

**ETHICS IN THE NEW CREATION:
A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM!
A Perspective from
Paul's Letter to the Galatians.**

by

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*In gratitude to my loving, dedicated, most supportive
and lovely wife,*

Heleen,

*who, through loving service, words of wisdom and humour,
remains divinely instrumental in my discovery of
our freedom in Christ.*

*May we stand firm in that freedom,
forever loving, laughing, and hoping!*

*And to my equally loving and supportive children
whom I wish only to love and serve,
my pride and joy:*

Gysbert, Stephan and Lienké.

*May you walk tall and in step with the Spirit,
celebrating your freedom in Christ.*

*May your roads be graced with love, service,
hope, and much humour,
till that glorious Day!*

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ABREVIATIONS

ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>Biblical Interpr.</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bijdragen</i>	<i>Bijdragen Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
EBD	<i>Eerdmans Bible Dictionary</i>
EBT	<i>Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology</i>
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ER	<i>Evangelical Review</i>
ET	<i>English Translation</i>
<i>Exp. Tim.</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTS	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
IDS	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
IBD	<i>Illustrated Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>Interp.</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Jud.</i>	<i>Judaica</i>
NIDNTT	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NDT	<i>New Dictionary of Theology</i>
NGKB	<i>Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk Boekhandel</i>
NEB	<i>New English Bible</i>
<i>Neotest.</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>Nov. Test.</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RExp.</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RStR</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TWAT</i>	<i>Theologische Wörterbuch zum Alten Testaments</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZThK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
<i>Zygon</i>	<i>Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science</i>

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SOLI DEO GLORIA!

INTRODUCTION

Christianity places a very high premium on its conviction that the believer in Christ is free! Freedom in Christ is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental convictions of Christian faith and central to its proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, there often seems to be a disparity between the confession of this freedom and living it to the full. It seems that Christians are quick to proclaim freedom in a soteriological sense, but often most cautious to celebrate this freedom on an ethical level. Can one honestly be at peace with a conviction stating: “We are free, but please, put it on hold for Christ’s sake!” If we are free in Christ, do we not honour Him precisely by living and celebrating this gift?

All too often communities of faith do not celebrate their freedom, probably because they, quite understandably, do not trust themselves with their freedom and fear succumbing to the flesh once more. Obviously, this in itself is quite understandable. One should not put one’s trust in oneself. But when this distrust is extended to include the Spirit of Christ within us, it is fundamentally wrong. All too often this fear of succumbing to the flesh is dealt with by reverting to some form of prescriptive ethic within which we feel ourselves to be safe – sometimes, tragically, even saved! Sadly, this reveals an underlying distrust that Christ and his Spirit will provide us with true freedom and help us live this freedom to the full.

St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians is foundational for the church. It is a landmark document in the Christian library: a trend setting document as it were. It is, as will be argued, almost without a doubt the oldest of St. Paul’s letters and, for that matter, the oldest canonical book of the NT. It was born at the forefront of Christian expansion on the dividing line between being in Christ and being without Him. It was a time in which the newly born Church was wrestling with the question of what to do with its Jewish roots. At one end they were being challenged by Christians converted from paganism, who did not take a Jewish ethos for granted. At the other end there were converts from Judaism who found it difficult to cast off their old Jewish mould, and of whom some even insisted on retaining Torah as an ethical standard. Galatians could be seen as a literary watershed for the young Christian Movement trying to come to grips with the question of what ethos befits those in Christ. The fact that it was written by a born Jew and Roman citizen, who was acknowledged by no less than the “Jerusalem pillars” as the Apostle to the Gentiles, enhances the significance of the letter in defining the Christian ethic of freedom.

Dunn describes it as “one of the fiercest and most polemical writings in the Bible.”¹

Galatians is not an academic treatise drawn up in the calm autumn of a long life, the mature fruit of long debate, with every statement duly weighed and every phrase finely polished. Rather, it comes from the early morning of a vigorous new movement (Chris-

¹ Dunn, 1993, 1.

tianity) when basic principles were first being formulated, and when the whole character of the movement was at stake. In the pages of Galatians, one of the earliest documents of the New Testament, we see, as it were, fundamental features of Christian theology taking shape before our eyes. In no sense is Galatians an ivory tower tract remote from real life, the dispassionate statement of one high above the battle. Rather, it is a cry from the heart of one at the very front of the line of Christian advance, dealing with questions which determine the identity and whole life-style of those to whom he wrote. It is theology engaging with the challenge of competing interpretations of central beliefs and with the crisis of new adherents caught in the crossfire of whom to believe and how to act. It is itself theology under fire, theology in the midst, living theology. There can be no question that the man who wrote this letter was deeply engaged with and totally committed to what he wrote.¹

1. ORIENTATION

Much has been written on the subject of freedom as presented in Paul's letter to the Galatians. One is humbled by the magnitude of the scholarly activity in this field, both in terms of volume and scholarly eminence. The present study bears only small testimony to this large volume of scholarly activity in an ongoing debate. Some have changed the course of the debate irrevocably, while others assisted in fine-tuning the activity. Some did it by posing critical (sometimes even irritating) questions, while others offered helpful suggestions. One is indebted to each one of them. It is no mean task to decide between two or three contrasting arguments posed by equally eminent scholars. When twenty centuries of theological and intellectual mastication has not been able to come to a generally accepted conclusion, it is extremely humbling to try to come to a personal decision on what Paul meant with his statement in Gl 5:1:

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore,
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

In view of the letter's fundamental significance for Christian soteriology and ethics, it is a pity that most writings on the subject of freedom in Galatians focus mainly on freedom in terms of freedom from the law, or at least place a heavy emphasis on freedom from law. In other words, they limit the subject of freedom to its relation to law. This pitfall seems to come with the territory. There are probably many reasons for this approach. After all, Paul did not, detached from a historical and polemical setting, set out to write a discourse on Christian freedom *per se*. He was presented with a very specific problem: what was the position of law in the Christian community? This was the vantage point from which Paul had to operate. He was presented with a position where law, or at least a discussion on law, had become prominent in Christian life. Some would argue, Paul had to refute arguments giving prominence to law as an entrance requirement additional to faith in Jesus Christ. Others would reject this notion, emphasising it was all about the role of law with regard to Christian ethics.

