

Salvation in Paul's Judaism?

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Introduction

The title of this study is deliberately ambiguous. Obviously there is the initial puzzle of what 'salvation' meant to Jews, Christians, Greeks, and Romans. Apart from that there is the more perplexing issue of the referent in the phrase 'Paul's Judaism'. Does that mean (a) the Judaism known to Paul, or (b) the Judaism expressed in Paul's own *Christian* beliefs? And therein the questions begin on either option: is Paul a reliable witness to the Judaism of his time and are Paul's theological and religious beliefs to be situated within Judaism or external to it? I am interested in both of these questions. First, I am concerned in this study with how Paul narrated the story of salvation in Judaism. Second, I am concerned with how that narration is both continuous and discontinuous with Paul's articulation of salvation in his Jesus-believing faith. As we will see the rhetoric and reality of Paul's description of salvation and religious life in Judaism is much debated (especially by Jewish interpreters of Paul)¹ and the degree to which Paul and his communities are enmeshed in the matrix of 'common Judaism' is likewise varyingly understood.

In light of that, it is the task of this study to explore the relationship between Paul and Judaism on salvation. I intend to inquire how Jewish was Paul's soteriological matrix and to ascertain what is it he found wanting in Israel's national religion that Jesus was supposedly the answer to. That will ultimately inform us of the Pauline account of Judaism and how Judaistic is Paul's own 'Christian' religion. The way in which I will proceed is by: (1) briefly surveying the debate about Paul's relationship to Judaism in modern scholarship, and (2) discussing the socio-religious position of Paul and his Gentile Christian communities in relation to Judaism.

Paul and Judaism in Scholarship

There have been various proposals as to what kind of Judaism Paul knew and how well he represented it. In what follows is a brief summary of the respective views:²

Paul and Jewish Legalism

A first perspective is that Paul, in his post-conversion period, rallied against Judaism which in the post-exilic period had degenerated into a form of legalism, merit-theology, and synergism.³ While it is no doubt true that in some schemes performance of the Law could be

¹ Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, 'Jewish Interpretation of Paul in the Last Thirty Years,' *CBR* 6 (2008): 355-76.

² Cf. other surveys in Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 139-40; Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1-27; W.S. Campbell, 'Perceptions of Compatibility Between Christianity and Judaism in Pauline Interpretation,' *BI* 13 (2005): 298-316.

³ F. Weber, *System der altsynagogalen palästinischen Theologie aus Targum, Midrasch und Talmud* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1880); Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (trans. R.H. Fuller; Leipzig: Thames and Hudson, 1956 [1949]) ch. 2; Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 332-35; see discussion of 'legalism' and 'synergism' with references in Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 89-90.

emphasized as the basis of approval before God's throne or the condition of entering the future age (e.g. Wisd. 5.15; 6.18; Tob. 14.12; *Pss. Sol.* 9.3-5; 1QS 3-4; 4 *Ezra* 6.5; 7.77; 8.33, 36; 2 *Bar.* 14.12; 51.7), we cannot escape the fact that other schemes can also emphasize grace, election, and covenant as the efficacious force in salvation (e.g. 1QH 11.11-15; 1QH 15.18-20; *m.Sanh.* 10.1). Philo also attests to debates among Alexandrian Jews about the degree to which God's blessings are earned or freely bestowed (*Sac.* 54-57 [= Deut. 9.5]). By no stretch of the imagination can *all* Judaism be lumped into the one soteriological pattern regardless of whether some label that pattern 'legalism' or 'synergism'. Paul's critique of works, law, and works of law (for whatever reason) is certainly critiquing perceived abuses or failures with the Jewish religion in his opinion, but he is still doing so using the framework, tradition, and grammar of the Jewish religion itself. As long as Jewish teachers remained in dialogue within their own sacred literature and traditions, they cannot have removed grace and covenant from their thinking. Even Paul's opponents in Galatia would claim that their soteriological pattern was one of grace (Gal. 2.21). The issue was the nature and mechanism of divine grace for Paul (not the fact of divine grace) in light of a particular eschatological and messianic configuration in his own telling of the story of salvation. What is more, there is no term in antiquity that is translatable as 'legalism' so its imposition upon ancient Jewish and Christian texts is somewhat anachronistic. Even if one prefers the more fashionable term 'synergism' that still begs the question as to what it means and how is it that Paul's own soteriological scheme,⁴ which has its own articulation of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, avoids becoming equally synergistic in some sense.⁵

Paul and Diaspora Judaism

In another depiction, Paul did not experience true Judaism, rather, he knew only its Hellenistic counter-part which was impoverished when compared to the Talmudic Judaism of Palestine.⁶ The obvious problem here is that it assumes that Diaspora Judaism was lax whereas there is a great amount of proof that Jews outside of Palestine were no less loyal to the pillars of Judaism than their Palestinian counter-parts, even if they lived away from the land and far from the temple, even if they faced a different array of external pressures, and even if they expressed their piety in a different cultural idiom.⁷ It also assumes an unhelpful dichotomy between Hellenism and Judaism whereas it is now axiomatic that all Judaism of the first centuries BCE and CE was permeated by Hellenism in some form.⁸ The notion of a

⁴ Against the designation of 'synergism' is James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 77-89.

⁵ Cf. Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 334; Kari Kuula, *The Law, the Covenant and God's Plan: Paul's Treatment of the Law and Israel in Romans* (FES 85; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 5; Douglas Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2003), 32-38; Chris Vanlandingham, *Judgement and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005); But see objections of Peter T. O'Brien, 'Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?' in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2 – The Paradoxes of Paul*, eds. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 265.

⁶ Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (Oxford: OUP, 1978); idem, *The Genius of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). C.G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays* (New York: Dutton, 1915); H.J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).

⁷ The ubiquity of Jewish loyalty to their native customs throughout the inhabited world is stated frequently in Jewish and non-Jewish writings, e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 17.26; 18.84; 19.290; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.

⁸ Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; Trans. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1974), 1.104; I. Howard Marshall, 'Palestinian and Hellenistic Christian: Some Critical Comments,' *NTS* 19 (1973): 271-87; Troels Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox,

liberal and Hellenized Judaism, as opposed to that of Palestine, which was a foil for Paul's argumentation, is a scholarly myth.

Paul's Misrepresentation of Judaism

On another account, Paul's view of Judaism was jaundiced and skewed as he was unfair in his description of it.⁹ In favour of this view we can say: (1) there is undoubtedly an element of rhetoric and caricature of Paul's polemics against his Judeo Christian opponents and his lament at the failure of Israel to embrace the Messiah; (2) he also re-configures his biography to emphasize the inadequacies of his pre-conversion life in pharisaic Judaism; and (3) his theological critique of Torah is somewhat atypical in Judaism. However, the content of Paul's language is hardly anti-Judaistic *per se*, as the form and content of his language reflects typical intra-Jewish sectarian disputes. His conversion was, in its immediate setting, a transference from one Jewish sect to another even if he led his converts away from common Judaism in the end. Paul's remarks about the Torah oscillate between hostility and veneration depending on the argumentative context (e.g. from Galatians to Romans) and Paul still remains far from a gnostic perspective on the Torah as intrinsically unjust. What is more, the New Testament generally and Paul specifically simply are among our best sources of knowledge for pre-70 CE Judaism.¹⁰

Paul and Covenantal Nomism

Probably the most influential proposal in studies on Paul and Judaism in the last 30 years has been E.P. Sanders' construal of Palestinian Judaism as 'covenantal nomism'.¹¹ This 'pattern of religion' is now well known and is expressed by the dictum 'grace to get in and works to stay in'. In Sanders' own words: '*obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such. It simply keeps an individual in the group which is the recipient of God's grace... obedience is universally held to be the behaviour appropriate to being in the covenant, not the means of earning God's grace.*'¹² Paul's problem with the Torah was that it had simply been superseded by Christ and Paul himself reasoned from Christ's Lordship to the human problem; that is from solution (Christ) to plight (Law).¹³ There has been an industry to critiques of Sanders' portrayal of Judaism and Paul and I include only a few points. (1) There are undoubtedly documents from antiquity that exemplify the pattern that Sanders proposes (e.g. *Testament of Moses*, *1 Esdras*, Pseudo-Philo, Romans 2, and 1QH). Yet it is hard to compress all narrations of the basis and means of salvation in Judaism into a single religious descriptor because the emphasis could fall upon

2001); Anders Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude* (CBNTS 36; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001).

