

Paul, Israel, and the Gentiles

Hermeneutical and exegetical notes

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I. On the hermeneutical situation

The hermeneutical situation of the presence in my judgment unquestionably calls for a note of caution with regard to the subject area mentioned in the main-title. In order to clarify this for oneself and for others, it requires merely a hasty glance at more recent publications, that are concerned with this domain. Naturally they are not quite easily to overview. But some information on three spheres might suffice to gain an impression of the situation. Thereby I distinguish the Paul-discussion of some philosophers (see i) from rather protestant and from catholic discourses (see ii and iii).

(i) Concerning the philosophical considerations, it should be at least briefly pointed out to the corresponding publications of Alain Badiou (born 1937), Paris, of Giorgio Agamben (born 1942), Venice, and of Slavoj Žižek (born 1949), Ljubljana. These Publications, that R. Spinnler put together in December 2008 in the weekly newspaper 'Die Zeit' (17.12.2008, no.82, p. 54-55), were written without exception by atheist thinkers, and it applies without exception to these authors that one has to attribute to them 'the complete unfamiliarity ... with more recent historical-critical and biblical-scientific discourses' (to pick up and to generalize a word of E.W. Stegemann that merely refers to Agamben). Though these facts do not exclude interesting theses, the (bipartite) case at the same time is remarkable precisely under hermeneutical points of view: The personal position, here: not at least each an atheist, is not insignificant for the reception presented, and other perceptions do not seem to have to be integrated – for instance to being able to better judge the validity of the individually expressed interpretation.

At any rate one can possibly escape in this manner from that, what A. Badiou denotes as 'centuries-lasting obscurantism' and as 'churchly patois'. His statements display at least, that Paul can be of considerable relevance for people outside of the church. Thereby play, according to Spinnler's judgment, the 'discontent on political neoliberalism' and additionally 'on the cultural postmodernism era' a significant role. Badiou, who regards the apostle as 'figure of uppermost importance', so emphasizes a factor of our paradox political and social situation. This situation can be approximately described: In spite of the 'global market' (or the 'generalised circulation') 'one increases everywhere the rules and regulations, to prevent the circulation of people', for instance of 'foreign persons'. In contrast Paul emphasizes that phenomenon, that Badiou already emphasizes in the subtitle of his book: 'The Foundation of Universalism', a phenomenon, for which not at least statements like Gal 3.28 (and also Rom 2.10; 1Cor 7.19) are offered. Remarkable thereby is, how

Badiou establishes the relation to the Judaism. He claims, ‘that there is nothing in the scriptures of Paul, that even slightly resembles any anti-semitic statement.’ This seems to be noticed quite freshly!

G. Agamben criticizes the conception of Badiou, inter alia because of the formulation of the spiritual, not fleshly circumcision, as mentioned in Rom 2.28-29, and because of a congruent Pauline differentiation at the term ‘*Ἰουδαῖος*’. From this, according to Agamben, ‘the difference’ may become obvious, ‘that departs’ the Pauline procedure from modern universalism’. But Agamben is close to the Frenchman insofar, as he rejects all attempts on churchly and Jewish side, ‘to display Paul as founder of a new religion’ and so to ‘delete the Judaism of Paul or at least to extenuate it’. In essence the Italian here, too, wants to point out to what he primarily focuses on, also in the book-title alluding to 1Cor 7.29ss. ‘The time that remains’: i.e., ‘the structure of the messianic time’, ‘an aporie’, actually with the ‘special connection of reminiscence and hope, past and presence, abundance and emptiness, origin and fulfillment’. Insofar he emphasizes (like W.D. Davies and afterwards J. Taubes) ‘the fundamental Jewish-messianic character of the Pauline faith’. This is also unquestionable a noteworthy attempt!

S. Žižek puts a similar but slightly different emphasis. One of his book-titles reflecting the subject matter offers a clear hint: ‘The Fragile Absolute’. The author, thinks that he can determine at Jesus, in early Christianity and especially at Paul a disruption with that (Gentile) conception, which ‘experiences today ... in the multiplicity of the New-Age-approximations to nature and the society an artificial renaissance’. This disruption, according to Žižek, occurs with an antique conception which claims ‘the pagan cosmos, the divine hierarchical order of the cosmic principles, that results, if one applies them to the society, in the picture of an corresponding building in which each member is resided on her/his position’. With reference to Luke 14.26 and 1Cor 13 and with an allusion – again – to Gal 3.28 Žižek formulates: ‘It is the love itself that instructs us to separate from our organic environment, or, to speak with Paul: ‘For a Christian there are neither men nor women, neither Jews nor Greeks.’ Again a philosophical glance commands certain respect, not other than it was the case before with the ‘universalism’ and with the ‘Jewish-messianic character of the Pauline faith’!

However, Žižek regards this disruption with the Gentile cosmos-thinking and the emphasis on the love with regard to Paul also as follows: as ‘the suspension of the law's vicious circle and of its law-breaking desire’. The Slovenian further also considers Rom 10.4 in terms of the thesis of the end of the law. As untouched the mentioned philosophical Paul-interpretations seem to be by the youngest exegetical debates – and apparently really are – as much they are finally incorporated in a centuries-long Paul-reception, as this example of the law shows quite plainly. Beyond that it is therefore not precluded that something like ‘churchly patois’ now and then, unintentionally, may

occur at with the just now briefly drafted atheist Paul-interpreters.

(ii) That ‘wing’ of the younger Paul-exegesis, widely one of protestant exegetes, which J.D.G. Dunn not unjustified and unquestionable very audience-efficient has named with the expression ‘The New Perspective on Paul’ in 1982/83, is largely coined by a conviction, according to which certain reception-practices should (partly) be overcome if the apostle's statements are supposed to appear undisguised to some extent. Thereby are not at least those comprehension-traditions scrutinized, which often occur as connected with the name of the reformer Martin Luther, also as connected with something like ‘the’ Lutheranism and with the exegesis deducing from there. The ‘*Gemengelage*’ (K. Haacker) of the coexistence ‘Lutheran and New Perspective on Paul’ (which is, by the way, the main title of a multiple-author work that I published in 2005) does not only entail quite unspoiled new approaches, but also remarkable hermeneutical problems. What concerns these new approaches, it still seems adequately correct to me, to appoint to two items as something like a certain consensus. Ch. Strecker has already formulated them a decade before as follows: ‘1) The quintessence of the Pauline doctrine of justification here is not ... the question for the salvation of the individual, but the question for the soteriological status of the Gentiles’; it ‘is, with other words, primarily about the inclusion of the Gentiles into the salvation of God's people ... 2) The apostle's doctrine of justification will no longer be read as an attack against an alleged “righteous by works” or “legalistic” Judaism’; in this respect room is made for ‘a juster and more appropriate characterisation of antique-Jewish religiosity.’ Nevertheless, complications of hermeneutical nature are already abundantly connected with these two items. Even if one briefly outlines the list for this ‘wing’ of the Paul-exegesis with a few exercised New Testament scholars and assign similar to Strecker, merely Krister Stendahl, Ed Parish Sanders, Heikki Raisänen, J.D.G. Dunn, Nicholas Thomas Wright and Lloyd Gaston (thereby placing the chronological beginning of this research approach in the early 60s of the last century) – if one especially does not include not-Anglo-Saxon exegetes like Klaus Haacker, Mogens Müller and me –, at least three problems would occur:

Firstly, subtleties and differences of conceptions within this ‘wing’ already recede with such an accumulation and this strains and clouds the younger exegetical conversation excessively. E.P. Sanders for instance had already attested the Fourth book of Ezra something like works righteousness – and concerning myself, I addressed in 1994 with a hint to Wisdom 6.18b similar traits in the broader area of early Judaism –. Furthermore, as should be shortly mentioned, the Pauline estimation of the relationship of the Christian community to Judaism is evaluated quite differently for instance by E.P. Sanders and J.D.G. Dunn – and by K. Stendahl and L. Gaston again differently –; formulated with Strecker, ‘a thesis of discontinuity towards Judaism’ and one of ‘continuity towards Judaism’ are placed side by side. The neglect of these subtleties and differences does not necessarily obtrude itself, but may indeed suggest itself due to the catchy formulation of

'*The New Perspective on Paul*'. But for instance with the criticism on Sanders, 'to form a too homogeneous portrait of the Early-Judaism' (St. Schreiber) the question will (as Schreiber himself hints to) not yet be already decisively brought forward.