¹ Dunn, 1993, 3-4. Refer to Ch. 1 of this dissertation where rhetoric will be discussed.

There are those who, for fear of leaving Christianity without a moral norm or ethical code, replaced the law and its works with a new law, namely the fruit of the Spirit. Others even revive law, by arguing from Paul's seemingly more positive stance on law in Romans and his reference to the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2). Obviously, this stance includes re-interpretation of law, with Christians being free from ceremonial, cultic, calendar and dietary laws, but not from moral law. I will argue that this opens the door for moralism and ethical casuistry.

My thesis is that, although setting out to refute a position in which law was prominent, even primary, Paul did his utmost to indicate that Christianity was being eroded at a much deeper and profoundly more fundamental level than that which surfaced in Galatia. The freedom Christ brought about by delivering believers from the present evil age itself was being compromised. In the apocalyptic event of the advent of Christ and the outpouring of his Spirit, God provided a new paradigm for life. A new creation had been inaugurated within which believers in Christ were freed from the dominance and slavery of *flesh*, and enabled to make ethically responsible decisions in accordance with the *Spirit* living in them as individuals and as believing community. The believer was now a *new creation* (Gl 6:15), living and walking in the Spirit (Gl 5:25). He was liberated in order to be a loving servant of his neighbour (Gl 5:13), even to the point of sacrifice and persecution (Gl 6:12).

In other words, there is a much bigger picture to be viewed than merely, or primarily, freedom from law. It is about freedom from the *present evil age* (Gl 1:4) characterised primarily by slavery to *flesh* (Gl. 3:22; 4:21-31; 5:17). *Law* (Gl. 3:24), the *elements of this world* (Gl 4:3,9) and *beings that are by nature no gods* (Gl 4:8) only emphasise man's plight of slavery to the flesh, living under a curse and being threatened by hopelessness (Gl. 3:10-13). Even more fundamental than these results of the liberation in the advent of Christ, is the new foundation from which the believer operates.

The aim of the present study is not to present old bones in a new coffin, but to come to grips with the magnitude of information that has become available over many centuries. Many questions have to be answered. From what were Christians freed, and towards what? Who freed them and in whom do they exercise their freedom? Do Paul's arguments enhance libertinism? Is Paul concerned only with freedom from law in terms of soteriology (legalism) or is he also concerned with freedom from law with regard to ethics (nomism)? What bearing does Paul's concept of new creation (Gl. 6:15) have on his notion of freedom, and vice versa? What is the position and function of the Holy Spirit within this freedom?

2. CIRCUMSCRIBING THE FIELD

In his four main letters Paul has seemingly different nuances on the subject of freedom and the Christian's position with regard to law and life. This fact cannot be ignored and will be taken into consideration at the appropriate time, al-

though it will not be the main business of this study. Reference will be made to these viewpoints in the course of our reflections, but only in as much as it is helpful to get a clearer picture of what Paul intended to convey to the Galatians. After all, if the letter to the Galatians is Paul's first letter, as is argued here, and, for that matter, also the first of the canonical books of the NT, the Galatians would not have had the luxury of comparing different utterances by Paul.

Without diminishing the intricacies of the subject, one must mention the too often experienced disappointment that Galatians is so easily interpreted through the lens of Romans in particular. One wonders why it is hardly ever the other way around. The underlying question is often: how can we accommodate Paul's clear-cut stance on freedom and law in Galatians in our reflections on Romans? Should scholarship not rather place the onus on Romans to explain why it is seemingly more positive with regard to law? Why are perceived differences often explained in such a way that Paul's clear-cut stance in Galatians is softened, even reinterpreted, in a multitude of ways, in order to accommodate Romans? Why is it less obvious to scholars to approach the dilemma from the other side? Enough said! In the current dissertation the Letter to the Galatians is our focal point.

3. APPROACH

It is impossible to focus on freedom in Galatians without involving the whole letter. Besides this being a fundamental exegetical given, Galatians is an extremely well-integrated and complete argument on Christian freedom in a specific context. Seeking to follow Paul's argument to its logical conclusion, this dissertation is divided into three parts.

Part I deals with matters of introduction to the letter, such as its rhetoric, dating¹ and Paul's possible opponents.²

- In *Chapter 1* it will be illustrated how these matters enhance the *urgency* of the letter. Even just considering circumcision or any other form of reversion to law, was no small matter. In this regard Paul's rhetoric carries much weight. Equally important is the date of the letter, as well as the message of his opponents.
- Associated with the rhetoric, is the importance of Paul's *apocalyptic approach* in the letter. The role of apocalyptic must be accounted for. Although much has been done to stress Paul's use of apocalyptic, my impression is that it has not been reflected adequately enough in the debate concerning *freedom* in Galatians. If Paul wrote in apocalyptic fashion, as will be argued, what was his aim? Had he abandoned a salvation-historical approach to theologising with its emphasis on continuity in favour of the

¹ This I regard as important, because an early date enhances the importance of the letter as well as the urgency with which Paul approached the matter.

² Helping to shape the contours of Paul's rhetoric and arguments.

discontinuity of apocalyptic? What are the hermeneutical implications? Paul seems to play to the tune of the advent of Christ having been a very defining point in the history of salvation. Something radically new came about, so that faith and ethics would never be the same again. An apocalyptic deliverance took place. A paradigm-shift occurred. The present evil age was irreversibly invaded by new creation. It will be argued in *Chapter 2* that Paul made use of apocalyptic to reframe the Galatians' mindset. There could be no smooth continuity from one age to the other without both soteriology and ethics being profoundly transformed.