⁹ Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1939); Hyam Maccoby, *Paul and Hellenism* (London: SCM, 1991).

¹⁰ Cf. Alan F. Segal (*Paul the Convert: The Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990], 48): 'Paul's text provide information about first-century Judaism and Jewish mysticism, as important as the Jewish texts that have been fond to establish the meaning of Christian texts. Indeed, Paul's letters may be more important to the history of Judaism than the rabbinic texts are to the interpretation of Christian Scriptures'; idem., ('Conversion and Messianism: Outline for a New Approach,' in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 299): 'The New Testament is ... much better evidence for the history of Judaism [in the first century] than is rabbinic Judaism for the origins of Christianity.'

¹¹ E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 422.

¹² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 420-21.

¹³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552.

either the ‘covenant’ or the ‘nomism’ depending on the peculiar dynamics of a given writing.¹⁴ While covenantal nomism is ‘a very flexible pattern’,¹⁵ the efforts of some to suggest that it can still accommodate highly nomistic praxes is to make the concept so broad as to be meaningless.¹⁶ (2) I would also maintain that the addition of eschatological hopes for entering the future age, violent disagreements over whose interpretation of the law counts, and debates over the rites of entry for outsiders within apocalyptic and sectarian Jewish groups led to soteric patterns that placed an incredible amount of gravity on nomistic observances.¹⁷ We are confronted then with varied and variegated degrees of nomism in first century Judaism. (3) It is likewise a matter of contention as to whether or not what Paul found wrong with Judaism was merely its *Heilsgeschichtlich* obsolescence and equally contestable is the assertion that Paul’s own pattern of religion was, despite his participationist eschatology, essentially in agreement with covenantal nomism.¹⁸

Paul and Ethnocentric Judaism

A further perspective is that Paul never changed the mode of salvation in Judaism, he never doubted the efficacy of Israel’s election, nor did he criticize Israel for anything other than rejecting the notion that the good news had come to Gentiles.¹⁹ This perspective is typified by two aspects: postulating a Pauline *Sonderweg* for Israel and regarding Israel’s misstep as denying God’s salvation to the Gentiles. Israel’s failure, according to John Gager, is: ‘[I]t has nothing to do with accepting Christ as Israel’s saviour. What Israel missed was understanding the goal of the Torah as it relates to the Gentiles’.²⁰ In the specific case of Rom. 11.25-27 it is said, ‘Es ist nicht die Rede von Israels Bekehrung, sonder von Israels Rettung durch Gott.’²¹ Although the *Sonderweg* perspective is appealing to postmodernists, pluralists, and post-

¹⁴ D.A. Carson, ‘Summaries and Conclusions,’ in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1 – The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 543-48; Brendan Byrne, ‘Interpreting Romans: The New Perspective and Beyond,’ *Int* 58 (2004): 248; Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 93-94; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (rev. edn; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), xvii, 12-15.

¹⁵ Richard Bauckham, ‘Apocalypses,’ in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1 – The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 174.

¹⁶ C.F.D. Moule, ‘Jesus, Judaism, and Paul,’ in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne and O. Betz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 48; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICTN; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 215-16; Timo Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Theology* (WUNT 2.100; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1998), 56; Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 94-95; but see the objections of Bruce Longenecker (‘On Critiquing the ‘New Perspective’ on Paul: A Case Study,’ 96 *ZNW* [2005]: 266-69 who understands ‘staying-in’ is a multi-temporal signifier that includes an eschatological component and believes that covenantal nomism comprises an element of eschatological nomism.

¹⁷ Cf. Michael F. Bird, ‘What if Martin Luther Had Read the Dead Sea Scrolls? Historical Particularity and Theological Interpretation in Pauline Theology: Galatians as a Test Case,’ *JTI* 3 (2009): 107-25.

¹⁸ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 514, 543, 552; cf. M.D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 155-64; Peter T. O’Brien, ‘Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?’ in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2 – The Paradoxes of Paul*, eds. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 249-96.

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Klaus Haacker, ‘Das Evangelium Gottes und die Erwählung Israels. Zum Beitrag des Römerbriefs zur Erneuerung des Verhältnisses zwischen Christen und Juden,’ *TBei* 13 (1982): 70-71; Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987); John Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: OUP, 2000); Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Eung Chun Park, *Either Jew or Gentile: Paul’s Unfolding Theology of Inclusivity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

²⁰ Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 135.

²¹ Bernhard Mayer, *Unter Gott Heilsratschluss. Prädestinationaussagen bei Paulus* (Würzburg: Echter, 1974), 290.

holocaust interpreters, it is historically and theologically objectionable. (1) On the logic of this view Jewish Christianity becomes a mistake, though perhaps a necessary one, to force the issue of Gentile inclusion. (2) It does not make sense of Paul's statement about the gospel being for the Jew first (Rom. 1.16), or his assumption of a continuing mission to the Jewish people (Rom. 10.14-21; cf. 11.14; 1 Cor. 9.20; Gal. 2.9), nor why Paul celebrates the existence of a current remnant of Jewish believers in Jesus (Rom. 9.27-29; 11.1-10). (3) While preaching Jesus to Jews may imply a crusader-like superiority or even anti-Judaism, denying them the one means of salvation is anti-semitism no less.²² (4) For Paul there no διαστολή between Jew and Gentile in either condemnation (Rom. 3.22-23) or justification (Rom. 10.12), as both therefore need faith in Jesus Christ.²³ Likewise, while Paul undoubtedly critiqued ethnocentric elements of the Torah as requiring Gentiles to become Jewish proselytes in order to become Jesus believers (e.g. Gal. 2.11-15; Rom. 3.21-31) and he mentioned Jewish resistance to his Gentile mission (1 Thess. 2.15), one cannot properly regard Jewish ethnocentrism as the sum total of Paul's critique of the place of the Torah in redemptive-history and his anguished concern over Israel's failure for several reasons. (a) Paul did not need the word of the cross to learn that God was the God of the Gentiles too, since God's concern for the nations is attested from Genesis to Isaiah and in various other Jewish writings.²⁴ (b) To what extent is it valid to call ancient Judaism ethnocentric or exclusivist? Jews did indeed accept Gentiles into their communities as proselytes (Philo, Josephus, and the Rabbi's speak glowingly of them).²⁵ In addition, is not Christianity just as exclusivistic as Judaism in some respects in forbidding intermarriage with pagans, censuring sexual immorality, expulsion of apostates, avoiding pagan religious associations, and displaying a sectarian social perspective that rejects the values of their surrounding cultural environment?²⁶ (c) Paul also deals with a more fundamental issue, viz., what is problem with humanity that Judaism and its covenants cannot solve, i.e. the adamic self.²⁷ (d) I find it difficult to believe anything other than Israel's lack of faith in Jesus and a rejection of the righteousness that is by faith constitutes the rubric of Paul's assertions in Rom. 1.16, 10.1-13,

²² Cf. Richard H. Bell (*Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11* [WUNT 2.63; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994], 354-55): 'Paul's theology demands a mission to the Jewish people. Provoking Israel to jealousy is no replacement for mission. It is just one possible precursor for mission. The gospel must be preached for it is only the gospel, God's reconciling word, which can make someone a Christian (Rom. 10.17) ... I would maintain that evangelism to Jews is not antisemitism; rather to renounce preaching the liberating gospel to Jewish people is antisemitism'; N.T. Wright ('Romans,' in *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck [12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002], 10.697): 'to imagine that Jews can no longer be welcomed into the family of the Messiah ... [that] for Paul, would be the very height of anti-Judaism'.

²³ While interpreters of this 'new Paul' are trying to avoid supersessionism, in many ways, they imply a supersession of Jewish ethnocentrism and of Israel's role to be a light to the Gentiles by Paul. Cf. Bruce Longenecker, 'On Israel's God and God's Israel: Assessing Supersessionism in Paul,' *JTS* 58 (2007): 26-44.

²⁴ Cf. Terence Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007).

²⁵ Cf. Michael F. Bird, *Crossing Over Sea and Land: Jewish Proselytizing Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, forthcoming 2010).

²⁶ Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 53, 232; N.A. Dahl, 'The One God of Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 3:29-30),' in *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 191; E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 160; idem, 'Jewish Associations with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11-14,' in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, eds. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 181; Anders Runesson, 'Particularistic Judaism and Universalistic Christianity?: Some Critical Remarks on Terminology and Theology,' *ST* 54 (2000): 55-75.

