul calls his hearers to an obedience that is to some degree a condition of eternal life.³⁹ While synergism might helpfully convey the real role believers play in salvation, to the extent that it suggests that humans either work independently of the divine agent (one plus another), or that divine and human contributions stand in inverse proportion to one another (one not another), it remains inadequate as a characterisation of Pauline obedience.⁴⁰ Similarly, to simplify Paul's understanding of Christian experience, as Hooker does, to 'God's saving grace evokes man's answering obedience'⁴¹ equally risks pauperising Pauline conceptions. For Paul, obedience does not start where grace ends. Any response on the part of a human agent, as Martyn insists, 'is emphatically *not a separate step*, one that is separate from the continuing causative activity of the divine agent . . . for this invasive God *consistently participates in human morality*'.⁴² If, therefore, human works are a necessary condition for eschatological life,⁴³ then God's grace in Christ refashions even the notion of conditionality itself, since grace provides the sufficient condition for obedience.⁴⁴

38 Dunn 'Whence, What and Whither?', 80, notes how Paul was not unaware that his emphasis on obedience 'could lead to reliance upon and pride in achievement. But that clearly did not prevent him from urging such responsibility upon believers'. Indeed, yet it is striking that often in those very places where one would expect him to emphasise human agency, he mentions divine agency in the same breath (e.g., Phil 2:12–13)!

39 Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 71–72. So also Winninge, *Sinners*, 334.

40 So Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency', 384, 388n38; Peter Thomas O'Brien, 'Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume II The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D.A. Carson, et al., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 265.

41 Hooker ('Covenantal Nomism', 157), who with Garlington (*Obedience of Faith*, 265) and Yinger (*Paul, Judaism, and Judgment*, 289) agrees materially with Sanders on the relationship between grace and works in Paul; see Sanders, *Paul* 513, 515–518, 543. While all these authors give some credence to Pauline agency dynamics with mention of the Spirit, they seriously downplay the implications of these dynamics for understanding the Pauline 'pattern'.

42 Martyn, 'Epilogue', 182, emphasis his. See also Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 227.

43 See Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*, 263–68.

44 Dunn ('Whence, What and Whither?', 78) asks rhetorically: 'Does that make any difference to the implication of a degree of conditionality in Paul's understanding of the judgment of believers'? He seems to think not. More strongly, by focusing upon the end point rather than the beginning point of salvation, VanLandingham (*Judgment & Justification*, 335) concludes: 'The Last Judgement is not . . . even over what the Holy

If synergism does not adequately describe the place of obedience in Paul, what about monergism? Does this not more accurately fit Paul's thinking in so far as it emphasises the role of the divine agent in founding and sustaining obedience?⁴⁵ While in these ways monergism appears less problematic, it is not without difficulties since it carries the risk of making Paul out to be an occasionalist, of perverting the integrity of human agency, of rendering a believer's works ultimately inconsequential, and of a 'one and not the other' construct. Perhaps, then it is better to follow Barclay's suggestion and label Paul's view energism,⁴⁶ since God is ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας (Phil 2:13).

Scholars coming out of a broadly reformed tradition often describe Christian works as evidential. So Ridderbos calls works 'indispensable as the demonstration of the true nature of faith and as the evidence of having died and been raised together with Christ'.⁴⁷ For Schreiner, works 'do not constitute an earning of salvation but are evidence of a salvation already given' because they 'manifest the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life'.⁴⁸ R. Gundry believes that Paul 'makes good works evidential of having received grace through faith, not instrumental in keeping grace through works'.⁴⁹ At one level, there is nothing wrong with these formulations and one can see how for Paul a believer's works evidence saving grace. In Romans 2:25–29, it is through obedience that one detects the 'concealed' circumcised heart, which is another way of describing union with Christ—the essence of salvation. Thanks is given to God in Romans 6:17 for obedience, which demonstrates that these Christians have been handed over to the imprint of teaching—another reference to Paul's union doctrine.