In **Part II** we will investigate the meaning of *present evil age* (Gl. 1:4) and its constitutive elements. It goes without saying that throughout the examination of this subject one will have to take Paul's *symbolic universe* into account. This symbolic universe is not only about apocalyptic. It involves the broad spectrum of theological matters concerning Second Temple Judaism, as well as a vast array of theological, sociological and anthropological elements unique to the ancient Mediterranean people, and without which we cannot dream to be accurate in our assessments.

- As mentioned earlier, my thesis is that the freedom of which Paul speaks is primarily freedom from the domination by *flesh*. For this reason, *Chapter 3* will discuss *flesh* as primary characteristic of the present evil age from which Christ delivered believers.
- *Chapter 4* will reflect how the *elements of the world* (Gl. 4:3, 9) and *law* in its totality emphasise the human plight of slavery to the flesh, and its resulting curse.

In **Part III**, our main section, we move on to clarifying the extremely important so-called parenetical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10) where Paul brings *freedom* into very sharp focus, both in terms of its indicative basis and its imperative intention.

- *Chapter 5* brings us to the heart of the matter, namely Paul's climactic concluding exclamation: **For freedom Christ has set us free!** (Gl. 5:1). Freedom is christologically defined in Galatians. Although *flesh* is in the background in this chapter of the dissertation, it will be dealt with more strongly, and in juxtaposition to Spirit, in Chapter 6. Here the emphasis will be on standing firm in the christologically obtained freedom, by not reverting to law. It will be argued that law as such no longer has a directive role to play in either the Christian's coming to life, or living his life. The believer has been oriented away from law to Christ as the promised seed, the One who rang the death knell for *flesh* and law – the *christological indicative*. There can be no mixing of the two aeons.
- *Chapter 6*, returning to the matter of *flesh*, will deal with the very heart of the Christian ethic. The latter is in no way characterised by a life in the *flesh*. The christological indicative above has brought an end to the dominating slavery of *flesh*. After having explained that law had come to an end, but very aware of the fact that *flesh*, although having lost its dominat-

ing power, was still part of this life, it deals with the implied question of how the Christian ethic should be lived. The present evil age dominated by the flesh had been replaced by the *new creation* characterised by the *Spirit*. In the old order external directives were needed and, in many cases, tragically misused and ineffective. There was no fear that the Christian ethic could in any way be characterised by a new onslaught of the flesh, because of another indicative, namely the advent of the Spirit. The *pneumatological indicative* would not provide Christians with a new set of external directives. The Spirit would live in them, fulfilling the promised solution to the OT plight. He would create in the Christian a new heart. It would be like fruit being produced almost automatically from being in Christ and his Spirit. It will be strongly emphasised that love of the neighbour, as God originally intended, would be the touchstone for determining whether the truth of the gospel had been concretised in the lives of believers. It would be a love leading to sacrificing service to one another. It would be imperative upon Christians to live this newfound life. It will be emphasised that the flip-side of being **free from the present evil age** and all its characteristics, is the Christian's being **free in order to love and serve**.

- This leads to Gl. 5:25-6:10 which will be discussed in *Chapter 7*. The emphasis will be on *accountability* and *responsibility*, and the role of the *community*, as decisive elements of Christian ethics. Paul has no inclination towards a *laissez-faire* ethic. He strongly emphasises the responsibility of the individual believer to “test his own work” (Gl. 6:4) and to remember that he is dealing with God who is not mocked (Gl. 6:7). He lays an equally heavy emphasis on the individual's responsibility for others and especially for those of the household of faith (Gl. 6:10). In the same vein, he places a very heavy emphasis on the community of faith to bear with one another and to bear one another's burdens. Instead of being characterised by the very fleshly attitude of boasting about their deeds (Gl. 6:13), they were to follow the spiritual route of restoring one who had been overtaken by sin (Gl. 6:1).

Finally, taking cognisance of the very relevant criticism of D.J. Smit,¹ we will move on to drawing a few *conclusions*. He argues that dogmaticians, in their systematic labour and endeavours to answer to ethical challenges, are often accused of faulty exegesis by NT scholarship. Because of academic specialisation it is not always possible to pay specialised attention to exegetical matters. For this reason systematic theologians and theologians in other fields have to rely on biblical scholarship to provide them with relevant material. He argues that biblical scholarship does not always provide relevant exegetical and biblical theological material for systematic theologians to use. In this respect

¹ D.J. Smit, 1992, 320-325. One is also reminded of an article by Fuller, 1989, 574-579, in which he stresses the dangers of both N.T. scholarship and exegesis being prescribed to by ecclesiastical considerations, and of exegetes monopolising the task of the dogmatician.

the disciplines will do well to be in dialogue with one another.¹ Obviously one could not endeavour to bridge the exegetical and hermeneutical divide between Paul and theological reflection of the twenty-first century in general. There are too many loci of theology and too many fields of study involved. It is hoped that theologians from fields other than that of NT Studies would find the subject intriguing enough to pursue its application to their own fields of study. I would be overjoyed and humbled if this study could be a small building-block in such endeavours to practical application.

This is a matter of grave importance. Paul had no word of thanksgiving to offer with regard to the great works of God in the lives of the Galatians. Because they considered circumcision, Paul feared that they were jeopardising their freedom in Christ. He feared that, despite their profound sincerity, they were unwittingly severing themselves from Christ. If Christianity, Christian communities and scholarship across the vast spectrum of theological disciplines fail to persistently deal with the matter of how to celebrate their freedom in Christ in every new situation and time, they run the risk of plucking the heart out of our faith.

It is humbly hoped that this dissertation will assist communities of faith, vastly expanded since the time of Paul's writing to the Galatians, and equally more variegated, to grasp the enormity of our freedom in Christ and embrace it with appreciation, joy and enthusiasm, and celebrate it as they walk in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25).