²⁷ Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (NSBT 9; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 19-21; Bruce Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 120-21.

11.7, 23. Nonetheless, while Paul does not have a *Sonderweg* for Israel he does foresee a *Sonderplatz* for the Jewish nation in God's eschatological plans.²⁸

Paul and intra-Judaistic Debates

According to Mark Nanos, Paul's remarks about Torah, Gentiles, and Israel are part of intra-Jewish debates and not anti-Judaistic discourses. For Nanos it is apparent that Paul was essentially *Torah* observant and even took concerted measures to prevent the gentilization of the churches. Paul contends against any form of ethnocentrism that would exclude Gentiles from salvation, but he also wants Gentile Christians to have an amicable relationship with Jewish communities and to that end he endeavours to restrain Gentile freedoms (morality and purity) *halakhically*.²⁹ Israel's failure according to Nanos' Paul was her unwillingness to accept that the end of ages had come and Jesus Christ had opened up a way for Gentiles to join Judaism as Christ-believing Gentiles. I would surmise that the intra-Jewish nature of Paul's polemics are correct and probably also the notion of Paul as (for the most part [cf. 1 Cor. 9.19-23]) law observant too. Likewise, Paul never expected Jewish Christians to give up the law either and he remained in conscious association with his national compatriots. However, Paul's critique of the *Torah* also encompasses anthropology (its negative effect upon humans) and redemptive-history (its limited place in God's purposes) in addition to ethnocentrism. In many ways *Torah* and *Christ* had become opposite poles since in Judaism *Torah* was the constitution for the chosen people and the essence of life. As Bart Ehrman states on Paul's Torah and gospel antithesis: 'No one in early Christianity could surpass Paul in making an issue both clear and compelling'.³⁰ We must be careful not to turn intra-Jewish debates into anti-Jewish accusations. Paul never denied belonging to or representing the Jewish people, but his continued engagement with his Jewish contemporaries served only to solidify his own disparity with them and that, to later readers of Paul especially, became a definitive matter for relations between the two communities. Paul's matrix of eschatology, christology, and Torah-free Gentile mission could not be accommodated within a 'common Judaism' and later many Gentile Christians rather liked it that way.³¹ Moreover, we can also say that Paul was to a large extent sectarian in terms of adopting an attitude of separation from Jewish communities in the aftermath of the failure of Jewish communities to receive the gospel. He established Gentile Jesus-believing communities that never been part of the synagogue. A major concern of Paul was the integrity of Gentiles *qua* Gentiles and not their integration into non-Jesus believing Jewish groups.

Summary

What should be clear from the above survey is that Paul's theology has often been construed in opposition to Judaism, as if it were the foil against which his theology developed, and his

²⁸ Cf. further critiques in Reidar Hvalvik, 'A "Sonderweg" for Israel: A Critical Examination of Current Interpretation of Romans 11.25-27,' *JSNT* 38 (1990): 87-107; Terence L. Donaldson, 'Jewish Christianity, Israel's Stumbling and the *Sonderweg* Reading of Paul,' *JSNT* 29 (2006): 27-54.

²⁹ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); idem, 'The Jewish Context of the Gentile Audience Addressed in Paul's Letter to the Romans,' *CBQ* 61 (1999): 283-304; idem, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); idem, 'How inter-Christian Approaches to Paul's rhetoric can perpetuate negative valuations of Jewishness – Although proposing to avoid that outcome,' *Biblical Interpretation* 13 (2002): 255-269; idem, 'Paul between Jews and Christians,' *Biblical Interpretation* 13 (2005): 221-316.

³⁰ Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 98.

³¹ Cf. Magnus Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch* (London: Routledge, 2003).

churches were a separate socio-religious entity from neighbouring Jewish communities. Alternatively, there have been more recent attempts to situate Paul's thought within Judaism, to reinterpret the rhetoric and polemics in Paul's letters as intra-Jewish affairs, and to postulate the church as remaining as part of Israel's Gentile clientele with due allowance made for its unique Christ-centred faith. The debate comes down to whether or not we should speak of Paul and Judaism *or* Paul's Judaism!³² Nonetheless everyone admits that Paul still has some degree of tension or difference with his Jewish compatriots in general and his Jewish Christian contemporaries in particular. In modern interpretation these tensions seem to revolve around various conceptions of nomism, supersessionism, and ethnocentrism and they can be configured with a Paul external to Judaism or with a Paul yet within Judaism.

Israel's Problem	Nomism	Supersessionism	Ethnocentrism
Paul <i>contra</i> Judaism	Paul possessed a law-gospel antithesis developed in contrast to the religion of Judaism.	Paul conceived of Christians as a replacement for or fulfilment of Israel as God's people.	Paul established Christian communities separate from Judaism and resisted attempts at bringing them into closer socio-religious proximity to Judaism.
Paul <i>intra</i> Judaism	Many Jews and Judeo Christians would concur with Paul's critique of nomistic stances and nomism only arises in the context of admitting Gentiles into mixed Jew/Gentile fellowships	Paul conceived of Jewish and Gentile Jesus believers as a remnant within Israel who occupy a special place within an irrevocably elected Israel.	Paul believed that the eschaton had dawned in Jesus' resurrection and Jesus had become the way for Gentiles to enter into Israel without having to actually become Jews themselves and Israel must accordingly accept this fact.

Thus the question is: were Paul and his converts in Judaism and what did Paul find wrong with Judaism that Jesus Christ supposedly remedied? The remainder of this study shall proceed to answer these questions.

The Identity of Paul and the Socio-Religious Location of Paul's Communities

In Gal. 1.13-14, Paul writes: 'You have heard, no doubt, of my former way of life in Judaism (ἐμὴν ἀναστροφήν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ). I was intensely persecuting the church of God and was incessantly trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my kinsmen of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.' The crux of the issue is how Paul's current life ἐν Χριστῷ differs from his former way of life ἐν Ἰουδαϊσμῷ. In his conversion/call did Paul simply shift from a pharisaic sect to a messianic sect *within Judaism*, or has he now been dislocated, religiously and socially, *from Judaism*? Along with a number of contributors I sense that Paul, by the 50s at least, did not regard the formal structures of Judaism as the most determining aspects of his identity and mission.³³ Yet Paul did not cease thinking of himself as a 'Jew', 'Israelite', or 'Hebrew'. Thus, the subject of Paul's identity (and Christian and Jewish identity in antiquity for that matter)³⁴ is

³² I owe this to Mark Nanos, 'Paul and Judaism: Why Not Paul's Judaism,' in *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on Paul*, ed. Mark Given (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, forthcoming 2009).

³³ Cf. Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. M.E. Boring; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 21-22; Giorgio Jossa, *Jews or Christians?* (WUNT 202; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2006), 12, 95-102; Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 96-99.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. E.P. Sanders et al. (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (London: SCM, 1981); W.C. van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*

incredibly complex.³⁵ In what follows, I want to analyze Paul's own conception of his identity and the socio-religious location of the Pauline communities in relation to Judaism. I intend to look at several aspects of Paul's letters that point to continuities and discontinuities with his Jewish milieu under the headings: Pauline identity, christology and covenant, and church and synagogue.