Care must be taken, however, with this formulation; for works are never simply evidential. In so far as union with Christ establishes persons in the new creation—Paul's most basic conviction about salvation—it also establishes

Spirit has done in the believer'; but a judgement over the individual's accomplishment. Unfortunately, Vanlandingham fails to consider how, for Paul, the Holy Spirit's work in a believer is inseparable from what believers do. Neither does he ask the question of how in the process of salvation the beginning and middle reshape what otherwise might appear as a traditional end. Compare Gathercole, *Boasting*, 264.

45 Hagner, 'Paul and Judaism', 122. So also Laato (*Paul and Judaism*, 77, 167) and Eskola (*Theodicy and Predestination*, 272, 296–297).

46 Barclay, 'Grace and the Transformation of Agency', 388n38.

47 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 180.

48 Schreiner, *The Law*, 203–04.

49 R. Gundry, 'Staying Saved in Paul', 11. Compare Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment*, 175, 202–203, who appears to use 'evidential' in a slightly different fashion.

them as obedient agents. Obedience thus becomes the realisation of the new creation in a person's life. Furthermore, while grace founds obedience, and is thus *logically* prior to obedience, it retains contemporaneity with obedience.⁵⁰ Seen this way, the evidential value of obedience lies in the fact that it is a constituent element of saving grace, not because obedience is grace's biproduct or its detached witness. To make this latter mistake borders on making works dispensable, which is a grave distortion of the Pauline vision.⁵¹ Dunn is thus entirely right to note how 'in Paul's soteriology, faith and the Spirit do not reduce or remove the human responsibility of obedience (Rom 1.5; 15.18; 16.19; 1 Cor 11.16; 2 Cor 10.5–6; Phil 2.12; 2 Thess 3.14), and the expected outcome is not simply imputed righteousness but *transformed persons*.'⁵² Yet at the very same time, Paul's focus on obedience does not detract in the least from divine grace, but specifies both that in which that grace consists and how grace reaches its goal in the establishment of obedient lives. Grace is actualised in works.

11.4 Implications for Paul and Judaism

Throughout this study, I have tried to shed some light on Paul by comparing him with his Jewish contemporaries. A few points are worth highlighting, particularly regarding their views about grace and agency.

11.4.1 *The Relationship between Grace and Agency in Obedience*

The first thing to note is that every author we have studied, including Paul, holds that grace *and* works are necessary. Yet from one author to the next we can see palpable differences in the way the two concepts integrate. In 2 Baruch, for instance, grace and obedience are both necessary for salvation, but they remain completely separate and distinguishable. 4 Ezra is similar since there moral agents operate autonomously, even though God overlooks the feebleness of their works, and possibly aids those works to make them acceptable. In Jubilees, God's grace is manifest in the giving of the covenant, which creates

50 J.M. Gundry, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 44, here 270, rightly speaks of lives evidencing God's 'continual salvific work in them'.

51 Thus R. Gundry is right to repudiate a view that sees 'good works as a *means* of retaining salvation', but is wrong to conclude that they 'are only (but not unimportantly) a sign of staying in' ('Staying Saved in Paul', 35).

52 Dunn, 'Whence, What and Whither?', 76, emphasis his.

space for the possibility of obedience and protects its members from demonic hindrances. In Baruch, works depend on grace because grace secures obedient agents, who then go on to fulfil the condition of obedience independently. On Philo's understanding, human agency is akin to divine agency and in this way is directly related to and dependent on it. God even strengthens the willingness of those who exercise their share in the divine gift and God's agency is necessary for works to take effect, but grace does not guarantee that humans will appropriate their share in the divine gift.

There is a large amount of overlap between the structures on which Paul and those associated with Qumran relate grace and agency. At first glance, they could even appear identical: in both divine and human agencies are set in direct, positive relation; in both they coexist and coinhere; in both the integrity of the human agent is ultimately maintained. Yet in Paul the loss of moral competence that all humans possess is a result of disobedience, whereas for *yahadic* sectarians it is only the Sons of Darkness who lack such capacities, and this lack results from the dualistic structures of the universe. Furthermore, by locating the event of becoming righteous at creation, terms like grace and salvation take on different associations for the sectarians than they do for Paul. Consequently, unlike Paul, the *yahadic* documents do not foresee grace bringing about a fundamental reconstitution of the Sons of Righteousness in this age; instead, the righteous were created uniquely with a good inclination, they have been given the necessary instruction to live, and at the consummation they will be transformed. For Paul, however, everyone who is able to offer obedience, without exception, was at one time incompetent. If humans are able to obey, this is because God is recreating human agents by bringing them into a dynamic relationship with Christ.