If we are to take Paul seriously, however sincerely our convictions and deeds are meant, if we do not live the freedom that we confess to have in Christ, we revert into the bondage of the old age, severing ourselves from Christ, or something dangerously close to it!

¹ Fuller, 1989, 577. Scroggs, 1988, 29-30, stresses that the text remains primary in bridging the gap between past and present and that there may not be any "genuflection to dogmatic theology."

PART I

**PAUL'S PARADIGM SWITCH
- A MATTER OF URGENCY!**

CHAPTER I

EXPLORING GALATIANS AS A LETTER OF URGENCY

1. GETTING PERSPECTIVE ON A CRITICAL SITUATION

The urgency of Paul's letter to the Galatians can hardly be over-emphasised. It will be argued that Paul wrote a letter from the heart in a situation in which he was convinced that the truth of the gospel – its very essence – was being seriously threatened. Taking into consideration the distinction between, what was coined by J.C. Beker as Paul's coherency and contingency,¹ one could say that the letter to the Galatians, though illustrating a high degree of internal coherence,² was written in a very contingent (context-related) situation.

It is this contingency that makes it of the utmost importance that the original frame of reference be decided upon as historically, sociologically³ and theologically⁴ accurately as possible. The wide range of well-argued viewpoints with regard to the date, recipients, occasion, rhetorical strategy and Paul's opponents, testify to the difficulty of reconstructing the letter's original setting. In order to seek the truth – the truth of the gospel about which Paul wanted to be straightforward (Gl. 2:14) – in a letter like Galatians, which is as context-related as it is, we have to be as accurate as possible. Considering the objective of this thesis, it does not fall within its scope to make an in-depth and detailed analysis of all the relevant arguments with regard to destination, date, the Pauline opponents and rhetorical mechanisms. This being said, it is important to motivate – albeit in broad outline – a specific stance on these matters in order to have a contextual basis from which to operate and in terms of which disciplined choices of interpretation can be made.

A position on Paul's rhetorical approach in Galatians will have to be taken. Having only the letter in front of us almost 2000 years after being issued, makes it incumbent upon us to understand the rhetorical approaches of his day, as well as his use or disregard of them. With regard to dating, it will be argued that the letter was written very early, in fact, it is probably Paul's earliest extant letter. It has become usual to discuss the dating and addressees together, since defenders of an early date usually opt for a South Galatian address and those in favour of a later date, for a North Galatian address. Be this as it may, because the address has no bearing on our subject, it is assumed that a South Galatian address is slightly

¹ Beker, 1980, 11-6.

² Du Toit, 1990, 159.

³ Green, 1995, 423; Barton, 1995, 61-76.

⁴ Fowl, 1995, 394-410, provides a good orientation on this subject, stressing the dangers of approaching the text with theological presuppositions and not subjecting conclusions to textual scrutiny. A primary factor in overcoming the subjectivity involved is a historical reading of the text. Meeks, 1983², 1-8, is most helpful with this. Cognisance will be taken of the principles laid down by Hays, 1997, 291-310.

more probable.¹ The question as to who the opponents were against whom Paul argued so strongly, is extremely important with a view to fine tuning his arguments and to avoid being side-tracked from the truth of the gospel as understood by Paul. We have to move between the Scylla of decontextualising Paul's arguments as though the opponents were of no consequence in his arguments, and the Charybdis of understanding Paul's letter in terms of the opponents' arguments, as if Paul were actually replying to an earlier letter of theirs addressed to him.

The urgency of Paul's letter to the Galatians will be strongly argued. It seems a very important element in the scenario of Paul's effort to impress on the Galatians the radically different situation that the advent of Christ had brought about – one he describes as freedom. In tandem with this, he wished to impress on them the seriousness of the threat of circumcision and law-observance and the urgency to rectify the situation.

2. A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

2.1. Rhetoric: about the gospel truth – not about Paul

Paul's style in his letter to the Galatians has been fiercely debated, especially since Betz' influential introduction of the use of classical Greco-Roman rhetoric to our subject. Although his input is not wholly accepted by NT scholars, and is even harshly contested by many, the debate has been irrevocably set on a course on which one must consider his invaluable and laborious scholarship.²

Let it be said from the start: Paul, although sensitive to his Umwelt's stylistic conventions and to some extent conforming to them, would not be dictated to by them, nor slavishly follow them. It is common knowledge that in terms of epistolography alone he deviated from conventions of his day, creating his own characteristic way of writing letters.³ In fact, in Galatians he even deviated from his own characteristic epistolary approach.⁴ The question therefore, is whether Paul deviated from convention because of a lack of literary knowledge, or whether he did it deliberately. In a clear and well-argued article, Andrie du Toit argues that Paul was probably very well informed on Greek rhetoric and philosophy and well versed in the Greek Bible. His written Greek was "not translation Greek. He was thinking in Greek."⁵ This being accepted the deviations are even more obvious and one must conclude that Paul wanted to create a specific effect in each case. One would therefore have to determine his probable intention with each deviation.

¹ Breytenbach, 1996, 149-73; Ramsay, 1900, 314-8; 1897, 97-111; Duncan, 1934, xviii-xxi; Bruce, 1982¹, 12-3; Morris, 1996, 15-20; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxviii-lxx; Witherington, 1998¹, 6; Fung, 1988, 1-3; Guthrie, 1970, 452-7.

² Betz, 1975, 353-79; Betz, 1979.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 69.

⁴ Dunn, 1993¹, 19.

⁵ Du Toit, 2000, 375-402, points to both Tarsus and Jerusalem as vastly influential on Paul. A choice should not be made. However, clearly, even in Jerusalem, because of the need to be persuasive, attention would have been given to Greek rhetoric as serving of Judaism – especially by an open-minded teacher like Gamaliel.