The Pauline Identity

Paul's biography was a matter seismic changes in personal identity: beginning life as a diaspora Jew, then Palestinian Pharisee, and finally Jewish Christian Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. So who was he? Paul's representation of himself in his letters is that he is just as Jewish as his Jewish Christian contemporaries and also holds ethnic descent from Israel (cf. Acts 21.39; 22.3). Paul's response to Cephas in the Antioch episode includes the rebuke that 'we who are Jews by nature and not Gentile sinners' which clearly marks Paul and Cephas as Jewish Christians rather than Gentile adherents to faith in Christ (Gal. 2.15). In Philippians Paul famously states that he was: 'circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee' (Phil. 3.5). Paul can even affirm that his own ethnography as Hebrew, Israelite, and Abrahamic is equal to that of the super-apostles who visited Corinth (2 Cor. 11.22). In Romans he says that Israel are, 'my own people, my kindred according to the flesh' (Rom. 9.3) and of himself, 'I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11.1). Paul's conceptual framework including particularized notions of God and intermediary figures, his views of the afterlife and eschaton, his sacred texts and their interpretation, his geopolitics and mission strategy, as well as his piety and gospel are all rooted in the Judaism of the Graeco-Roman world. It seems that he even submitted himself to synagogue discipline on at least one occasion (2 Cor. 11.24), he strove to remain in amicable relations with the Jerusalem church who were still within the orbit of Palestinian Judaism (Gal. 2.1-10; Rom. 15.25-31; 1 Cor. 16.1-3), and chided a predominantly Gentile congregation for anti-Judaism in favour of the interlocking destiny of Jews and Gentiles in salvation-history (Romans 1.16; 11.1-32; 15.8-9). Thus Paul identified his own genealogical and religious origins in Israel and in Judaism, he endeavoured to maintain affable links with the Jerusalem church and Jewish Diaspora communities, and his own thought world was firmly rooted in Jewish texts and traditions. What is more, even in his post-Damascus state he continued to have a particular bond of solidarity with the Jewish nation witnessed in his eschatological expectations (Rom. 11.25-32), his prayer for Israel's salvation (Rom. 10.1), and heart-felt anguish to the point of wishing for vicarious self-anathematization on their account (Rom. 9.3).

in der hellenistischen-römischen Zeit (Leiden: Brill, 1993); S.J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1999); Jörg Frey, Daniel R. Schwartz, and Stephanie Gripentrog (eds.), *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (AGJU 71; Leiden: Brill, 2007); Judith Lieu, *Christian identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); Bengt Holmberg, *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2008).

³⁵ Cf. K.-W. Niebuhr, *Heidenapostel aus Israel: Die jüdische Identität des Paulus nach ihrer Darstellung in seinen Briefen* (WUNT 62; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1992); Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994); James D. G. Dunn, 'Who Did Paul Think He Was? A Study of Jewish Christian Identity,' *NTS* 45 (1999): 174-93; Jörg Frey, 'Paul's Jewish Identity,' in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Jörg Frey, Daniel R. Schwartz, and Stephanie Gripentrog, (AGJU 71; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285-321; Caroline Johnson Hodge, 'Apostle to the Gentiles: Constructions of Paul's Identity,' *BibInt* 13 (2005): 270-88; William S. Campbell, 'Religion, identity and ethnicity: the contribution of Paul the Apostle,' *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 29 (2008): 139-50; idem, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

Nevertheless, much of the cerebral furniture in Paul's mind had been significantly rearranged since his conversion to that point that several of Paul's ideological fixtures were now clearly at odds with his Jewish contemporaries. A good example is that of circumcision as Paul no longer required this of Gentile converts to Jesus-faith. Circumcision was the distinguishing mark of the Jewish male, ordinarily the rite of entry into the commonwealth of Israel for male proselytes, and linked to the Mosaic legislation.³⁶ Paul, however, dissolved the category of Jewish adherent (i.e. 'God-fearers') and accepted uncircumcised persons as full and committed members of the Pauline assemblies and demanded their acceptance even in mixed Jewish/Gentile Christian settings (Gal. 2.1-14).³⁷ In which case, Paul has replaced an ethnocentric nomism³⁸ (e.g. Gal. 2.11-21) with a messianic pneumatology (e.g. Gal. 4.6-7; Rom. 8.14-17)! Paul strikes hard and fast against the soteric invalidity of circumcision (Gal. 5.2, 6; Rom. 4.11; 1 Cor. 7.19; cf. Acts 15.1, 5) but, more potently, membership in the people of God is no longer defined by circumcision but by an inward transformation through faith in the Messiah (Gal. 3.26-29; 6.15; Rom. 8.9-17). The obedience of the uncircumcised can be 'imputed' (λογίζομαι) as 'circumcision' (Rom. 2.26; cf. Phil. 3.3; 1 Cor. 7.19). The Apostle explicitly redefines being a Ἰουδαῖός as something that is not φανερός ('outward') but κρυπτός ('hidden') in Rom. 2.28-29; thus implying a redefinition of the designation so as to include those who are not circumcised (i.e. those who have neither ethnic descent from Israel nor possess the chief emblem of Israel's covenant identity). The value and privilege of circumcision and ethnic Jewish descent are not denied, but they are of little benefit in the face of disobedience to God and rejection of his Son (Rom. 2.25; 3.1-20; 9.1-29). In contrast to 'circumcision', the designations 'Israel' and 'Israelite' were more positive for Paul as they denoted continuity with God purposes and plan first made to the Patriarchs and fulfilled in the economy of God's action in Jesus Christ. The terms relate to God's electing purposes and can transcend ethnic categories. Indeed, Paul's 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6.16) corresponds to some degree to Philo's 'Israel who sees God' which is a philosophical rather than ethnic category for the Alexandrian philosopher (Philo, *Migr. Abr.* 113-14; *Conf. Ling.* 56; *Rer. Div. Her.* 78).³⁹ Paul envisages salvation for the renewed Israel comprising of believing Jews and Gentiles centered around Christ (Rom. 9.4-8; cf. Rom. 3.30; 4.10-12; Eph. 2.11-22) and the whole or part of national Israel in the eschatological future (Rom. 11.26). What separated Paul from other more 'liberal' approaches to circumcision and Gentiles (e.g. Ananias in *Ant.* 20.34-42 or the allegorizers in Philo, *Migr.* 89-94) was three things: (1) the soteriological singularity of God's eschatological deliverance wrought in Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation (e.g. Gal. 2.21; Rom. 8.3), (2) the experience of the Spirit being poured upon the uncircumcised (e.g. Gal. 3.2-5, 14; 4.6; Rom. 8.4-17), and (3) the salvation-historical priority of the Abrahamic promise over the Mosaic Law (e.g. Gal. 3.6-14, 29; Rom. 4.10-11).⁴⁰

Further to this theological transformation, Paul's explication of his own identity points in a direction away from the key nodes of Jewish identity. Obviously the question of who was

³⁶ Cf. Bird, *Crossing over Sea and Land*, ch. 2.

³⁷ In a strange feat of irony, the teachers in Galatia aver that Paul usually preached circumcision but being fickle or merely expedient he misinformed them by omitting their obligation to be circumcised (Gal. 1.10; 5.11), in turn Paul alleges that the teachers are themselves fickle and false when they omit the obligation to obey the whole Torah (Gal. 5.3; 6.13).

³⁸ Cf. Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 117 and Bruce Longenecker (*Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 9-11* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991] 278-79) developed a parallel concept of 'ethnocentric covenantalism'.

³⁹ Cf. Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1996), 11-12.

⁴⁰ Terence Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Conviction World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 215-48.

a Jew/Judean in antiquity is a complex one.⁴¹ Yet if we define Judaism in terms of ethnicity and shared custom⁴² it is evident that Paul relativized the former and denied the efficacy of the latter in view of the saving event of God executed in Jesus Christ. Several features of Paul's construal of his identity suggest that being ἐν Χριστῷ does not negate his Jewish origins, but it does transcend it and even relativize it in relation to a new Christ-given and Spirit-endowed anthropology. That new identity is continuous with his Israelite ancestry, but also consciously distinct from it. For instance, in Phil. 3.7-8 Paul can consider his nationally inherited Jewish privileges as ζημία ('loss') and σκύβαλον ('filth') when *compared to* Christ. It is evident from 1 Cor. 9.20-23 that he considered 'becoming' (γινόμηναι) a Jew (i.e. living like a Jew) just as much a compromise as becoming one 'without law' (ἄνομος) or 'weak' (ἀσθενής) for the sake of his missionary call to herald the gospel.⁴³ The exhortation in Gal. 3.28 with its οὐκ ... οὐδὲ construction which frames the binary pairing of Jew/Greek, Slave/Free, and Male/Female, is not a complete negation of the ontological and cultural existence of the respective tags (e.g. believers do not suddenly cease to be Greek-speaking male freedman), as much as it stipulates their transformation into a shared meta-identity defined by being ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. What is negated is the effectiveness of these tags to become vehicles of separation and superiority. The emphasis in Gal. 3.28-29 (and Gal. 2.19-21; 5.6; 6.15; 1 Cor. 7.18-19; 12.13; Col. 3.11) is not the obliteration of different human identities, but the *inclusion* and *transformation* of multiple identities under a single meta-identity marked by Christ and the new creation. But that can only be true if the existing identities, which are a means of distinction and status, are themselves negated in value and lessened in their ability to cause differentiation.⁴⁴ When this formulation is combined with Paul's remarks in 1 Cor. 10.32 that divides persons in Jews, Greeks, and the church of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1.18-24) it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul conceived of Jesus-

⁴¹ I deal with the translation of Ἰουδαίος further in Bird, *Crossing Over Sea and Land*, ch. 1, n. 10.