Secondly, the roughly outlined situation about 'The New Perspective on Paul' seems to postulate a further form of malfunction. With the focussing on certain 'masterminds' like Sanders and Dunn – the more so in the case that one of these exegetes recently has given his opinion on an appointed complex of problems – the dissent in this 'wing' which cannot be denied is often considered as simply decided. So for instance J. Schröter tries to make use of the critical response of J.G.D. Dunn to my interpretation of the syntagma $\xi\rho\gamma\alpha$ νόμου, of a syntagma, that I, as might be known, other than the English exeget, do not simultaneously relate to regulations *and* practices, but exclusively to something like halakhot, and the German scholar proceeds this way, even though I argumentatively rejected Dunn's criticism. Similarly one assumes occasionally a certain completion of the discussion about the here portrayed new approach, so where a new 'Post-*"New Perspective"* Perspective' (B. Byrne) is proclaimed.

Thirdly, the 'Gemengelage' around 'The New Perspective on Paul' naturally provokes a fairly heavy contradiction, since thereby a '(not always fair sketched) "negative-foil"' (J. Frey) plays a role, namely the 'Lutheran Perspective on Paul', more precisely the "'Lutheran" Perspective on Paul'. In this process as a matter of course confessional or theological identities or principles will be touched sensitively – which is why in the meantime systematic theologians, dogmatists (as F. Beißer and W. Härle) chimed in the conversation.

(iii) Conversely, a 'dis-Lutherisation' (M. Theobald) of the Pauline theology could seem thoroughly attractive to catholic exegetes – as far as the not quite insignificant influence of the Bultmann-school, interpreting Paul in a 'Lutheran way', in this area does not tend to prevent this –. Also a (more) positive estimation of Judaism and of the Mosaic law, as it seems to be thereby provided by Paul, suits in the decades after Vatican II, especially then after the passing of the declaration 'Nostra aetate'. However, as much as the holocaust not insignificantly has influenced the previously characterised hermeneutic positions – and this undoubtedly often in a quite adequate manner, adequate to a time of cooperation of *Jewish-Christian* groups (of very significant extent) and of additionally joining Gentile-Christians –, as little does the contemporary catholicism and the contemporary catholic exegesis, concerning Paul and Judaism – also the Mosaic law –, indeed reveal a homogeneous picture. Therefore, the reference to the intensity of the discussions about the just published declaration by 'Gesprächskreis "Juden und Christen"' at the 'Zentralkomitee' of the German catholics (on February the 11th 2009), might suffice; the 'No to missionizing of Jews ...' is here especially justified with regard to statements of Paul.

The look at the realms of discourse which have been destined by some recent philosophers,

by protestant exegetes (as well as systematic theologians, dogmatics), and by catholic theologians reveals easily, how difficult the contemporary hermeneutical situation is, not at least since ‘different perceptions are governed partly by just prevailing main research and partly by brought along traditions and interests’ (K. Haacker) and since thereby with regard to complex data not suitable shortenings adapted to them are used. Nonetheless, in my opinion, if one takes all three realms into consideration, the impression evolves that in the attempt to question the mere updating of interpretation-habits – not to simply take up ‘churchly patois’– , something like an ‘innovative potential’ (St. Schreiber) has become noticeable in the last decades. However: One cannot emanate from this ‘potential’ as if a extensive consensus has been achieved. Rather, it seems to be reasonable and necessary, to follow up some of the previously alluded impulses (see II). This should now be conducted in two attempts, as the questions of the Pauline point of view of Judaism and law as well as of a possible universalism took the center stage: With the example of the Israel-terminology it should be tried to capture the Pauline prospect of Judaism more closely (see II.1); using the examples of the apostle's statements on the topic of the law, the question of ‘freedom of the law’ in Pauline contexts should briefly be considered and furthermore – as well as especially – should be taken into account if the expression ‘works of the law’, that consistently is encountered with negative connotation throughout the Pauline corpus, could have something to do with the inclusion of non-Jews in the salvation-community (see II.2). With all due caution according to our conversational setting it should be suitable, if the questions concerning hermeneutics, dealing with the meaning of the exegetic results for the presence, are only taken up again thereafter (see III).

II. On the exegetical detail

1. On the terminology of ‘Israel’

Naturally the concept with which Paul genuinely or apparently quite instantaneously addresses ‘Jewish’ issues plays a central role concerning our topic. Hardly a statement of the apostle has become of such importance after the shoa as the statement of Romans 11.1: ‘Has God rejected his people? By no means! For I [i.e. Paul] too am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.’ In the widely Gentile-Christian church of the last centuries it had become self-evidently not only to use ‘the language of Canaan’ but – in a certain deviation from this Pauline wording – at the same time to consider oneself for ‘Israel’ and thereby not anymore or not barely thinking about real Jews. In German protestantism for instance one has sung and still sings since the mid 17th century (Matthäus Apelles von Löwenstern [1594-1648], 1644 [Evangelisches Gesangbuch 502,1]):

‘Nun preiset alle Gottes Barmherzigkeit!
Lob ihn mit Schalle, werteste *Christenheit*!
Er lässt *dich* freundlich zu sich laden,

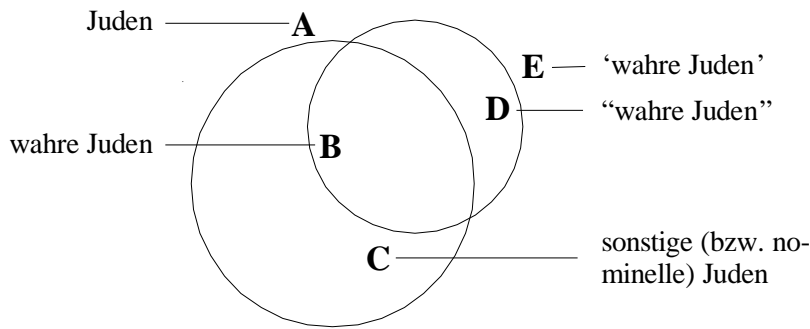
freue *dich, Israel*, seiner Gnaden,
 freue *dich, Israel*, seiner Gnaden.'

Something like that has tradition, more precisely: has a long tradition. One already encounters it in the second century with Justin Martyr. In his 'Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon' the I-narrator, a Gentile-Christian philosopher, says (11,5):

The true, spiritual Israel, and the descendants of [γένος] Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, who though [!] in uncircumcision was approved of and blessed by God on account of his faith, and was called the father of many nations, are we, who have been led to God through this crucified Christ ...'

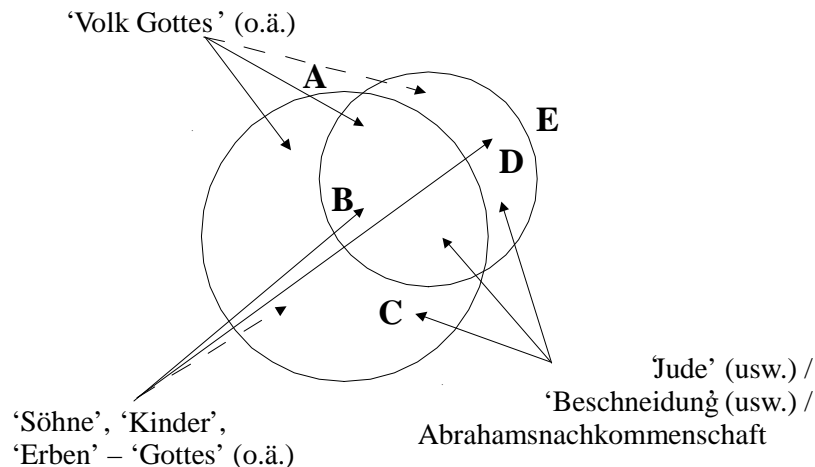
This formulation amounts to something like disinheritance or rather disappropriation of Judaism, and especially this has coined the self-conception of the western Christianity – unfortunately coined. Therefore one can comprehend both well to some extent: (i) That particularly after the holocaust one has tried to strictly distinguish the Israel-statements of Paul, who has been writing in a Christianity that significantly still mainly consisted of born Jews, from the later reception – one might now like to think of the corresponding publications of G. Schrenk and of P. Richardson for instance, but one could also integrate two of my studies (NTOA 40, 1999, 159-189; NTS 48, 2002, 500-512) –; (ii) that furthermore it does not lack of pronouncements of seriously taken exegetes, who interpret in terms of the just concisely outlined tradition – as for instance N.A. Dahl and W. Kraus –. The 'traditionalists' are thereby sometimes determined by a further custom of interpretation, which expresses itself in a more or less anti-Judaic understanding of Galatians and in the thesis of a new, a more Jew-friendly theological level climbed by Paul with the letter of Romans. As well as one can at least understand the continuing customs of interpretation on the field of the Pauline statements on Judaism in principle, as little one can comprehend the neglect of counter-arguments (which meanwhile, fortunately, also result in positive effects, as with S. Schewe, with W.S. Campbell, and now [SNTS-congress 2009] with S. Eastman). To refuse again the thesis of the allegedly anti-Judaism of Galatians, which I not at least opposed with an anthology published in 1999 (namely: NTOA 40) (which is now also available in English [Grand Rapids, MI: W. Eerdmans 2009]), must and can remain undone here. My 'Vorschlag zu einer "mengentheoretischen" Neubeschreibung der ... paulinischen Terminologie' concerning Judaism (namely: NTS 48, 2002, 500ss.) however, be meanwhile concisely depicted by three tableaux, before the exceptional position of the concept 'Israel' will be illustrated with regards to Gal 6.16, especially in due consideration of the here encountering formulation '... peace above them and mercy and above the Israel of God.' I would like to set myself apart especially from more recent statements of M. Wolter (Festschrift G. Bader, Münster/Berlin 2008, 149-161) und A. Du Toit (NTS 55, 2009, 121-143, especially 142-143).