He seems to have been so at home in the Greek world that he could both use and deviate from contemporary style in whatever way he considered necessary to reach his specific goal, always being careful that his audience understood him, for the simple reason that he wanted to persuade them of his position.¹

Betz took his cue from Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography, paying special attention to the rhetorical handbooks of Greco-Roman antiquity.² He argues that Paul's letter is mainly a well-structured composition of speeches enclosed by an epistolary framework consisting of a pre- (Gl. 1:1-5) and a postscript (Gl. 6:11-18). In fact, even the postscript is applied as part of a rhetorical structure, serving as the *conclusio* of an apologetic speech.³ Three rhetorical styles were predominantly used in Greco-Roman literature, namely, the juridical (apologetic in nature), deliberative (polemic in nature) and epideictic styles (demonstrative in nature and usually used in funeral orations).⁴ Epideictic rhetoric has not received much attention in Galatian scholarship⁵ and will be ignored in this treatise. We now very briefly reflect on the first two styles.⁶

2.1.1. Juridical rhetorical approach considered

Betz argues that Paul made extensive use of rhetoric in the so-called *genus iudiciale*; that is juridical or forensic rhetoric (defence-speech)⁷ common in court. It was used both in defence of and in indictment of the accused,⁸ i.e. as defence and as blame-speech. His baseline is that Paul was involved in an intense debate with his adversaries concerning his apostolic authority. In his letter he was defending his apostleship and the Galatians were the jury who were to decide on the matter.⁹ It therefore, according to Betz, has a strong apologetic air about it. Obviously, if this were the case, part of Paul's self-defence would have included laying blame on his opponents. This was pioneering work by Betz who is credited for introducing modern scholarship to the Greco-Roman rhetoric to which Paul would most probably have been exposed.¹⁰ Paul was probably not merely a Jewish intellectual, but also informed on the Hellenism of his day. His use of the Greek language in itself points in this direction.¹¹ Paul, being conscious of the Hellenistic context in which his readers found themselves, would make use of such mechanisms as helpful means to a gospel-serving end. One is reminded of

¹ Du Toit, 2000, 397, stresses that rhetoric intends to persuade the reader, whatever the genre!

² In this regard Aristotle's, Cicero's and especially Quintilian's handbooks on rhetoric are prominent.

³ Betz, 1979, 15.

⁴ Hester, 1991, 291-307, one of few exponents of this view, provides valuable insight into epideictic in Galatians. He refers to his earlier articles: 1984, 223-33; and 1986, 386-408, in which he regarded Gl. 1:11-2:14 as apologetic.

⁵ W.B. Russell, 1997, 50, probably correctly ascribes this to the lack of dominance of praise and blame features.

⁶ The subject being an intriguing one, it is not within the detailed scope of this study. It is, however, important with regard to exegetical consistency that a position is taken on the matter of style and stylistic methods.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 14.

⁸ Du Toit, 1992², 466.

⁹ Betz, 1974, 78-93; 1975, 353-79; 1979, 14.

¹⁰ Du Toit, 1992¹, 280; W.B. Russell, 1997, 38.

¹¹ Hengel, 1991¹, 61; Witherington, 1998¹, 114, 115, 122.

Paul's remark in 1 Cor. 9: 20-23 with regard to being sensitive to the position of his hearers, for the sake of the gospel and in order that they might believe:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win the Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law – though not being myself under the law – that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law – not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ – that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.¹

However, Betz' comparative analysis poses some major problems:

- In his endeavour to stress the possibility of Galatians as an apologetic document Betz depends too heavily on one type of rhetoric, i.e. juridical or forensic rhetoric, without giving due consideration to other options.²
- By superimposing a specific rhetorical form onto Paul's letter Betz has to seek exceptions to the Quintilian rule³ to accommodate those parts that do not fit the form naturally. He has a problem particularly in accommodating Gl. 3-4⁴ which he himself refers to as the *probatio* and, importantly, "the most decisive of all because in it the 'proofs' are presented. This part determines whether the speech as a whole will succeed."⁵ He also has a problem accommodating the hortative section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). To solve this problem Betz unsuccessfully seeks refuge in an appeal to philosophical diatribes.⁶

¹ One is reminded of Luke's depiction of Paul's speech on the Areopagus where he respectfully – he could have been opportunistic - met his audience on their terrain, claiming to proclaim the unknown god for whom they had erected an altar (Ac. 17:23). For clarity's sake, I accept that Luke's presentation, although possibly slightly pretentious, was not altogether alien to Paul's actual approach. Marshall, 1980, 283 remarks: "[I]t is a summary in Luke's language of the kind of thing Paul said to Gentile audiences and, in particular, to his audience in Athens." For elaboration on this assessment and sources to the contrary, read Nauck, 1956, 11-52; Bruce, 1979, 353-5; J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 73-4. Not wholly applicable, but related, Lindemann, 1996, 275-88, writes on interreligious dialogue in Paul's mission, finding Paul very clear on his stand with regard to Jesus and abrasive with regard to so-called other gods (Gl. 4:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Th. 1:9-10). However, Acts reflects missionary speeches aimed mainly at fellow Jews Paul wished to convince of the truth of God's revelation in Christ. The only real interreligious dialogue in Acts is Paul's (Ac. 17). However, he did not get involved in open-ended dialogue in search of common truth. He wished to convince his hearers of the truth in Christ. He is not abrasive in any way. In my view, one should not deduce that Luke distorted Paul's speech, because the actual Paul was not diplomatic, judged by his letters. Lindemann does not do this. He has different concerns. Paul addressed his letters to Christians. When he refers to their former gods abrasively (to which they, now Christians, would surely agree), he tries to correct a position to which they had deteriorated and could no longer hold. In Ac. 17 Paul's dialogue is very sensitive. He addresses Greeks whom he wishes to convince of the truth in Christ, taking it from where they were without engaging in a discussion on religious equality (Lindemann, 1996, 286-8).