⁴² John M. G. Barclay, *Barclay (Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE))*(Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 405.

⁴³ Cf. Richard Hays (*First Corinthians* [Int.; Louisville: John Knox, 1997], 153) 'Since Paul was in fact a Jew, this formulation shows how radically he conceives the claim that in Christ he is ... in a position transcending all cultural allegiances'; Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991-1999], 2.340): 'Paulus wird nicht einfach Jude oder Heide, sondern *wie* ein Jude und *wie* ein Heide, ihnen vergleichbar. Er läßt sich auf sie ein, wird in bestimmter Weise mit ihnen solidarisch. Das erweist gerade das Ἰουδαίος ὡς Ἰουδαίος. Denn wie kann Paulus, der geborene Jude (vgl. Gal 2,15 ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι), erst ein Jude *werden*? Nicht zufällig fehlt ein μὴ ὢν Ἰουδαίος in Analogie zu den beiden folgenden Beispielen. Aber kann er nicht nur etwas werden, was er in bestimmter Weise nicht mehr ist? In der Tat. Weil es in Christus weder Juden noch Griechen gibt (Gal 3,28; vgl. zu 12,13), *ist* Paulus auch als geborener Jude nicht mehr einfach Jude, sondern wird es, "um Juden zu gewinnen".'. Dunn ('Who Did Paul Think He Was?' 182): 'Paul speaks as one who does not acknowledge "Jew" as his own given identity, or as an identity inalienable from his person ... Instead, the term 'Jew' is being treated almost as a role which one might assume or discard'. In contrast, Nanos ('Paul and Judaism') states that 'I understand Paul to be expressing a *rhetorical strategy*, not a change of halakhic behaviour ... I propose that "becoming like" signifies "arguing from the premises" of each'. But I wonder if Nanos has simply exchanged a legal duplicity for a philosophical one (see also Schrage [*Der erste Brief*, 342]: Aber V20b ist auch nicht einfach eine Tautologie oder eine bloß rhetorische Wiederholung von V20a. Eher wird es sich um eine Explikation und Steigerung handeln. Explikation insofern, als das Gesetz den Juden zum Juden macht und das Sein ὑπὸ νόμον für Paulus das ist, was den Juden von Christen unterscheidet. Steigerung aber insofern, als Paulus erklärt, selbst unter den Nomos getreten zu sein, um die Gesetzesleute zu gewinnen. Wie ungewöhnlich und alles andere als selbstverständliche das ist, zeigt die konzessive Partizipialbestimmung μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον. Christliches Leben wird nicht mehr durch die Tora konstituiert und determiniert).

⁴⁴ Michael F. Bird, *Colossians and Philemon* (NCCS; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, forthcoming 2009). See also Nanos, *Irony of Galatians*, 99; Mark Seifrid, 'For the Jew first: Paul's Nota Bene for his Gentile Readers,' in *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 26-27, 37. Cf. Pauline Nigh Hogan, 'No Longer Male and Female': *Interpreting Galatians 3:28 in Early Christianity* (LNTS 380; London: T&T Clark, 2008).

believers as a τρίτον γένος or *tertium genus* (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.5.41.6; Aristides, *Apol.* 2.2): a third race.⁴⁵

Does this mean that Paul is not a Jew? By no means! Paul is a Jew, but by his own admission he is an ‘in-Christ’ Jew. His Jewishness is retained but subsumed beneath and subordinated to being in-Christ. Yet can we say with Markus Barth that, ‘Sein Leben war eines guten Juden Leben: ein Kampf für das Recht des Nächsten’.⁴⁶ Paul himself could have conceivably said so, but I doubt whether that would have been reciprocal from all Jews or from all Jewish Christians who may have regarded him as an apostate or schismatic.⁴⁷ Is Paul, then, in Judaism any longer? Broadly speaking it would seem no. His unique concoction of christology, eschatology, and the transformation of identity could not be accommodated within a common Judaism. Paul consistently characterizes Judaism as ‘pharisaic’ Judaism and regarded this as fundamentally incompatible with the gospel (Gal. 1.13-14; Phil. 3.6-8).⁴⁸ And herein lies the crux, it is precisely the question of Christ and Judaism – the crucified and risen Lord in relation the visible structures, emblems, ethos, and ethnicity of the Jewish people – which perplexed the early Christian interpreters and it became a matter of contention in their own communities. The focal point of debate revolved around how the God given instruments of Torah and Christ related to each other. Should one interpret God’s Messiah in light of God’s Torah or interpret God’s Torah in light of God’s Messiah?⁴⁹ The resulting question, then, is what takes priority: christology or covenant?

Christology and Covenant

For Paul, it seems that what had been a Torah-centred religion in the context of Israel’s Sinaitic covenant has become a Christ-centred religion in the context of the new covenant that is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. Thus Paul, paradoxically, strove to demonstrate tangible links between the Jesus movement and Israel’s religious antiquity (principally through Scripture), yet he also intended to provide an ideological legitimation for

⁴⁵ Cf. E.P. Sanders (*Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 178): ‘Paul’s view of the church, supported by his practice, against his own conscious intention was substantially that it was a third entity, not just because it was composed of both Jew and Greek, but also because it was in important ways neither Jewish nor Greek’.

⁴⁶ Barth, ‘Der gute Jude Paulus’, 132. Nanos (‘Paul and Judaism’) characterizes the consensus of Pauline scholarship as supposing: ‘He [Paul] may have thought of himself as a “good Jew,” but no other practicing Jews would have.’

⁴⁷ Paul’s experience of a synagogue punishment (2 Cor. 11.24), having his mission hindered by Jewish groups (1 Thess. 2.16), praying for deliverance from Jews in Jerusalem (Rom. 15.31), accusations of antinomianism (Rom. 3.8; Acts 21.21), and antagonism from Jewish Christians (Gal. 6.17; Phil. 1.17) do not bode well for Paul being considered a ‘good Jew’ by others. That said Paul, did have a cohort of Jewish Christian supporters and we can safely assume that not all Jews would have been automatically hostile to him (e.g. Acts 28.17-24). See John M. G. Barclay, ‘Paul among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?’ *JSNT* 60 (1995): 89-120; Stanley E. Porter, ‘Was Paul a Good Jew? Fundamental Issues in a Current Debate,’ in *Christian-Jewish Relations Through the Centuries*, eds. S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson (JSNTSup 192; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 148-74; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concern in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 4; Bird and Sprinkle, ‘Jewish Interpretation’, 355-56.

⁴⁸ In this instance Paul seems at one with Josephus who also regards pharisaism as the default position of the Jewish masses (*Ant.* 13.288, 297-98; 18.15). Roland Deines (‘The Pharisees Between “Judaisms” and “Common Judaism”’, in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001], 503) calls Pharisaism, ‘the fundamental and most influential religious movement within Palestinian Judaism’. Dunn (‘Who Did Paul Think He Was?’ 185) thinks that Paul regarded Judaism too much identified with Maccabean views of circumcision and food laws.

⁴⁹ J.L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 124.

the separation of his Gentile converts from the synagogue and their freedom from Torah observances. While precise elements of continuity and discontinuity between the Sinaitic covenant and the new covenant are many and debatable, I intend here to focus on two key texts from Paul that engage this subject: 2 Cor. 3.6-13 and Rom. 10.4-5 as indicative of the macro-structure of Paul's covenantal thinking.⁵⁰

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul provides a further defence of his apostolate by reference to the superiority of the ministry of the new covenant over that of the old covenant. God has made he and others sufficiently capable to serve in the dispensation of the new covenant that is defined not by γράμμα ('letter')⁵¹ but by πνεῦμα ('Spirit'). Immediately, he adds an explanatory remark in v. 7 τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ ('for the letter kills but the Spirit quickens') echoing a thought that he will develop further in Romans (7.5-7; 8.2).⁵² Paul's subsequent argument beginning in vv. 7-11 uses a series of *qal wāhōmer* (*minori ad maius*) comparisons, built around the imagery of Exodus 32-34, to the effect that if the ministry of death and condemnation (Sinai covenant) was glorious, how much more so is the ministries of Spirit and righteousness (new covenant). He asserts that the glory of Moses' face was gradually set aside (καταργέω)⁵³ and the new service (διακονία) has surpassed (ὑπερβάλλω) the older one in glory. The doxological inferiority of the old ministry compared to the new ministry is restated further in vv. 10-11 emphasizing the even more glorious and permanent nature of the new dispensation.