To begin with the first tableau (NTS 48, 2002, 503):



Here one has distinguish the set A, the set of the Jews, from the set E, the set of the Christians (which is in Paul's time even smaller, as it is noted here due to the clarity). With the Jews here nominal Jews (i.e. *merely* nominal Jews), C, are distinguished from true Jews, B, and the term *true Jews*, which has been suggested by Justin especially for Non-Jews, moreover is visualised twice, once with double quotationmarks for Gentile-Christians, D, and once with single quotation marks for Jewish- and Gentile-Christians, E.

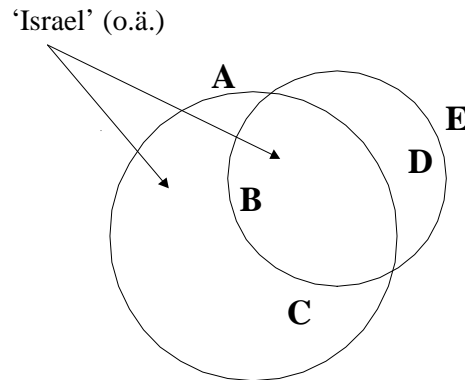
The second tableau (NTS 48, 2002, 507) is more complex:



It indicates that in his vocabulary concerning Judaism Paul, at least to large extent, knows in addition to a literally one also something like a transferred application (i.e., so to speak, particularly also for the subset D). This is unquestionably the case with the word Ἰουδαῖος (see Rom 2.28-29), also with the circumcision-terminology and with the conceptualization of Abraham-descendantship (see Rom 2.26, 29: 4.17-18). In a weakened manner it is in particular valid for the 'sons', 'children' and 'heirs' of God (see Rom 8.14-21), though, however, even with Gal 4.1-5 'a candid characterization of all Jews – ... also the ones belonging to the subset C – as heirs of God (or also as his sons or children) is ... not' simple to state (ibid., 506). Things are somewhat different with the expression 'people of God', more exact: with 'my [i.e.: God's] people' (Rom 9.25, 26), respectively with 'his [i.e.: God's] people' (Rom 11.1, 2; 15.10; 2Cor 6.16); because here, despite Rom 9.25-26,

a clear reference to non-Jews is not at all given, and so Paul says in Rom 15.10 with regard to Deut 32,42 that the nations should rejoice with his, i.e. with God's people – with the Jews. When the apostle goes back to the Old Testament here and also in his five other people-of God-instances it fits in a certain sense to the fact that Paul does not, seen from a traditional-historical point of view, break ranks too with the other terms of this tableau.

Hence, the third tableau (NTS 48, 2002, 510) might be more easy to understand:



On the one hand the apostle proceeds similarly with the Israel-terminology, but even a little bit more radical than in the case of the people-of-God-expression: With his three instances of the 'gentilium' Ἰσραηλίτης (Rom 9.4; 11.1; 2Cor 11.22), of whom one has already been cited, and at least with all 15 Pauline occurrences of the 'ethnicon' Ἰσραήλ beyond Gal 6.16c (Rom 9.6a, 6b, 27a, 27b, 31; 10.19, 21; 11.2, 7, 25, 26; 1Cor 10.18; 2Cor 3.7, 13; Phil 3.5; compare Rom 10.1 *v.l.*; Eph 2.12) the word family is used in a way just not referring on something like the subset D, just not on non-Jews. It therefore seems to be not surprising, that a contextual overlapping is given with λαός (Rom 9.25, 26) and with ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ (Rom 11.1, 2; compare further Rom 10.21). *On the other hand* over 20 years ago P.J. Tomson has described the traditional-historical peculiarity of this term with good reasons as follows: It is 'the cherished, *inner*-Jewish name of the Covenant People'. So far solely the expression of Gal 6.16, ὁ Ἰσραήλ τοῦ θεοῦ, not attested in the Greek literature before Paul, has as a precaution not been accounted for in the third tableau. But this example that belongs to something like a word of blessing could optimally match the other results; in these cases, so we had to notice, with the concept 'Israel' Paul refers consistently to real Jews, just as it is customary in the tradition, and he thereby proceeds similarly to his usage of his reasonably synonymously used expression 'his' or rather 'my people', which in addition interestingly offers in each case a pronoun referring to God.

One is all the more astounded when recently reading M. Wolters thesis, that in this syntagma the genitive attribute τοῦ θεοῦ should like for instance with the expression ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ of Gal 1.13 be comprehended as 'a semantic innovation'. It should be 'probable that Paul intended to undertake a semantic re-definition of the Israel-concept here': 'The supplement τοῦ θεοῦ enables to

define an Israel-concept whose extension is a group that is located beyond Judaism.’ In no case am I to dispute a considerable relevance of a genitive attribute! But not taking account of Jewish-Christians, for instance of a Jewish-Christian like the author of the letter – Paul (merely see Gal 2.15-16; 3.28; 4.26; 5.6; 6.15; compare e.g. Rom 11.1) –, in Wolter’s thesis already cannot convince. This could also be in view by Du Toit who leaves it open whether with the δ Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ in Gal 6.16c the church simply replaces Israel or ‘now included Israelite as well as non-Israelite believers.’ Nevertheless, the South-African scholar speaks of a ‘re-definition of Israel’ in Gal 6.16 and thereof, that Wolter aptly describes it is a ‘semantical re-classification of the Israel-concept’. However, the thesis of the protestant New-Testament-scholar from Bonn barely fits the diachronic and synchronic data to be considered – beyond this it also does not really take into account the contemporary situation of scholarly discussion.

Concerning the claimed ‘semantic innovation’, something like that might barely have begun only with Paul or elsewhere in early Christianity, but rather before that. Wolter has to note this for the ‘church of God’ at least with Nehem 13.1 (2Esdr 23.1: ἐκκλησία θεοῦ; compare e.g. Philo, Ebr 213; compare in addition e.g. Deut 23.2 [ἐκκλησία κυρίου]; Judg 20.2 [ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ]; 2Chr 6.3 [ἡ πάσα ἐκκλησία Ἰσραὴλ]; Sir 24.2 [ἐκκλησία ὑψίστου]; Thr 1.10 [ἐκκλησία σου]; 1QM 4.10 [כּאָ לַהַקּ]), even though he tries to minimize the continuity. For he advocates the hypothesis ‘that the word ἐκκλησία in difference to the use of language in the Septuagint ... suddenly and exclusively in early Christianity was employed as a *group-expression*.’ Already with regard to Judg 20.2; 2Chr 6.3; Sir 24.2 and Thr 1.10 one rather should agree with H. Merklein: ‘Particularly instructive is the syntagma ἡ ἐκκλησία (τοῦ) θεοῦ or κυρίου (הַקָּהָל לַיהוָה), in which ἐκκλησία (לַהַקָּהָל) always has a meaning that goes beyond the concrete gathering, tending at least towards the direction of a group-expression’, ‘particularly because ... the connection of the syntagma with “Israel” (qua God’s people) distinctly protrudes.’