² J. Smit, 1989, 7.

³ J. Smit, 1989, 6. He argues, because Quintilian's work was encyclopaedic in nature, it would be possible to find as much comparative evidence there as needed with regard to Paul. "Eclecticism is therefore a threatening danger." Black, 1995, 275, sounds this very warning against Betz.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 129. The reason is "frequent interruption of the argumentative sections by dialogue, examples, proverbs, quotations, etc." He adds: "But this is in conformity with the requirements of Hellenistic rhetoric. In fact, for the rhetoricians of Paul's time, there could be nothing more boring than a perfect product of rhetorical technology."

⁵ Betz, 1979, 128.

⁶ Boers, 1994, 45.

- Smit criticises his use of handbooks for Paul, because Greek rhetoric had already been adapted by the Romans over a period of two to three centuries prior to Quintilian's time (90 CE). The implication being that, if Paul were to have used this rhetoric, he would most probably have used a pre-Quintilian form. His eclectic use of Quintilian to justify the difficulty of finding similarities between the latter and Galatians makes it possible to prove almost anything. It adds dubious matter to the letter's context and could force a meaning not intended by Paul.
- Paul's letters reflect a characteristically Pauline form, a variation on ancient Hellenistic epistolary forms. Galatians fits very well into this form without forcing it into juridical rhetoric.¹ Joubert cautions that there is not enough evidence emanating *from his letters as such* to suppose a formal knowledge of Greco-Roman rhetoric on Paul's part.²
- The juridical approach is misplaced, because it wrongfully stresses Paul's defence of his apostolic authority instead of his defence of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10; 2:2,5,7) of which the former is only a function.³ A heavy apologetic approach is in conflict with Paul's confession of being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). In this regard Du Toit, although he does not align himself with the deliberative approach, points out that the heavy emphasis on the self-apology of Paul in Betz's approach impacts negatively on the very clear pastoral character of the letter.⁴ In conclusion, Boers aptly remarks:

Even though the evidence in favor of a deliberative speech seems overwhelming, there is no reason why Betz' analysis cannot provide insights into the letter. What prevents this from happening is the rigidity with which he forces the letter into the mold of his macro-structure. There is no place for a hermeneutic circle in the sense of Bultmann; everything moves from the theory concerning the letter's meaning to the letter. The letter itself, the subject matter of the interpretation, is left no opportunity to correct and refine the theory. Betz no longer appears to approach the letter with a question; all questions appear to have been answered.⁵

2.1.2. *The deliberative rhetorical approach considered*

Other scholars⁶ follow the classical Greco-Roman deliberative rhetorical approach known as *genus deliberativum* (persuasive speech). It aims at persuading hearers to follow a specific approach on a matter of public debate, focusing on the future and seeking decisions on the matter at hand in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of the taken position.⁷ Scholars following this approach have sound intentions. The central thrust of the argument in favour of this approach is

¹ Du Toit, 1990, 155-64.

² Joubert, 2000, 79. This not necessarily opposes Du Toit's position based on historical and cultural probability. Joubert sticks to the letters. Although one should be cautious, I agree with Du Toit, 2000, 375-402, that Paul's education would have provided him with at least an adequate working knowledge of his Umwelt's rhetorical mechanisms. In fact, Forbes, 1986, 22-4, is convinced Paul was privy to a formal education in Greek rhetoric. This might be taking it too far.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 38; Hall, 1987, 277, 287; Gaventa, 1986¹, 20; Lategan, 1988, 425-426, 430.

⁴ Du Toit, 1990, 158. Witherington, 1998¹, 114, indicates that from Paul's letters "we gain a clear picture of someone who cares deeply about his converts. Not just the joyful passages but also the angry ones make clear how much he loved them." Koptak, 1990, 102.

⁵ Boers, 1994, 49.

⁶ Amongst others: Kennedy, 1984; Hall, 1987; Witherington, 1998¹.

⁷ Du Toit, 1992², 466.

the fear that the juridical approach unduly emphasises Paul's position as apostle, and his defence of that position, to the detriment of the gospel, which he actually intended to promote. The Galatians were not confronted with a legal question, but had to decide, on the basis of Paul's recounting of past events, what course to follow, the opponents' or Paul's.¹ Paul wanted to be convincing. It was not about Paul, but about what they were going to believe and do.² The value of this approach is its emphasis on Paul's intention of persuading them to stand firm in the gospel of Christ.³

Although this approach greatly improves on Betz' position it has major flaws.⁴

- Like juridical rhetoric, it superimposes on Paul's letter. Recently Philip Kern found that, although Paul could have been thoroughly informed on the subject, even using some of its elements, it seems highly unlikely that he modelled his letter according to a specific rhetorical form. One of his main arguments is that he could find no evidence of any church fathers of even as early as the second century – much nearer to the situation than we are – who interpreted Galatians in terms of classical rhetoric.⁵ After having studied the early Christian authors on Paul, he concludes that early Christians did not think of Paul as a rhetorician, but as "a humble author of weighty letters."⁶ In fact, Origen was of the opinion that Paul's ability to convince has more to do with his uncultured and frank way of conveying the truth of the gospel in the power of the Spirit, than with rhetoric.⁷ One must add though, that Janet Fairweather has found that St. John Chrysostom, granted that he lived much later (345-407 CE),⁸ made ample use of rhetorical criticism in his commentary on Galatians.⁹ She states that he seemingly finds Galatians to be both apologetic and deliberative¹⁰ and then continues to illustrate how he identifies both these elements in the letter. She also finds that Paul used both Hellenistic and Jewish elements in his letter, e.g., θαυμάζω (Gl. 1:6) as a Greek rebuke form and ἀμήν (Gl. 1:5) as a Jewish oddity.¹¹ His greatest departure from standard modes of persuasion, however, was that he based the authority of what he proclaimed on an otherworldly foundation, namely faith,¹² laying down new literary and spiritual terms.¹³
- Smit falls prey to a danger that is the consequence of superimposition. Although the parenetical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10) should fit in well with a delibera-

¹ J. Smit, 1989, 3.