In vv. 7, 11 and 13-14 it is clear that Paul reasons that the transitory nature of the glory that reflected from Moses' face is indicative of the transitory nature of the Mosaic legislation which is replaced with something yet more glorious and more permanent. In v. 7 it is the glory of Moses' face that was καταργέω, while in v. 11 it is that which came *through glory* that was being καταργέω, i.e. the old covenant. The substantive participles designate a dispensation and its temporal status as τὸ καταργούμενον (old covenant) and τὸ μένον (new covenant). Hence, there is a switch from the cessation of the mosaic glory in v. 7 to the supersession of the mosaic service in v. 11. The fading/inoperability of the mosaic glory becomes a metonym for the limitation/ineffectiveness of the mosaic covenant.⁵⁴ The same pattern emerges in vv. 13-14. Moses wore a veil to prevent the Israelites from gazing εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου ('the end that was being set aside). The neuter or masculine substantive participle τοῦ καταργουμένου relates back not to the feminine δόξα ('glory') but to either κάλυμμα ('veil') or the ἀτενίζειν ('to stare'). In effect, Israel's error was its mesmerizing fixation on a face that symbolized a ministry that was already on the way out. In v. 14, Paul applies the analogy to his own time and he contends that the hardening of the Israelites' minds means that the same veil which covered Moses face now covers Israel when they read the old covenant and so fail to understand its transitory nature. They have mistaken that which is preparatory for that which is permanent. That veil is only ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται ('in Christ is taken away'). The net purpose undertaken in vv. 6-14, then, is to

⁵⁰ Markus Barth ('Der gute Jude Paulus,' in *Richte unsere Füße auf den Weg des Friedens* [FS Helmut Gollwitzer; München, 1979], 112-14) cites these same two texts and argues that those who take them to imply that Paul regarded the law/covenant as obsolete, cancelled, annulled, or replaced have 'verachtet und verurteilt mit dem Gesetz die Juden' and consequently 'Mit dem Alten Bund und Testament fallen dann auch die Gottesverheissungen dahin betreffend Nachkommenschaft' (113).

⁵¹ Here γράμμα refers to the ten commandments given the reference to 'tablets of stone' in v. 3.

⁵² Augustine regarded the Epistle to the Romans as a commentary on 2 Cor. 3.6. See his *De Spiritu et Littera* (ca. 412 CE).

⁵³ Cf. BDAG, 525-26; TDNT 1.452-54; EDNT 2.267-68; Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 301-9.

⁵⁴ Hafemann, *Paul*, 329-30.

show that the καταργέω of Moses' δόξα ('glory') is symbolic for the καταργέω of the παλαιᾶς διαθήκης ('old covenant') and the γράμμα ('letter').

Several key implications emerge from analysis of 2 Cor. 3.6-18 for Paul and Judaism. (1) Paul asserts the negative soteriological effect of the 'letter' and 'old covenant'. The 'letter' (i.e. Torah) kills and the old service is associated with death and condemnation. In contrast, the new service brought about by the Spirit brings righteousness and life. The glory of the new also eclipses the glory of the old. The hope that the righteous would share in God's glory at the eschaton was widespread in post-biblical Judaism and Paul attributes its realization to the new epoch of salvation-history.⁵⁵ The hope for transformation and glorification is brought by the Lord and Spirit thus showing that the new covenant brings in the new creation (2 Cor. 3.18). This is why Paul does not minister καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ (like Moses who put a veil over his face [2 Cor. 3.13]), but in a different order of service associated with hope, life, freedom, righteousness, transformation, and glory.⁵⁶ (2) Paul implies the supersession of the old covenant with the advent of the new covenant. The precise meaning and application of the words τέλος (v. 13) and καταργέω (vv. 7, 11, 13, 14) are of course disputed. What is clear, however, is that Paul regards the old covenant as comparatively inglorious, transitory, and ineffective next to the new covenant. The focus in vv. 6-14 is ultimately on the discontinuity between the two covenants. Otfried Hofius correctly suggests that already in v. 6 it is assumed that the new covenant relates antithetically to the old covenant even if 'old covenant' does not appear until v. 14.⁵⁷ The new covenant is the eschatological act of God executed in Jesus Christ, mediated through the Spirit, and enacted by the apostolic ministers. Yet it is impossible to excise all elements of continuity. What is brought forward is precisely a new covenant with the same God who made the first one. The new covenant is the eschatological fulfillment of the hopes expressed in Isaiah (49.8 [LXX]), Ezekiel (16.60, 62; 37.23, 26), Jeremiah (31.31-34) for the *renewal* of the old covenant and Spirit-enacted obedience of the Torah.⁵⁸ (3) The socio-rhetorical function of this passage must be related to Paul's own sectarian context. The intruding super-apostles (2 Cor. 11.5; 12.11) who have come to Corinth with letters of recommendation are ministers of this letter that kills. That is not to say that the intruders are proselytizers as per Paul's opponents in Galatia, indeed they probably have a more sapiential and sophistic form of discourse;⁵⁹ but all the same, when postured polemically against them, Paul does feel the need to make a stark contrast between Jewish and Jesus-believing communities in order to buttress his own authority in opposition to these visitors. Rejection of these visitors necessitates Paul constructing a paradigm of how the old covenant relates to the new and providing an ideological justification for the separation of Jesus-believing communities from the synagogues.⁶⁰ (4) The internal logic of Paul's covenant theology is that the position of Jews under the Torah is implied to be a dire condition. In vv. 14-15, the synagogues in which Torah is read continues to exacerbate the problem of Moses' original audience. As Francis Watson states: 'There, each Sabbath, Moses is read and heard without any awareness that, beneath the surface of the veil, the glory has departed'.⁶¹ What is more, a

⁵⁵ Marvin Pate, 'Erwägungen zum ontologischen Charakter der καινή κτίσις bei Paulus,' *EvTh* 27 (1967): 1-35.

⁵⁶ Hafemann, *Paul*, 352-53.

⁵⁷ Otfried Hofius, 'Gesetz und Evangelium nach 2. Korinther 3,' in *Paulusstudien* (WUNT 51; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994), 75.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hermann Lichtenberger and Stefan Schreiner, 'Der neue Bund in jüdischer Überlieferung,' *Theologische Quartalschrift* 176.4 (1996): 272-90.

⁵⁹ Cf. recently N.H. Taylor, 'Apostolic Identity and the Conflicts in Corinth and Galatia,' in *Paul and His Opponents*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (PAST 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 115-22.

⁶⁰ Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 156-59.

⁶¹ Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 159.

metaphorical veil covers their hearts and impairs their understanding of the very words before them. What is needed then, by those of the synagogue, is to turn to the Lord and have Christ remove the veil for them. That way, they will participate in the freedom bequeathed by the Spirit and so enter into the transforming glory of the new creation that has no reason to be veiled (vv. 17-18). It is probable that Χριστός as the remover of the veil in v. 14 is to be identified with the κύριος of v. 16 meaning that turning (ἐπιστρέφω) to the Lord is essentially conversion to Christ.⁶² In other words, the noetic liberation of Israel and their doxological transformation occurs through Jesus the Messiah.

An additional key text of Paul's covenant theology is Rom. 10.4: τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι ('Christ is the end/goal/terminus of the Torah/Covenant so that their might be righteousness for everyone who believes'). Obviously a central issue is the meaning of τέλος in context.⁶³ The larger and immediate contexts provide crucial evidence of how Paul conceived salvation in relation to Judaism. Paul writes this epistle to a predominantly Gentile church (aware that it will also find its way into the hands of Jewish Christians) in order to garner support for his future mission to Spain, to return to Jerusalem with the Gentile churches of Rome behind him, to defend himself against allegations of being antinomian or even anti-Israel, and to engage in some preventative pastoral care of a congregation that he suspects could fracture over ethnic lines or over *halakhic* issues.