Accordingly, relevant traditional-historical data can be given for the expression of δ Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ, probably first occurring in Gal 6.16. For instance a remarkable phrase of the 18th benediction of the Palestine version of the Schmone Esre, ‘Place your freedom upon Israel, your people [עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל עַמּוּךָ], upon your city and upon your inheritance’, prompts (e.g.) U. Kellermann to the statement: ‘Potentially Paul’s wish of blessing in Gal 6.16 depends on the tefilla’. Furthermore, definitely four real or at least possible points of contact deserve to be mentioned: (i) Also the Jewish formulation of prayer is a kind of closing remark; (ii) it refers to ‘peace’ – in the (latter) Babylonian version it even says: ‘Peace, benevolence and blessing, grace and community loyalty and mercy’ –; (iii) as it seems, it is mentioned more than one group of addressees; (iv) the affiliation of Israel with God is expressed, namely according to the prayer-form, with a second person suffix. Next to the statement of the Schmone Esre other parallels can be indicated (not at least also: 1En 1.8). At the end of Ps 124(125) one can find the words: εἰρήνη ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ (v. 5), and, earlier, v. 2. speaks of δ λαὸς αὐτοῦ (i.e. of the κυρίως). One can encounter the same closing remark also in Ps 127(128) – namely in v. 6 –, and the attention of God for his people is also addressed here within the rearward context (see especially vv. 1, 5; compare v. 4). One is doubtlessly closer to the literary genre of a letter with the interesting and important (Qumran-)document 4QMMT, ending with the following words (C31-32; compare C27): ‘for your own welfare and for the welfare of Israel’ (לְבִרְיַתְךָ וְלְבִרְיַת יִשְׂרָאֵל). Considerably later originated the letter papMur 42, probably written in the ending phase of the Bar-Kokhba-

rebellion. The ‘closing greetings’ (which are merely followed by the signatures [lines 8-13]) of this writing itself concerning economical matters are (line 7): ‘Best wishes to you and to all Beth-Israel’. Thereby interestingly the word שְׁלֵשׁ is used, and just as in 4QMMT C31-32 the blessing is addressed to two groups connected linguistically by ‘and’ – and the Gentiles mentioned in line 5 obviously are not regarded as belonging to (one of) them –. If we look back at the early Jewish formulations compiled in this excursus – and compiled by me also earlier –, it should be obvious that the formulation ὁ Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ from Gal 6.16c at the most only insofar is an ‘innovation’ as the second person singular suffix or the pronouns σοῦ and αὐτοῦ now became so to say a τοῦ θεοῦ (which furthermore has a series of substantive ‘precursors’, e.g. in the expression of ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ in Judg 20.2). Apart from that the just listed passages are so closely related with the Pauline word at the end of Galatians, that a real ‘semantic innovation’ here seems nearly excluded.

Let's return to Paul and thereby to synchrony! Before we talk about the context of Gal 6.16c in this respect, two other moments of the Pauline Israel-conceptualization should be addressed:

(i) The formulation Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα in 1Cor 10.18 belongs to those instances, that in Paul's view deal at least initially with the past (see especially Rom 9.27; 2Cor 3.7, 13) or with the recent past or rather with the presence (see Rom 9.4; 11.1; 1Cor 10.18; Phil 3.5). Wolter, according to whom the ‘empiric Judaism’ is meant here, seems to share this view. However, ‘a group that is located beyond Judaism’ – to cite Wolter's formulation anew – cannot be taken into consideration as ‘semantic complement’, despite the ‘typology’ defining First Corinthians in this context. According to W. Schrage, also according to the theses of W.S. Campbell, the passage (see especially 1Cor 10.7, 9, 14, 19, 22) probably forces to the following interpretation: ‘not Israel as a whole is “Israel according to the flesh” but the idol worshipping [Israel] of vv. 6-10’ (W. Schrage) – and for this reason also the view should be rejected that the passage ‘indirectly reveals the reclamation of the Israel-term for the church’ (W. Schrage).

(ii) As one might assume due to the ‘typology’ of 1Cor 10, invariably or nearly invariably an future dimension appears fairly obviously with the Pauline usage of Ἰσραηλίτης and Ἰσραὴλ (see only Rom 9.4-5; 11.25-26). Still especially remarkable is, that thereby the relation of this quantity particularly to the non-Jews, to the Gentiles, is discussed. This occurs most impressively in Rom 11.25-26 (namely with a succession of [a partly ‘hardened’] Ἰσραὴλ, of ἔθνη and of [πᾶς] Ἰσραὴλ), but also somewhere in Rom 9-11, furthermore in 2Cor 3 and Rom 15.8-12, especially v. 10 [Deut 32,43]!). With this the conclusion recommends itself, that the apostle deals with the terminus Ἰσραὴλ in a different way than with the word ἐκκλησία: In both cases he considers also the non-Jews. But with (ἡ) ἐκκλησία (τοῦ θεοῦ) he leaves out (and this not only in Gal 1.22) such formulations under the above mentioned semantic characteristics, which like τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Judg 20.2) or Ἰσραὴλ (2Chr 6.3) were linguistically able to exclude non-Jews or non-Jewish Christians from this community; however, with the use of Ἰσραὴλ he particularly minds that God united himself and still is united with this people (see especially Rom 9.1-5; 11.1-2) and that

Gentile-Christians, i.e. non-Jews, owe their new status particularly to this phenomenon of 'Heilsgeschichte' (see especially Rom 11.25-26; 15.8-12).

The literary context of Gal 6.16 now confirms the attained impression. At least two traits of this fairly polemic document must indeed – other than usual - not be withheld: (i) The narrowing of the Abraham-descendants through the *one* 'seed' Christ in Gal 3.16 does not at all prevent the apostle – as we already touched on – to refer back to and to insist in Gal 4.1-7 (compare already Gal 3.29!) that especially and firstly *Jews* fall in the category of κληρονόμος. (ii) The 'we' from Gal 2.15-21 (more exactly: 2.15-17a) which refers to Jews (thus excluding other persons) is taken up in Gal 3.1-4.7 and it expresses insofar the temporally and factual priority of Jews (Jewish-Christians) over non-Jews and over Gentile-Christians; these are addressed to only at the completion of the three levels of argumentation 3.1-14; 3.15-29 and 4.1-7 (3.14a; 3.26-29; 4.6a), partly by a 'you', and are also incorporated twice (3.14b; 4.6b) by an including 'we'. Concerning Gal 6.16 itself, already before the καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ a blessing is enunciated for those who will live according to the guideline of v. 15 – 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but new creation!' –. The just quoted καί, the last of this verse, by W. Kraus is regarded as καί *explicativum*; but this view has to be ruled out. *On the one hand*, Paul nowhere else uses this kind of an exegetical καί. *On the other hand*, he addressed beforehand, as we have already seen, in Galatians the 'heilsgeschichtliche' connection of Jews (Jewish-Christians) and Gentiles (Gentile-Christians). This guideline – prepared also traditionally-historical (see only Isa 2.1-5; Tob 14.5-7) and occurring too in Rom 9-11 and Rom 15.8-12 is thus obviously taken up. (One should not deviate from this exegetical estimation since Rom 4.11-12 suggests a similar succession as answer to the question of v. 9, namely that the macarism [of vv. 8-9] goes out ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροβυστίαν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν περιτομήν.) Exactly at such a connection does Gal 6.16c aim with its καί (which corresponds to the 'and' in Rom 4.9). Thereby Paul clarifies at the end of his quite harsh letter to the Galatians, that his opinion against the circumcision of Gentile-Christians (Gal 5.2-4; 6.12-13) is not at all an opinion against the 'heilsgeschichtliche' fixing of the gospel in Judaism (Gal 4.4) and also not an opinion against promises of God addressing especially Jews (see only Gal 3.28-29). The quantity ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 1.13[-17]; compare Rom 16.16) that refers particularly to the Christ-event therefore does not dishonour what is expressed with the ceremonial expression ὁ Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ about God's past and future attention to the Jewish people. With the adoption of the traditional blessing Paul obviously intends to protect his contemporary addressees not at least from an anti-Judaic misunderstanding of his polemics.

Summarised: Very differently than it has often been interpreted, and very differently than recently especially M. Wolter again has interpreted, even Gal 6.16 and particularly Gal 6.16c conforms, if one takes a closer look, to the manner Paul otherwise defines the relation(ship) of the

Christian community of Jews and non-Jews towards Judaism, for instance – but not exclusively – in Romans (compare [again] especially Rom 1.16; 3.30; 4.9-12; 9-11; 15.8-12, further Gal 3.1-4.7, especially 3.28): Ἰσραήλ refers to real Judaism, and the wish in Gal 6.16 will be effortlessly, without superficiality compatible with the formulation in Rom 11.26-27 (compare Isa 27.9; 59.20-21), according to which – however – ‘all Israel will be saved’ (Rom 11.26a).

2. On the terminology of νόμος

There have been written countless books and essays on the topic of the law in Paul, on his usage of the term νόμος and also of the syntagma ἔργα νόμου, and still we seem to be fairly distant to a scientific consensus in this field – even in the area of the ‘wing’ which I introduced initially citing J.D.G. Dunn as ‘The New Perspective on Paul’. The consensus is lacking even in spite of or because of the remarkable fact, which F.W. Horn (not without good reasons) describes as follows: ‘The exact definition of what should be understood by ἔργα νόμου, provided the so called *new perspective* with an issue in which all problems, that it originated, converge in odd ways.’ That the circumstances prove thus to be complicated is due to the largely difficult hermeneutical situation that has been addressed to also at the beginning. For instance our western habits of comprehension, concerning the Pauline terminology of law, are substantially co-determined by Augustine and reformational Paul-reception, further by the medieval *opus*-terminology – descending also to confession-formulations (compare for instance *Confessio Augustana* [abbreviated CA], here the articles IV and VI). For the ‘New Perspective on Paul’ a dissent between J.D.G. Dunn and me, has to be added. It has risen quite early, and seeming rather inconspicuously, however on the background of 2000 years ecclesiastical and theological history it may be of some importance. Contemporary, as already mentioned, this dissent is often solved by agreeing to the famous New Testament scholar of Durham – who commented sooner on the subject area than I did and who considered, and as I assume still considers, in contrast to me, the genitive connection ἔργα νόμου, not only as regulations, but as regulations *and* as deeds fulfilling (or neglecting) these regulations. A connection with Dunn is therefore doubtlessly an option for a ‘more traditional’ ‘solution’. In the following I would like to highlight my perception – as it may suggest in the ‘introspective West’ and hopefully be reasonably tolerable – in a somewhat autobiographical manner (see i); after that I briefly dwell on the apparently more or less law-critically comments of Paul (see ii), in order to enlarge then upon the expression ἔργα νόμου (see iii) and to eventually quickly address further particularly those plural phrases of the apostle that seem to be ‘somehow’ connected with the law (see iv).