11.4.2 *The Logic of Gift*

Second, by setting readings of Deuteronomy 30 alongside one another, we have been able to illuminate many similarities and differences amongst and between Paul and his contemporaries. While every author affirms some problem with the human heart, the depth and scope of this problem would have been contested. Even with this disagreement, most would argue that Deuteronomy 30 must be directed at people who maintain a certain degree of competence as moral agents, corresponding to a reading that prioritises Israel's initiative. If there are necessary conditions placed upon Israel to elicit restoration, Israel must be able to fulfil those conditions if restoration is to come about.

It is crucial to note that such conditionality is not incompatible with the belief that salvation is an act of grace.⁵³ B. Longenecker rightly objects to

53 So Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 443–44.

the idea that Jews viewed God as somehow ‘obligated’ to save them because of their works.⁵⁴ We have continually seen how in Israel-priority readings God’s gifts, on which humans have no claim, remain essential to salvation. Yet these gifts, while undeserved, nearly always correlate with something in humanity, whether that be repentance (2 Baruch; 4 Ezra), love for learning (the *Yahad*), good intentions (Philo), order of birth (Jubilees), and so on. While sometimes correlations might secure some worthy achievement in the recipients (2 Baruch; 4 Ezra), at other times the desire is simply to harmonise God’s grace with a rational universe (Jubilees; Philo). Whatever their various motivations, by providing a rationale for grace these Jews would have been able to protect God from the charge of capriciousness and secure a well ordered world.⁵⁵ Consequently, even though works do not *obligate* God to save, this does not mean, as Longenecker would have us believe, that ‘worth’ was never a reason for delineating to whom God bestowed the gift of salvation.⁵⁶

By reading Deuteronomy 30 in a way that prioritises divine agency and initiative, Paul, with the author of Baruch, represents the minority report. His reading involves presuppositions that stand in the sharpest of contrast to the other interpreters. Unlike many in the ancient world, Paul did not understand God’s grace-gift coming to ‘worthy recipients’.⁵⁷ To the contrary, God’s love flows freely to the ungodly (ἄσεβεις, Rom 5:6), to sinners (ἁμαρτωλοί, Rom 5:8), to enemies (ἐχθροί, Rom 5:10). By refusing to correlate God’s gift with qualifications, Paul again shows himself to be a radical Jew, choosing a somewhat strange option out of the various ways in which grace and agency might be related.

It is important to remember that in the ancient world social, communal, and economic networks all depended upon cycles of reciprocity. Since to give a gift was to establish a relationship upon which the very fabric of society was based, it was assumed that a recipient was able to reciprocate. Paul’s view would thus appear to unravel these crucial networks. The seriousness of this threat is compounded when one considers the ramifications this might have for relationship with a covenant God. Is YHWH then a disinterested giver? Does his grace operate irrespective of covenant, without the expectation or desire

54 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 30.

55 Sanders, *Paul*, 98; Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 345.

56 Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 30.

57 See Harrison, *Language of Grace*, 224–225, 348. So also Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul*, 170: ‘in standard Greek χάρις is not equal to the Pauline, undeserved grace, but means something favourable in general. The semantic limitation of grace to the opposite of personal merits is rather Pauline’; though it would be more accurate to say: The semantic limitation of grace to the opposite of *suitability* is rather Pauline.

for relationship(!)? How would Paul respond to the charge that his God expects no 'return', and therefore desires no relationship?