In this apostolic manifesto of the Pauline gospel, Rom. 1.18-32 exhibits a fairly standard Jewish polemic against pagan religion and immorality typical of Isa. 44.9-20 and Wisd. 13.1-19. Paul converges here with what is often called an 'ethical monotheism' of Judaism.⁶⁴ The difference is that Paul will soon say that God's wrath against the nations is also against Israel as well (Rom. 3.5). In 2.1-3.20, Paul endeavours to hold together two paradoxical axioms: God's faithfulness to Israel and God's impartiality in judgment. In Rom. 3.1-3, the apostle affirms the ὠφέλεια ('advantage') of circumcision with circumcision functioning a metonym for the mosaic covenant and Israelite election. What is more, there is no denying the πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ ('faithfulness of God') towards Israel either. These pillars of Judaism are not denied by Paul, but transposed in light of the revelation in the gospel so that the advantage of Israelite identity and the purpose of mosaic covenant are realized in the manifesting of the Messiah through Israel and first to Israel in order to confirm God's promises to Abraham (Rom. 1.16; 9.1-6; 15.8-9). Yet Paul proceeds to undermine a genuine covenantal nomism by arguing, much in line with the Jewish tradition, that mere possession of the Torah (e.g. *m.'Abot.* 1.17; Jas. 1.22-25; 1QS 3.4-12) and physical lineage from Israel (e.g. Mt. 3.9/Lk. 3.8) does not ensure vindication at an eschatological judgment. When such a judgment is made without any προσωποληψία ('favouritism') there is no διαστολή ('difference') between Jews and Gentiles in judgment according to deeds, because all have sinned (Rom. 2.11; 3.20, 22-23; 5.12; 10.12). Indeed, Paul brings further shame on his imaginary interlocutor because an impartial judgment will show that (Christian?) Gentiles are

⁶² Cf. Richard H. Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God* (WUNT 184; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2005), 238-43.

⁶³ In Pauline usage τέλος ordinarily denotes cessation (2 Cor. 2.13; 1 Cor. 15.24), a gradual closure (1 Cor. 10.11); goal or result (Rom. 6.21, 22; 2 Cor. 11.15; Phil. 3.19), or can be used adverbially (1 Thess. 2.16; 1 Cor. 1.8; 2 Cor. 3.13). It is striking, however, that Rom. 10.4 occurs in a context filled with athletic imagery in 9.30-33 so a translation of 'goal' may be the one most contextually appropriate.

⁶⁴ Cf. Jacob Neusner, *The Emergence of Judaism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 74-75 who lists four tenets of ethical monotheism: (1) Creation, Torah as the plan; (2) The perfection of creation and justice; (3) God's will and humanity's will in conflict; and (4) Restoration of perfection. And also Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 493-98.

righteous according to deeds and they are reckoned as inward Jews as well (Rom. 2.13-16, 25-29).⁶⁵

The *exornatio* of Rom. 3.21-26 provides further evidence for matters of continuity and discontinuity. In the new eschatological event (νυνὶ δὲ, 'but now'), the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ('righteousness of God') is being revealed χωρὶς νόμου ('apart from Torah') while simultaneously μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ('being testified by the law and the prophets'). The Torah, as manifesto for the mosaic economy, is nullified as a means of salvation and signifier of election. As Paul says elsewhere, it was a temporary administration of God's grace to govern God's people and to reveal sin until the anointed deliverer came (Rom. 4.13-15; 5.20; Gal. 3.15-4.7). Justification is to be found διὰ/ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ('through/from faith of Christ') and not in ἔργων νόμου ('works of law'). The human response of faith to the God-in-Christ-event replaces the human response of failed obedience to the mosaic covenant as the locus of God's saving action. The upshot of this is that there is righteousness, redemption, and propitiatory sacrifice for everyone who was formerly condemned by the Torah and the scope of God's saving power has been expanded beyond the confines of ethnic Israel (Rom. 3.28-30). Still, continuity remains in effect as God's saving work in the new age is proleptically anticipated and predicted in Israel's sacred traditions (e.g. Hab. 2.4; Gen. 15.6) and Paul can also say that faith upholds the Torah (Rom. 3.31; cf. 8.4).⁶⁶

The employment of the Abrahamic and Adamic stories in Rom. 4.1-5.21 exemplifies the stated principle of Rom. 3.21-31. First, Abraham was righteous by faith and not by works, he was righteous as a Gentile not as a Jew. Thus, all boasting in effort or ethnicity is excluded. Circumcision was a seal of righteousness not a means to it and is a model to Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 4.10-12). This story is applicable to Paul's readers as Abraham had faith in the power of God to bring life to Sarah's dead womb in the same way that Jews and Gentiles look to Jesus as the one whom God raised from the dead (Rom. 4.23-24). Second, Romans 5 is somewhat of a bridging section that recapitulates motifs from Rom. 1.18-4.25 while looking ahead to Romans 6.1-8.17. In Rom. 5.1-11, Paul provides a *complexio* of his thesis and begins to admix some exhortatory remarks as well. Third, the Adam/Christ typology in Rom. 5.12-21 provides an exposition of the adamic condition of humanity that is aggravated rather than remedied by the coming of the Torah. The solution lay in the advent of the second Adam who, by one righteous act, overturned the one transgression of the first Adam and is able to vivify, justify, and reconcile sinful humanity. The grace of God in Jesus Christ does what the grace of the Torah and nation of Israel could not do. The problem was not in God's call of Israel, but the nexus of Law, Sin, and Flesh which rendered the Torah ineffective in dealing with sin. This is explained more fully in Rom. 6.1-8.30 which could be regarded as a commentary on 1 Cor. 15.56-57, 'The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I am convinced by Thomas Tobin that Rom. 8.1-39 needs to be integrated more closely with Romans 9-11.⁶⁷ The link between them is threefold: (1) if divine redemption has arrived with the eschatological advent of the Messiah and the Spirit with the concomitant influx of Gentiles, then why does this inclusive salvation remain so elusive for Israel? (2) How does one have assurance in God's eschatological purposes if the elect nation itself has rejected the offer of the gospel? (3) Who then is 'Israel' if ethnic Israelites have rejected the message? Underlying all of this is the practical matter of how do Gentile believers relate to unbelieving Jews and the apologetic matter of how does the present circumstance of Israel and God's

⁶⁵ Cf. Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 155-78.

⁶⁶ Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 222-23.

⁶⁷ Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 251-72.

promises to the nation relate to Paul's gospel? The 'Israel Question' dominates Romans 9–11 and Paul addresses this in three phases: (1) Israel in the past (9.6-29), (2) Israel in the present (9.30–10.21), and (3) Israel in the future (11.1-36).⁶⁸

The concern of 9.30–10.21 is to explain Israel's rejection of the righteousness of God that has come to all. In regards to 9.30–10.4 we should note that the ideas expressed in 9.30-33 are essentially restated anew in 10.1-4.⁶⁹ The parallel includes:

A	(30) Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη	(1-2) Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέησις πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν. μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν·
B	τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως,	(3) ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν [δικαιοσύνην] ζητοῦντες στήσαι,
C	(31) Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.	τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν.
D	(32) διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων·	(4) τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.
E	προσέκοιψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος, (33) καθὼς γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυθήσεται.	(5-6) Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει· μὴ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου· τίς ἀναθήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν·

- (A) Paul juxtaposes the response of the nations (9.30) and Israel (10.1-2) to God's righteousness.
- (B) The contrast is twofold, first, between Gentiles who did not seek righteousness with Israel that did seek righteousness and, second, between the Gentiles who received a righteousness from faith, whereas Israel sought to establish their own righteousness (9.30; 10.3).
- (C) Despite Israel's efforts she did not attain a righteousness from Law (9.31) and as such she did not submit to the righteousness of God (10.3).
- (D) The operating assumption of Paul is that righteousness is from faith and not from works (9.32), and the reason is that Christ is the τέλος of the Law so that righteousness would come to everyone who believes (10.4). In parallel, ἐκ πίστεως seems to be a metonym for Χριστός, and righteousness by means of ἐξ ἔργων has ended with the termination of the νόμος.
- (E) This argument is validated with scriptural citations including a conflation of Isa. 8.14, 28.16 (9.32-33) about Israel's stumbling and then again by Lev. 18.5, Dt. 9.4, 30.12-14 concerning the inability of persons to satisfy the Law in contrast to the efficacious descent of God's saving word (10.5-6).

⁶⁸ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 321.

⁶⁹ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 309-11, 341-42.