(i) Two decades ago – and in the beautiful black forest, by the way – I worked on my postdoctoral dissertation on Gal 2.15-21, and so I had to deal with the syntagma ἔργα νόμου, occurring three times in Gal 2.16; but this expression remained difficult to me. Nonetheless, I read

articles written by Dunn, and I became aware of his formulations ‘identity’ and ‘boundary markers’ concerning this matter. Besides, I then came upon a short comment of D. Flusser from the year 1987 that adverted to (at least) one extra-Pauline parallel: ‘For the expression “the works of the Law” in DSS see E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, “An Unpublished Halachic Letter from Qumran”, *Biblical Archaeology Today ...*, 1985, pp. 401 and 406, note 5.” There I also found a more precise naming, or counting of the respective ‘Qumran’-fragments, 4Q394-399, and of the writing to be reconstructed from them, as both authors suggested, namely 4QMMT; incidentally Dunn alluded to it in 1988, pointing (inter alia) on an ‘unpublished 4Q text’ as evidence for ‘deeds of the law’ ‘in the Dead Sea Scrolls’. Via E.W. Stegemann, Basel, who brought in H. Lichtenberger, at that time Münster, I relatively quickly and fortunately came by an ‘unauthorised edition’ of 4QMMT that emerged in December 1990 in Krakow, and M. Hengel, Tübingen, kindly gave me copies of two transcriptions (including an appropriate translation-suggestion of H. Stegemann) for the particularly important passage with the expression ‘works of the law’ – which can be found in that line, which then only according to the 1994 edition, brought forward by Qimron and Strugnell, is denoted as 4QMMT C27. That summer, 1989, I therefore was conscious of two things: *On the one hand*, it was now possible to name a quite obvious parallel to the expression ‘works of the law’, a parallel independent from Paul, indeed decades before him, and it does not occur in Greek but in Hebrew – and exactly this analogy was assumed before (above all by P. Billerbeck) yet not verified –. *On the other hand*, it seemed indistinct with the analogical Hebrew expression, whether one should relate it to regulations or (also) to the action(s) realizing them (or rather disregarding them); Qimron and Strugnell (and then also the Krakow edition) translated (already in 1985) with ‘precepts’ or with ‘precepts [of the torah]’ and Dunn – whose just addressed article of 1988 does not offer a reference to Qimron and Strugnell – mentioned besides ‘deeds of the law’ inter alia ‘covenantal obligations’ and ‘commandments’. The sensational fact and the, on the background of the history of theology – it’s enough to mention again the ‘good works’ of the Middle Ages (and also of CA IV)! –, probably not unimportant question of translation, naturally alerted me. There possibly might lie an interesting angle of interpretation! I tried to trace the semantic problems meanwhile primarily with the help of the Pauline contexts, thus essentially synchronic, alongside then of course also diachronic. In the postdoctoral dissertation of 1989, which was then published in 1992 (WUNT 59, p. 100), I came to the conclusion, that ‘the commandments and prohibitions of the tora’ be meant. In principle, I’ve retained this proposition ever since, however altered it slightly, inasmuch as I shortly – now still closer to the sociological impulse of Dunn – deemed to represent the proximity of the Pauline expression to what the New Testament scholar of Durham defined with ‘identity’ and ‘boundary markers’ of Judaism. My ‘comprehension of the phrase ἔργα νόμου ..., according to which halakhot are meant here’, is not consistently taken up, as already mentioned, in fact it is partly briefly – as it

seems to me too briefly – rejected, partly also very fully, particularly by O. Hofius. In light of the difficult hermeneutical situation with regard to this syntagma, which has become so important in the history of the church and is especially interwoven in the process of separation between Lutherans or protestants and ‘catholics’ (see again CA IV), I am admittedly still very glad, that the thesis, initially astounding, in the meantime has won some attention. A not humble number of – partly absolutely prominent – scholars agrees with it or at least comments in the sense of the thesis. Some names should be named after all: Pierre Grelot, Miguel Pérez Fernandez, Romano Penna, Jean-Noël Aletti, Holger Sonntag, Johannes Woyke, Volker Stolle, Mogens Müller and Ulrich Wilckens; the conception is also assented to with cautious words by Eduard Lohse and Jörg Fey. By the way: I developed this semantic possibility in 1989, and this under quite favourable circumstances; but in principle it is significantly older, as it has been especially represented in a ZNW-article written 1929 by E. Lohmeyer, and it is by no means unbeknown to the patristic exegesis. If there should be something to this thesis, then the apostle's consistently negative connotation of the ἔργα νόμου could possibly be understood like this: Paul refuses with the statements – given only in Galatians and Romans – the opinion that regulations like the requirement of circumcision are also valid for Gentile-Christians. These halakhot were by *no means*, according to the apostle, meant for these people: non-Jews, Gentiles (with the faith in Christ) ought to be included just as non-Jews in the salvation-community, which insofar then indeed would have an universal feature.

(ii) Under the 118 Pauline νόμος-references besides the eight appearances of ἔργα νόμου occasional harsh formulations occur; one should however preferably not simply blend them in one pot with the ἔργα-νόμου-formulations, which, as it might be, could be related to ‘the inclusion of Gentiles’ (T.L. Donaldson). There are unquestionable several pots – as for instance one for phrases sounding positively. In this pot one could place at any rate the remarks on νόμος and commandment of love (Rom 13.9-10 [here also a hint to the ethical decalogue]; Gal 5.13-14 [compare 5.23, further 5.6]; compare also 1Cor 9.21; Gal 6.2, further Rom 3.27cβ; 7.12, 14, 22 [compare v. 25]; 8.2a). As well, otherwise it does not lack references that reasonably fit into this pot: for instance Rom 2.14 and 8.4, beyond that statements in which with νόμος one refers to the ‘Old Testament’ or the Pentateuch (especially 1Cor 9.8-9; 14.21, 34; Gal 4.21b; compare e.g. Rom 3.19, 21b; 7.1). Unquestionable not simply positive are the phrases in Rom 7.23 and 8.2 about the ‘law of sin (and of death)’; that the expression ἕτερος νόμος in 7,23a encounters, causes after all to think about the deposition in a different pot. With other formulations one should arguably be cautious, to consider them as merely *negative* in regard to the law, for instance, where the cooperation of law and sin, better: of sin and law, is involved (e.g. Rom 5.13-14; 7.1ss.; 1Cor 15.56); because to loosely circumscribe Rom 7.7-14 (compare 3.20; Gal 3.10): The mirror is naturally not responsible for my wrinkles, even though it makes me conscious of them. This cooperation of law and sin is now –