² Kennedy, 1984, 145.

³ Hall, 1987, 278-82.

⁴ Boers, 1994, 45.

⁵ Kern, 1998, 166f.

⁶ Kern, 1998, 203.

⁷ Kern, 1998, 171-5.

⁸ There does not seem to be unanimity on his birth year, although, ironically, sources are sure of his year of death. See De Jong, 1980, 83; Kannengiesser, 1985, 75; and, in the same volume, Schneiders, 1985, 12. The latter makes mention of the fact that he was more a theologian than an exegete.

⁹ Fairweather, 1994¹, 1-38.

¹⁰ Fairweather, 1994¹, 3.

¹¹ Fairweather, 1994², 213-4.

¹² Fairweather, 1994², 237.

¹³ Fairweather, 1994², 243.

tive approach,¹ it does not fit into his specific deliberative rhetorical analysis.² He concludes that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is most probably a later addition.³ This reflects badly on the integrity of the letter, regarded by most as intact.⁴

2.1.3. *A letter from the heart*

Neither Betz nor his critics have been able to argue convincingly in favour of Paul having structured his letter according to a specific classical rhetorical style, adding only an epistolary prescript and a conclusion.⁵ Their insights, however, need not be cast aside and can be of great help if used with due flexibility so as to avoid superimposition and allow Paul to speak for himself and not to be dictated to by stylistic rules.⁶ It remains critically important that a specific style of writing is never imposed on a text to force the text to say what the author did not necessarily intend.⁷ Rather, an author has a message to convey and employs a text to do it for him. In order to communicate his intended message as clearly as possible he chooses a style to suit his message. He could even remould a style or alternate between styles if need be. Form is dictated to by content, and not *vice versa*. In this respect, it is important that not one of the above styles was always used in the same type of setting (forensic in court and deliberative in politics). They were used in a vast array of situations. Together with this multi-faceted application, they were also used in combination, with users applying different elements of the respective styles together in one setting.⁸ The overriding motive in all the stylistic approaches is persuasion.⁹ Klauck makes an important observation.

Apogetische Züge trägt nur der erste Hauptteil. Später überwiegt das deliberative Moment, und Tadel in 1,6-9 z.B. zählt eher zur Epideiktik. In 4:12-20 sind zahlreiche Topoi eines Freundschaftsbriefes auszumachen.¹⁰

¹ Hall, 1987, 281.

² This is not important for our purpose. He argues that Gl. 5:13-6:10 forms a coherent unit breaking the connection between Gl. 5:7-12 and Gl. 6:11-18. See J. Smit, 1989, 8-9.

³ J. Smit, 1989, 9. In fairness, he does not deny Paul's authorship of this section and acknowledges that the letter should presently be read as a unit.

⁴ Du Toit, 1990, 159; Witherington, 1998, 40.

⁵ Boers, 1994, 45; Kennedy, 1984, 86-7; Klauck, 1998, 237. Sängler, 2002, 377-99, argues the case, pointing to the fact that ancient theorists distinguished between oral speech and epistolography. He reaffirms the value of a rhetorical approach. Tolmie, 2004, 36, observes that not even the ancient rhetoricians themselves always followed rhetorical theory as strictly as is sometimes suggested.

⁶ Martín-Asensio, 1999, 84-107, provides a concise overview of how modern scholars have judged the use of Greco-Roman rhetoric since Betz' groundbreaking labour (84-92). Without tending to his main subject here, i.e. a discussion of Halliday's functional grammatical approach, he concludes his article quoting Hasan, 1985, 106, to stress the importance of the time-consuming and laborious exercise of "meticulous linguistic analysis" in order "to arrive at the truth" the author wished to arrive at. Rhetoric alone cannot be decisive. Olbricht, 1999, 108-24, evaluates Betz' position on Galatians, and those of R. Jewett and A. Smith on the Thessalonian correspondence, observing that one should learn from each trend, but never embrace any *in toto* (124). Sound advice to all who superimpose a structure on Galatians.

⁷ In this regard D.F. Watson, 1999, 125-51, is important for stressing the need for a combination of rhetorical and historical analysis – especially from social-scientific studies (151).

⁸ Mack, 1990, 34-5.

⁹ Lambrecht, 1989, 240, 244; Roetzel, 1999, 92; Hall, 1991, 308-20.

¹⁰ Klauck, 1998, 237-8.

An invaluable contribution with regard to the use of classical rhetoric is the safer and more effective route taken by Du Toit. On Aristotle's cue, he points to three modes of persuasion typical of ancient rhetoric, namely *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.¹ *Ethos* involves the hearers having a positive image of the speaker. There is enough evidence of this in Galatians (Gl. 1:1, 11-2:21). Paul's omission of a thanksgiving actually enhances his standing with the Galatians, underlining his integrity. His disappointment prohibits him from including a thanksgiving. He is honest about his feelings.² His references to his glorying only in the Cross (Gl. 6:14) and his bearing the marks of Jesus (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ - Gl. 6:17) also enhance his *ethos*. *Logos* refers to the logic of the speaker's argument. Paul uses sound and logical reasoning in e.g., Gl. 1:11-4:11, enhancing his persuasive capacity. *Pathos* is about emotional appeal. Gl. 1:6-10;³ 4:12-20⁴ and 6:1-10⁵ are Pauline examples.⁶ Together with this, there is also the technique of *vituperatio* by which opponents are set in a bad light (Gl. 1:7,9; 3:1; 5:8; 6:12-13) and the readers are praised (Gl. 4:12v.).⁷ In this regard, the rebuke of the Galatians in Gl. 1:6 is again relevant. By rebuking them as strongly as he does, and following with a rebuke of the opponents, he verbalises his shock and dismay, but lays the blame at the door of the opponents, giving the Galatians an opportunity for exoneration.⁸

It seems a better alternative in view of our knowledge of ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish epistolography⁹ to work on the premise that Paul wrote a letter from the heart¹⁰ in a style of his own. He used whatever rhetorical mechanisms and

¹ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2. See also Loubser, 1994, 170-3.