What does this have to do with the meaning of τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς? Matters about the discontinuity between the dispensations of Christ and Torah permeate Romans (3.21, 5.21, 6.14-15, 7.1-6) and the antithesis between the two reaches a climax here. In this immediate setting, Israel's stumbling in the wake of Christ consists of its failure to know that Christ is the *end* of the law itself and that Scripture points in the direction of a righteousness for Jews and Gentiles through faith in Christ apart from works of law. Righteousness is not the exclusive property of Israel because the Torah itself cannot properly be a source of righteousness. Rather, it is the righteousness of God, revealed in Christ, apprehended by faith, which provides righteousness for all. Yet continuity is not fully obviated as Paul endeavours to show the conformity of his message to Israel's scripture (esp. from Deuteronomy and Leviticus) and the parallels between 10.3-4 and 3.20-23 qualify the antithesis as forecast in Israel's sacred traditions. We can conclude that the Law is no more because its *goal* has been attained and, therefore, its operation has *terminated*. This means, as Paul goes on to argue, that salvation is located in the word of faith about Christ and not in the covenantal structures of the mosaic economy (10.6-14).

Church and Synagogue

Paul's articulation of the Christ/Torah antithesis and his concomitant defence of Gentile believers as Gentiles emerge out of a particular social location. Paul's missionary career appears to have included periods of missionary activity oriented to Jews in the Palestine/Arabia (Gal. 1.17; 5.11), Jews and Gentiles in diasporan synagogues while connected with the Antioch church (Gal. 1.21), and focused almost exclusively on Gentiles in his later Aegean mission (e.g. 1 Thess. 1.10). What is more, all of Paul's disputes over circumcision and Jewish observances in relation to Gentile can be situated within intra-diasporan Jewish debates over *halakah* for Gentiles. Still, it appears that Paul soon began establishing Christian congregations that were separate from Judaism and included some persons who had never been part of the Jewish synagogues. As Wayne Meeks states: 'Socially the Pauline groups were never a sect of Judaism. They organized their lives independently from the Jewish associations of the cities where they were founded, and apparently, so far as the evidence reveals, they had little or no interaction with Jews.'⁷⁰ I hesitate in following Weeks on the degree of interaction between Jews and Christians (I think this was far more dynamic and varied depending on the individual contexts in Galatia, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Colossae), yet his central point of independence from Judaism at its formation probably holds true.

Paul's ecclesiology is a form of sectarianism that is built on a mixture of *socio-religious partitioning* and *theological reconfiguration* in relation to Jews and Judaism. The make-up of the Pauline churches undoubtedly included Gentiles and Jews (e.g. Corinth: 1 Cor. 1.14; Acts 18.1-17). Yet if one of Paul's central convictions was that the 'dividing wall' between Jew and Gentile had been broken down in Christ, then, as a matter of course, he was committed to providing an ideological defence of his thesis in order to defend the ethnic diversity of the churches under his apostolate. The ideological texture of Galatians and parts of Romans is that of a religious leader justifying separation from Judaism.⁷¹ Paul's manner of *deviant labelling* (e.g. Phil. 3.2; Gal. 5.12) relates to those who endeavoured to bring his

⁷⁰ Wayne Meeks, 'Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from Jewish Communities,' in *To See Ourselves as Others see Us: Christians, Jews, and 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, eds. J. Neusner and E.S. Frerich (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 106; cf. Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 386): 'In social reality Paul's churches were distinct from the synagogues, and their predominantly Gentile members unattached to the Jewish community'.

⁷¹ Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 51-56.

converts under the aegis of Torah as determinative for their identity and salvation. Similarly, his *reinterpretation* Israel's sacred traditions (e.g. 2 Cor. 3.6-18; Gal. 3.10-29; 4.22-31; Rom. 4.1-25; 9-11) locates divine election through a route other than Jewish ethnicity and locates reconciliation as occurring through Christ. This Pauline sectarianism should not be construed as entailing *denunciation* of Israel or Judaism, to the contrary, Paul is genuinely affirming of his parental religion, and he operates in terms of a promise/fulfilment framework and remains fixated not on Israel's destruction, but her deliverance.

Paul, then, marks a transition from a renewal movement within Judaism to the establishment of a sect on the fringes of Judaism. These communities are not *versus Judaism* but are para-Judaism in the social and theological sense. The 'parting of the ways' between Christianity and Judaism was a complex matter and differed through the centuries, in various geographical locals, and in different socio-historical contexts of the ancient world. Nonetheless, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul greatly contributed to that partings.⁷²

Conclusion: Salvation from Judaism to Jesus

This study has provided a summary of different ways in which Paul's relationship to Judaism can be conceived. As was evident from analysis of Paul's letters, it seems that Paul critiqued various expressions of Judaism including what we would call ethical monotheism, covenantal nomism, and an ethnocentric nomism. That itself raises the question of the socio-religious location of Paul and his communities in relation to Judaism. We saw, first, that Paul's own identity is umbilically related to Judaism (even retaining its Israelite element) but is transcended and subsumed by being 'in Christ'. Second, it is evident from 2 Cor. 3.6-18 and Rom. 9.30-10.4 that Paul emphasized the discontinuity between the epochs of Christ and Torah/Moses in order to provide an ideological justification for maintaining the ethnic integrity of his Gentile converts as Gentiles who worship the Jewish God through Jesus Christ, but wholly apart from proselytism. Third, the Pauline communities were themselves separate from the institutions of Judaism like the synagogues and temple cultus. Though Paul himself seems to have engaged in some limited or spasmodic evangelistic activity towards Jews and pursued unity with Jewish Christians, he established predominantly Gentile Jesus-believing communities that never had been part of the synagogue.

What can we conclude about salvation in 'Paul's Judaism'. For a start, Paul teaches that salvation comes *from* Judaism in terms of its point of origin because Christ himself came from Israel and to Israel. Thus, in the Johannine idiom, 'salvation is from the Jews' (Jn 4.22). In Pauline language, Gentiles have been grafted into a Jewish olive tree and they receive the patriarchal promises only because Christ served (and continues to serve) the circumcision (Rom. 11.17-24; 15.8-9). At the same time, salvation comes *from* Judaism in a more antithetical sense as well because: (1) the Torah has served to antagonize rather than solve the adamic condition of humanity in its state of alienation from God and one should not impose a deadly and defunct force upon his Gentile converts, (2) because the majority of Israel including its leaders have vigorously opposed the message of the gospel, and (3) the Torah's temporal and ethnographic character did not lend itself to being the mechanism by which God achieved his purpose of extending salvation to the nations.

I want to stress to the point of calling anathemas down upon myself that such an antithesis should not be too rigorously prosecuted so as to evacuate Judaism, Israel, and the Torah of its genuinely salvific role in salvation-history, nor to deny the irrevocable call that

⁷² Cf. Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 395): 'Thus, mostly unwittingly, Paul fostered the fateful division between Christianity and Judaism'; Frey ('Paul's Jewish Identity', 321): 'Even though Paul relentlessly worked for the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians, it may well be the case that he actually contributed more to the later split between the increasingly Gentile church and Jewish Christianity'.

God has for Israel. Yet his point of contention was not simply that Judaism needs to let the Gentiles into a Christ-religion while the Jews themselves continue on under the Mosaic religion, nor is it that the eschatological sands had simply shifted and Israel was yet to catch up – it is far more problematic than that – the end had come in Christ and not in Torah. Consequently, everything that Torah was thought to provide, Paul could find in Christ only in a better measure; what is more, when Torah's role in salvation-history is viewed retrospectively through the lens of faith it is seen as oppressive, ineffectual, and temporary.

Finally, it was formerly and famously said by E.P. Sanders: 'In short, this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity'.⁷³ Similarly, Lloyd Gaston said: 'This is what Paul finds wrong with other Jews: that they do not share his revelation in Damascus'.⁷⁴ More recently, Mark Nanos has wryly written: 'this is what Paul would find wrong in Paulinism: *it is not Judaism*'.⁷⁵ But I say unto you: *This is what Paul finds wrong with Judaism, what the Torah could not do due its exacerbation of the sin-flesh nexus and its limited role in salvation-history, God did by sending his son in the likeness of a human being and by bestowing his Spirit as a foretaste of the new creation by making Jews and Gentile co-heirs of Abraham through Christ.* Consequently, for Paul, salvation is of Judaism only in so far as Judaism is of Jesus Christ.

⁷³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552.

⁷⁴ Gaston, *Paul and Torah*, 140

⁷⁵ Nanos, 'Paul and Judaism'.