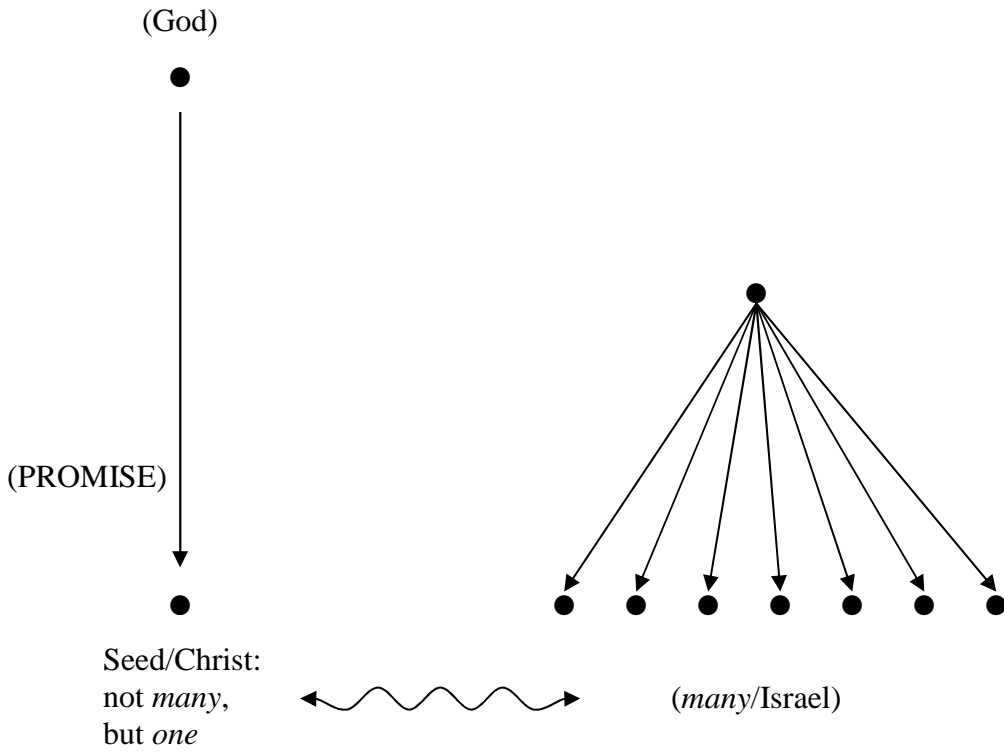
according to Paul - considerably affected by the Christ-event, that according to Gal 2.(15-)17 leads even Jews to a confession of their being sinners and that according to Rom 3.(21-)23 generally forces to the sentence: ‘all have sinned ...’ Who for this reason requires ‘justification’ through Christ and engages it, may not require it any longer from the law, so particularly Gal 5.4. Inasmuch as the Christ-event definitely connects law and sin, the apostle gives statements which are willingly understood in the exegesis as criticism of the law and as appeal to (complete) ‘freedom of the law’. This, however, is at odds with the results accumulated here, and in detail more questions unfold. At least three contexts of this field should be touched upon: the Pauline formulation (occurring in Rom 6.14, 15; 1Cor 9.20; Gal 3.23; 4.4, 5, 21a) ὑπὸ νόμον (see γ), the involvement of angels in the legislation according to Gal 3.19-20 (see β) and the phrase τέλος ... νόμου Χριστός (see α) in Rom 10.4. In my opinion *none* of these contexts is a matter of radical criticism of law, and insofar it is arguably not a question of complete ‘freedom of law’. Determining is in fact throughout that the Christ-event (for instance according to 1Cor 15.3b[-5]) suggests the following: Even the law, the Mosaic tora, is *de facto* not capable of giving ‘life’ and of imparting ‘justification’ (compare especially Gal 3.21c-22).

(α) Hence, in Rom 10.4, to begin with this item, the Christ-event is unquestionably emphasized. However, in the light of the syntagma ‘law of God’ in 7.22 (compare again especially 13.9-10) the expression disputed here will hardly be translated with ‘end/ending of law’. Additional, the formulation and vocabulary of Rom 10.4 with τέλος barely causes to think firstly of ‘end/ending of the law”, but the formulation, as K. Haacker with reference inter alia to 1Tim 1.5 has probably convincingly reasoned, rather refers to teleology; Christ therefore should here be somehow understood as the goal of the law.

(β) The contemporary still dominating perception of Gal 3.19-20 can be briefly and clearly described with Hübner as follows: ‘The nomos derives from demonic angle-powers’. A significant role here befits a special interpretation, which has been on the market with the commentary on Galatians by H. Schlier since 1949 (and which he already mentions in a letter to R. Bultmann in 1939 [19th of August]). Schlier claims the presence of imaginations of ‘early-gnostic’ provenience, and this suggests, that v. 20 according to this exegete seems to mean that the one, the mediator (‘The figure of a μεσίτης’) exists ‘not amongst one’, ‘but that God is one’. Therefore should ‘the peculiar idea of a multiplicity in God’ be assumed, whereby one seems to have reached the gnosis and thereby also negative deities. This all seems very far-fetched to me: We encounter the angels within the legislation for instance in Acts 7.53 and in Heb 2.2 (compare for example Josephus, Ant 15.136, further Deut 33.2LXX; Ps 68.18) and there they underline the impact of the legislation. In Gal 3.19 is not even expressively the speech of a *multitude* of angles (different for instance: Ps 68.18), whereas, on the other hand, earlier in v. 16 it has been talked about a multitude, yet, with

regard to the *many* (Jewish) *descendants* of Abraham; there the *one* descendant, Christ, was opposed to them. As furthermore with the 'one' God of v. 20b it is hinted to the Schema 'Jisrael in Deut 6.4, the outcome is: The '*one*' god causes the Christ-event as well as the law, and as the Christ-event according to v. 8 (compare generally v. 6-9) is valid for 'all nations', the God of the law (or of the legislation) simultaneously is the God of the whole world. A tableau developed by me firstly in (1997 and) 1999 might clarify this issue (NTOA 40, p. 119 [and p. 122]; transl. p. 74 [and p. 81]):

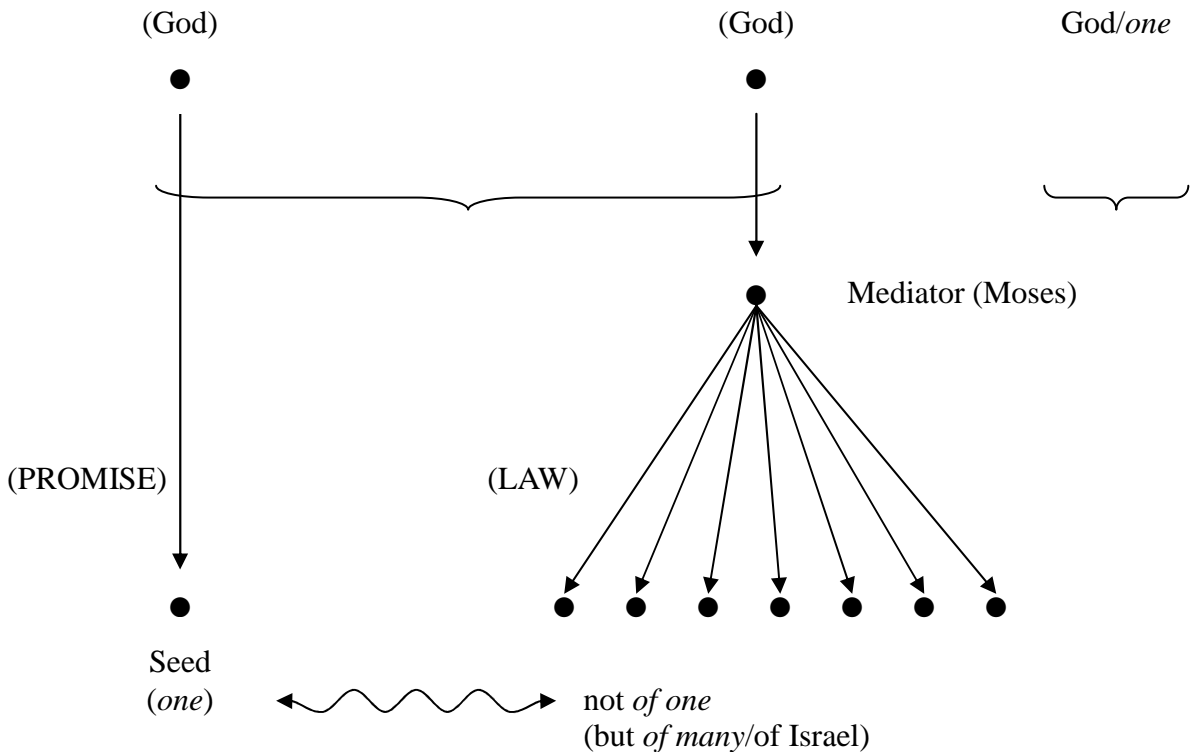
3:16



3:19bβ

3:20a

3:20b



However, so the irrealis in Gal 3.21b: The law *cannot* make vivid – on the contrary to the Christ-event (compare v. 22).

(γ) Insofar according to Gal 4.4-5 Christ is γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, those who according to 3:23 have been up to that point just ‘under the law’. Wanting to equate with them as Gentile-Christian would be delicate – so 4.21. Conversely, the Jewish-Christian Paul speaks in 1Cor 9.20 of being himself compatible ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον to meet other Jews, however, without himself still being ὑπὸ νόμον. Notwithstanding, so v. 21, he is not ἄνομος, rather ἔννομος Χριστοῦ.

In short: The terminus νόμος usually is not really used negatively by Paul. But the Christ-event allows to comprehend the conviction as illusion that the law itself could give ‘life’ (compare again Gal 3.21c-22). On the other hand the Christ-event (that somehow deals with Jesus’ love [see Gal 2.20]) causes that Christians – this at least is the apostle’s conviction! – lovingly meet the tora (see again Gal 5.13-14).