Convincing or not, Paul would no doubt exclaim: μή γένοιτο (cf. Rom 6:1–2, 15)! Grace is unconditioned but not unconditional: it comes without preconditions and correlates with nothing other than God's own Self-determination to love the ungodly; however, it expects that the ungodly will not stay as such and demands of them the obedience of faith. But while Paul believes that God expects reciprocity, the reciprocity that personal relationships demand is not something latent within humans which God draws out by his grace; rather, by uniting people to his Son, God's grace activates the reciprocity of obedience.⁵⁸ As Käsemann noted: 'Paulus kennt keine Gabe Gottes, die uns nicht zum Dienst verpflichtete und unsern Dienst ermöglichte.'⁵⁹

This brings us to a final point. It is notable that, unlike Philo, Paul was not driven to his formulations about grace and obedience on account of philosophical presuppositions. And while, as in Baruch, Paul's view of human sin does rule out moral competence, this does not seem to be, in the first instance, the reason for Paul's radical perspective. Neither are Paul's constructions of pervasive depravity and utter reliance upon grace primarily motivated by the specific purpose of praising God, as we saw in the *Hodayot*, though they no

58 Throughout this study, I have consciously adopted vocabulary and concepts from current 'gift' discussions. While I am not able to engage the exciting conversation taking place amongst many philosophers, theologians and historians, there is reason to believe this study offers a contribution, since questions of agency lurk closely beneath the surface. John Milbank, 'Can a Gift be Given?', *Modern Theology* 11 (1995), 136–37, for example, says that the Bible envisions God's gifts being met by an 'active reception' and 'gift-exchange' as opposed to passive reception and unilateral gifting. From my own research, however, I would suggest that Paul's complex notions of divine and human agency provide a model beyond the reductionistic unilateral-gift/gift-exchange dichotomy. For Paul, reception of grace must be what might be called an 'activated reciprocity' rather than an active reception, because the grace receptors are defunct. It is therefore only through an operation of restructuring grace that humans can be active recipients, participants in the circle of gift that substantiates relationships, vertical and horizontal. For a historical response to Milbank to which I am partly indebted, see J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

59 Ernst Käsemann, 'Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus', *ZTK* 58 (1961), 368–69. The English translation distorts the meaning somewhat: 'Paul knows no gift of God which does not convey both the obligation and the capacity to serve' ('"The Righteousness of God" in Paul', in *New Testament Questions of Today* [Fortress Press, 1969], 170). The gift does not 'convey'; the gift itself obligates and capacitates service.

doubt can function that way.⁶⁰ Rather the Pauline 'logic' (if we can speak thus; cf. 1 Cor 1:18–31), his prioritisation of divine agency, is inseparably linked to his own personal experience of being confronted with the revelation of grace as a persecutor of the church. It would be difficult to overestimate the impression that this disruptive event, along with the unnerving experience of witnessing Gentiles in charismatic worship, left on Paul's theology and hermeneutic.

In conclusion: Paul and his contemporaries hold much in common, not least of which is a belief in the necessity of grace. But upon closer consideration, we can see how the precise forms grace took, the functions it performed, the spheres in which it operated, and the conditions upon which it was given, differed markedly, allowing for the possibility of vehement disagreements between fellow Jews, not least over the character and function of obedience. It is more likely that, rather than being immune from such debates, Paul's own radical views would have placed him at the heart of them. The scholarly assumption that 'grace' was a monolithic concept in antiquity threatens to reduce the varied and complex presentations we have seen to the truism that 'all Jews believed in grace', or, and perhaps worse, of limiting a theology of 'grace' to a small few, or even one—Paul!⁶¹ The consequence is not only a distorted picture of ancient Judaism, but a domestication of the apostle himself. Rather than saying that while Paul believed in grace, his Jewish contemporaries did not, this study suggests that it is far more accurate to see that in Paul the ordinary meaning of terms like grace, reciprocity, obligation, condition, freedom, and even obedience are at once included, canceled, and transcended in light of his experience of God-in-Christ.⁶²

60 See Rom 11:33–36; 1 Cor 1:31.

61 The dividing lines between the former and latter tendencies fall neatly along those pro-Sanders and contra-Sanders respectively. It is unfortunate that both often suffer from simplistic and monolithic definitions of grace.

62 My language here is indebted to Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 200.

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