(iii) The syntagma ἔργα νόμου which has become so meaningful and which now should move over to the centre of this paper, occurs only eight times in Paul, namely in Rom 3.20, 28 and in Gal 2.16a, 16b, 16c; 3.2, 5, 10. Thereby seven times it says ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (compare Rom 9.32 *v.l.*) and only in Rom 3.28 χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου. My thesis, namely that consistently prescriptions, and not individual actions, are meant, draws synchronically inter alia upon items, which already E. Lohmeyer had observed: Nowhere in these passages a personal involvement of a possible agent is indicated by a personal-pronoun, and, moreover, a qualifying adjective is missing consistently, which could describe an action here, for instance as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. In addition, a certain parallelism of ἔργα νόμου with νόμος has to be noticed (see only Rom 3.10, 21, 27, 31; Gal 2.[19 and] 21). Further, the familiar *crux interpretum* in Gal 3,10 then becomes irrelevant, when in v. 10a not fulfilments of the tora are addressed, and similarly the reference in Rom 3.20b to v. 20a which is signalled by γάρ becomes completely clear, as soon as the formulation introducing the verse does not concern the actions according to tora-directions, but just regulations of the tora. They are possibly also in view in the expression (ὁ) νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων suggested by Rom 3.27b (compare Eph 2.15), and in Rom 2.15 the singular τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου might be referred to something like a sum total of the prescriptions of the Mosaic law.

To this, in my opinion, very formidable bundle of arguments, to discover synchronically, one has to add diachronically, besides a considerable number of not insignificant findings – inter alia Exod 18.20; Apc 2.26; TestLev 19.1-2 – now still 4QMMT C 27. This should be the more so as the here encountering expression מקצת מעשי התורה at least formally complies closely with the Pauline ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (insofar, as מקצת [precisely: מקצתם] in Dan 1.5LXX is reflected by ἐκ). Moreover, that

(Aramaic-)Hebraic formulation finds its counterpart in 4QMMT B1 (compare B2: ‘works’) and C30 in the expression *מקצת דבריני*, and thereby it deals unquestionably with the specific halakhot itemized in this writing, which are estimated as obligatory within the radius of the addressor and the persons around him, thus potentially on the part of the ‘teacher of righteousness’ and on the part of the (‘Qumran’-)community. Three aspects that in the document 4QMMT might be particularly illuminating for the Pauline usage of the syntagma *ἔργα νόμου*, should be mentioned:

- As then at the apostle (Rom 4.3 [compare v. 9]; Gal 3.6) also for instance in 4QMMT C28 questions concerning the tora are dealt with;
- like Paul 4QMMT C31 adverts, to say it thus, to Gen 15.6 (compare especially Ps 106.31; 1Macc 2.52);
- not other than in Paul (see especially Gal 3.10 [compare v. 12 and Rom 10.5], with reference to Lev 18,5) a verb relating to the doing, *עשה* (compare further for instance TestLev 19.2), encounters in 4QMMT C31 within the context of the phrase ‘works of the law’.

So the thesis of the *ἔργα νόμου* as halakhot obtrudes itself massively. Because in 4QMMT, if one takes a closer look, something like the ‘we-group’ around the author (B1; C7) hopes to get a ‘you-group’ (for instance B68; C8; compare for instance C26.28: you singular, further C27.31-32) that sides with the ‘we-group’ in respect of the rendered halakhot (see especially C30), whereas obvious reservation exists towards a ‘they-group’, one has seriously to take into account also for the Pauline syntagma the option ‘boundary markers’. Therefore in a pre-Pauline early-Christian tradition, as it can be assumed behind Gal 2.16, potentially come inner-Jewish ‘boundary markers’ into consideration, not other than in 4QMMT. The apostle himself within the context of his references to *ἔργα νόμου* deals, however, with the prescription of circumcision (compare to this in Romans [besides Rom 2.14; 3.29; 4.16-18] only the juxtaposition of *περιτομή* [Rom 2.25, 26, 27, 28, 29; 3.1, 30, further 4.9-12] and *ἀκροβυστία* [Rom 2.25, 26, 27; 3.30, further 4.9-12], in Galatians the statements in Gal 2.3, 7-8 [also also in vv. 6, 9-10], further in 5.2-3; 6.12-15 [as well as in 3.28]), in Galatians (see Gal 2.11-14) also with dietary laws. Insofar, I think: The reason for connoting the ‘works of the law’ negatively is, that regulations as the prescription of circumcision not shall be imposed on Gentiles and Gentile-Christians. I.e.: The inclusion in the salvation-community does not entail the appreciation of such halakhot by non-Jews and therefore does not request their conversion to Judaism. The only condition indeed is Christ or rather the faith in Christ (see merely Gal 2.16).

So a reasonable abundance of indication has been presented, to take up the formulation Dunn's of the ‘boundary markers’ and to think of the Pauline *ἔργα νόμου* more precisely of something like the halakhot, thereby primarily to think of those halakhot that in particular in the

first century of the common era could be regarded as differentiating between Jews and non-Jews. In light of this I am wondering a little, to put it bluntly, that Dunn up to now, as it seems to me, has not taken this little, but as it appears to me, anything but unimportant step beyond his earlier manifestations (given for instance in 1988) relating to this topic. Also the ‘method’ mentioned above to I regard as (self-)immunization, i.e. the ‘method’ to re-advert to his, Dunn’s, betimes also to his and to Hofius’ repudiation of my thesis, so to speak in terms of *Roma locuta, causa finita* (Augustine, Sermones 131,10), and this generally without reference to the (since that time) formidable group, that not other than I is pointing at halakhot. Such an approach astonishes me all the more, as the reason given by Dunn by all means did not convince me and does not convince, as I have published more or less scarcely – and recently I argumentatively countered as well Hofius’ respective paper (or rather his respective papers).

Concerning my answer to Hofius (NTS 55, 2009, 35-54), that offers further material besides the points just presented, the echo regarding the ἔργα νόμου is exclusively positive until now; especially two confirmations have pleased me. A scholar in New Testament and Judaism, grown up in Tübingen, writes: ‘Concerning the philological line of reason ... I can hardly contradict you’, and a not unimportant Old Testament scholar adds to his very friendly vote an additional argument: ‘Maybe, concerning the Hebrew Old Testament, in your favour, Lev 18.3, 4 still should be referred to. Here “ma’sē” means ... in Lev 18.3 certainly as much as “customary practices, operational-conventions” (in Egypt and Canaan), contextualised by “huqqot”. In v. 3 and v. 4 “asa ma’sē” and “asa mischpat” stand parallel.’ These latter observations comply with Gal 3.10-12 – and also with my NTS-article on this, published in 2007 –, for Gal 3.12 refers to Lev 18.5, a formulation that on its part includes vocabulary of the preceding verses.

With regard to Dunn I here will solely refer to his criticism in the closing article of the anthology edited by me with the title ‘Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive’ (WUNT 182). Two aspects of my reasoning are not clear to Dunn (ibid., 397-401): the philological division of the ἔργα νόμου understood as halakhot from ἔργα in terms of actions (see α); the theological impact of the distinction (see β). Let’s begin with the in the narrower sense semasiological item – after having recorded beforehand to two further similarities between Dunn and me, here not addressed up to now, but fairly remarkable, namely that, on the one hand, a close connection between the formulations ἐξ/χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου and – short of νόμου – ἐξ/χωρὶς ἔργων (the latter can be found in Rom 4.2, 6; 9.12, 32; 11.6) exists and that, on the other hand, in Paul in any case ‘on some occasions “works” can be seen as referring primarily to regulations, prescriptions’ (ibid., 401).

(α) That with ἔργα νόμου for instance in Gal 3.10a prescriptions are in view, can be seen with some probability from the counterparts, that this plural expression finds in v. 20 in τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου and also in the following pronoun αὐτά (compare v. 12), and

the Hebrew vocabulary of Lev 18.3ss., that has been just mentioned, confirms this result, especially as Gal 3.12 (compare Rom 10.5) ties in with it. The action has just as in Lev 18 also in Gal 3.10-12 to be distinguished from the instructions which have to be obeyed. And it would be a fallacy disproved by countless examples – among them the ‘stone of stumbling’ from 1Petr 2.8 (compare Isa 8.14), of course not belonging to the field of mineralogy –, wanting to claim from *nomens regens* of a genitive connection a necessarily closely connected meaning of the syntagma. If Dunn says, the ‘spectrum of meaning’ is in this case ‘a continuum’, it clouds the minds; for the spectrum embraces here for ἔργα (νόμου) with ‘actions’ and with ‘regulations of the tora’ two different meanings/sememes, which have to be semasiologically distinguished – as a test of polysemy might indicate without question –. To acuminate it strikingly: One should better not mistake green traffic lights for a pedestrian, who crosses the street according to the signal, and the reversed case, to stick with this example, would be even worse.

(β) This brings forth to Dunn’s claim, my differentiation be of irrelevance. The contrary is the case! (And the tohuwabohu in the discussion we addressed at the beginning is probably to ascribe to the factor of this [seeming] unclear point, complicating the hermeneutical situation!) Two items seem to be of special importance with regard to the so-called Pauline doctrine of justification. *On the one hand:* When ἔργα νόμου at least primarily deal with something like Jewish ritual instructions, it is more comprehensible as usual why Paul, as we have already seen in (ii), can talk so positively of the νόμος as in Rom 13.8-11 and why he, moreover, as we will forthwith regard briefly in (iv), uses other plural phrases like τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου (Rom 2.26) in an unrestrained positive sense. With this differentiation and with the negative connotation of ἔργα νόμου it becomes clear, whereupon the corresponding phrases of the particularly ‘prominent’ Pauline ‘sentences on justification’ (Rom 3.20, 28; Gal 2.16; 3.2, 5) are getting at: ‘Justification’ presupposes for Gentiles or Gentile-Christians barely the appreciation of Jewish ‘boundary markers’, as if they were also valid for non-Jews; inclusion in the salvation-community does not move over the detour of a halakhot regulated inclusion into Judaism, is insofar universally possible. Therewith, the Pauline doctrine of justification is easily to distinguish from ‘Lutheran’ interpretations, which for instance turn against attempts, to earn ‘justification’ for example through ‘a monk’s vow of renunciation’ or through donation(s). *On the other hand:* The positive aspect of the ‘doctrine of justification’ just mentioned remains completely unmodified with the new comprehension of ἔργα νόμου: Christ or rather the faith in Christ imparts ‘justification’ (see once again Gal 2.16-17), in fact also with regard to non-Jews. However, now – and *only* now! – a fairly symmetric relation can be discerned for the questions of Gal 3.2, 5, when there ἔργα νόμου and ἀκοή πίστεως as theoretic conceivable sources of salvation for the origin of the spirit are juxtaposed, and this in such a way, that v. 5 can arouse the impression: ὁ ... ἐπιχορηγῶν ... τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν

δυνάμεις ... might somehow deal with *both* of these dimensions. With the ‘Lutheran’ view a rather crooked alternative would be presented in the Verses Gal 3.2, 5: The humane action belonging quasi to the horizontal would be juxtaposed to the ‘vertical’ ἀκοή πίστεως. It would then be about, as it seems, a rivalry between human works and Godly donation. This is by no means the case with the thesis that I defend here! For this reason it results in, one can say, a bipartite *corollary*. Dunn poses at the end of his article picked up here two questions – and these problems have considerably influenced ecclesiastical history and its fights over many centuries –; the question, how one has to distinguish what for instance the phrase ‘living by the spirit’ in Gal 5.16 may think of from the ἔργα νόμου, and the other question, how in view of the negative connotation of the ‘works of the law’, nevertheless, e.g. in Rom 2.6 (or 2.6-13; compare 2Cor 5.10), it is talked about a judgment ‘according to each one’s deeds’. These grave questions now are *not* posed *anymore*! For the ‘works of the law’, according to my thesis, are not about actions but precisely about regulations, at least primarily about something what has been denoted as ‘ceremonial commandments’ in the Middle Ages; concrete thereby at any way such regulations are denoted that are regarded as Jewish ‘boundary markers’. Apparently they have only little to do with the ethical behaviour of Christians and with the ‘judgement according to the works’ (obviously) combined with ethics. Not a bit of irrelevance, unlike Dunn claims!

(iv) We already had to note, that Paul is indeed able to speak positively of the νόμος and that he e.g. makes a total positive use of the syntagma τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου. When he nowhere uses the plural νόμοι, then this is naturally co-determined thereby, that the singular talk of the νόμος (with regard to the tora) has been operated fairly consistently in the scriptures of the Septuagint. All the more the juxtaposition of ἔργα νόμου and of other plural expressions referring to prescriptions seems very conspicuous. Obviously it has to do with the fact that the apostle felt compelled to speak of such ‘individual commandments’, with which particularly the Christian life should harmonize with. The congruous terminology, which often is barely noticed – even though it finds a certain analogy in the ‘ethical commandments’ of the Middle Ages –, should be itemized here. It deals, if one confines just to plural-formations, besides τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου (Rom 2.26) with τὰ τοῦ νόμου (Rom 2.17) and with ἐντολαὶ θεοῦ (1Cor 7.19)

Summarised: Very differently, than is often understood, Paul speaks overall quite positively of the νόμος, of the Mosaic law (compare, however, Rom 7.23; 8.2). Admittedly, in view of the cooperation of sin and law cautious formulations develop. Ultimately it is the Christ-event that indicates the sin of all men and women. Throughout negatively connoted at any rate is the expression ἔργα νόμου that for synchronic as well as diachronic reasons alludes to halakhot and not yet to their fulfilment. The syntagma in Rom 3 and in Gal 2-3 is used in such a polemic manner, since it is thought of here of Jewish ‘boundary markers’, that, according to Paul, non-Jews in view

of the justifying Christ-event should not appreciate – and should not perform. The inclusion of Gentiles into the salvation-community therefore is not to be understood as ethnic inclusion in Judaism: The God of the Jews, as the apostle argues, is at the same time the one, who through Christ or by the faith in Christ can universally become approachable. Such the halakhot comprehension of ἔργα νόμου also allows better to understand the Pauline statements on ethics and on the ‘judgment according to works’.

III. On the theological and ecumenical relevance

In my opinion the suggestions of the New Perspective on Paul and there especially also the sociological impulse, that above all is connected with the name J.D.G. Dunn, promote exegesis, theology and ecumenical movement in a fairly considerable way. On the other side, the ‘churchly patois’, also reasons of the history of theology and church – and also some peculiarities of the exegetical dialogue – result in a very difficult hermeneutical situation, which makes it anything then easy to quickly proceed here. But I consider significant steps as possible – especially when grave reasons, that argue for something like a certain new-evaluation of the Pauline syntagmas ὁ Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 6.16) and ἔργα νόμου (Rom 3.20 inter alia), are not rejected reflex-like -. I want to adumbrate four points, and the information should not be embezzled, that philosophical works on and about Paul as well as thereby won approaches can in my view be regarded as encouragement:

(i) Paul does not consider the ‘church (of God)’ as an anti-Judaic reality; because it arises in Judaism and out of Judaism, it is, according to the apostle, something like an universalisation of the Jewish people – at any rate a more universal quantity, that for this reason is not tied to Jewish ‘boundary markers’, not tied to ἔργα νόμου. Beyond these regulations, there remains the ethical impulse of the Mosaic law obtained with the Christ-event and with the therewith connected brotherly love, at least in principle.

(ii) Paul hence clings in the letters of Galatians and Romans to a hope for ‘Israel’ - he seems, however, to imagine the ‘salvation of all Israel’ not as salvation without Christ –. The vocabulary related to Jewish issues, which in the tradition earlier to Paul is used also in a figurative sense for non-Jews the apostle applies so too. The word Ἰσραὴλ however, he uses, and this also might not at least be owed to traditional history, exclusively with regard to the real Judaism, corresponding also Ἰσραηλίτης. Thus, a disinheritance or expropriation of Judaism does not (yet) take place!

(iii) Should an exegetical development occur, as optimistically may be insinuated, just into those directions, that were in view in (i) and (ii), this would then be, in my opinion, a reason for hope for the theologies of the Christian churches and for the ecumenical cooperation. Besides the ‘big ecumenical movement’ of Jews and Christians I think of the relation between Lutherans, protestants and catholics, further of the broad field of protestant or rather evangelical groups. The

area of the discussion about Christian ethics and about eschatology can then be separated very strictly from the discourse about the ‘works of the law’. In particular, one should considerably get beyond the ‘Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre’ (1999) and its supplementary documents.

(iv) The ethic ultimately determined by the tora and the Christ-event provides in my opinion an important contribution for the globalized and yet still strangely torn world, anyway when Jews and Christians do not contort this holding. In addition, the formidable relativization of ‘boundary markers’ accrues, at which Paul aims to get with the negative connotation of ἔργα νόμου. This relativization, that already played a significant role in the coexistence of Jews and ‘God-fearers’ at the time of the apostle and even earlier, should also be important for the life in the presence and the future, not at least as a paradigm considerable for other contexts: Differences in religion, culture, property, habitus etc. should – this maxime one probably has to recover from the Pauline literature – be perceived and definitely not disclaimed, also not wantonly be levelled; but such ‘boundary markers’ should, compared to some tendencies, that are currently encountered in many places, also have to be extensively relativized! ‘Works of the law’ namely are not, what ‘justifies’!