² This is probably why Paul can move from Gl. 3:1 where he rebukes them, to Gl. 4:12, 19, 28, 31 in which he refers to them in endearing terms. Klauck, 1998, 238.

³ The use of θαυμάζω reflecting profound astonishment, as well as the reference to quick desertion (ταχέως μετατίθεσθε) of Christ for another gospel (Gl. 1:6) that is actually a perversion (Gl. 1:7), cursing even of an angel if need be (Gl. 1:8, 9), and the denouncement of pleasing men (Gl. 1:10).

⁴ After an emotional appeal with regard to their earlier assistance, how they regarded him an angel and would even have plucked out their eyes for him (Gl. 4:13-15) he reiterates his perplexity (Gl. 4:20). Had they become enemies, because of the truth (Gl. 4:16)? He refers to them as τέκνα μου ("my little children" – Gl. 4:19)

⁵ Although it does not reflect the emotive language of the other two sections, its softer tone is drenched in emotional appeal as Paul pronounces one imperative after another.

⁶ Hall, 1991, 312, also emphasises the importance of *pathos* in ancient rhetoric. Facts were handled to enhance *pathos* and suspense. Interestingly, Hall, 1991, 310-4, supports this from Quintillian. Also Howard, 1979, 49.

⁷ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2. Botha, 1992, 17-34, stresses the need to create oral presence in the author's physical absence.

⁸ Patrick (with Scult), 1999, 63-83, argues in favour of a "hermeneutic of affirmation" with regard to rhetoric as opposed to the "suspicious hermeneutics of ideology". In the latter: "Truth-seeking is taken as a ploy, not as an objective shared by rhetorician, audience and interpreter. What matters is the appearance of truth, used as a strategy to persuade particular audiences" (69). The hermeneutic of affirmation, on the other hand, works on the premise that the persuasive power of the text is in accordance with the truth it wishes to convey. Most important, however, is their remark: "Though the author seeks to present a compelling case, the discourse is designed to allow the audience space to re-enact the author's train of thought so that it can discover the truths the text has to convey" (77). So, one could argue: though Paul came across heavy-handedly, he created space for the Galatians to come to their senses after being misled.

⁹ Klauck, 1998, 181, emphasises that the influence of Jewish epistolography should not be underestimated. He follows with a discussion on a magnitude of such letters (181-226).

¹⁰ Dunn, 1993¹, 1. Porter, 1999¹, 222-48, concludes Paul was primarily a letter writer. Joubert, 2000, 79.

aids available to him in order to obtain his goal.¹ This included, to an extent, the eclectic use of rhetoric from the Greco-Roman *Umwelt* as well as from Judaism. It seems almost obvious that, if Paul followed an eclectic approach, it would be impossible to reconstruct a specific rhetorical style in Galatians. We do, on the other hand have clear indications from our text that Galatians follows mainly the conventions of Hellenistic epistolography,² although Paul often deviates to suit his purpose and to include primitive Christian liturgical elements.³ Tolmie correctly suggests that one should be very aware of the rhetorical theories and how they could apply, but that the text should dictate the process, rather than any rhetorical theory.⁴

Thus, Paul's letter was well considered, making eclectic use of whatever he needed in order to persuade his readers of the foolishness of their considerations. It was written from his heart and exudes *urgency* and *concern*.⁵

2.2. Scattered rhetorical indicators of urgency

It has become clearer that Paul's letter was intended to be urgent. It was also granted that Du Toit's⁶ reference to Aristotle's techniques of persuasion is very relevant in enhancing urgency. Not only is the form in which the letter is written important in this regard, but also the choice of vocabulary. Without going into detail, a few semantic marks of urgency will be mentioned and the way in which they enhance the urgency will be briefly illustrated. Because Paul's use of apocalyptic will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter, it will not be touched on at all here.

2.2.1. *Θαυμάζω* and associated indicators of urgency

A remark on Gl. 1: 6 and its use of *θαυμάζω* is called for in the light of its strategic position. It certainly enhances the notion of the letter being from Paul's heart. It carries with it a profound sense of rebuke, especially since it is applied at the point where Paul would typically have followed with a few words of thanksgiving and praise with regard to the readers.⁷ In fact, this is the only instance in his authentic letters where Paul deviates so expressly from his usual

¹ Aune, 1984, 147; Witherington, 1998¹, 105, 107; Howard, 1979, 49, state that Paul used any means to promote his theme. Stowers, 1986, 87, 102, 109, 134, 139, provides examples of the available ancient epistolary mechanisms.

² Du Toit, 1990, 157. Bruce, 1982¹, 58. Hansen, 1989, 29. Hansen also cites Funk, 1966, 270, who writes: "It should be emphasised that these elements are subject of variation in both context and order, and that some items are optional, although the omission of anyone calls for explanation. It is put this way around on the view that Paul is not rigidly following an established pattern, but is creating his own letter form – in relation, of course, to the letter as a literary convention. If he has moulded this particular pattern out of the circumstances of his apostolic ministry and his theological understanding, he seems to follow it without conscious regard to its structure. It is just his way of writing letters. It is only in this sense that we can legitimately speak of 'form'."

³ Roetzel, 1999, 81; Doty, 1973, 27-8.

⁴ Tolmie, 2004, 37.

⁵ Cooper, 2000, 135.

⁶ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2.

⁷ D. Cook, 1992, 511; Klauck, 1998, 237.

thanksgiving (εὐχαριστῶ). Of course, 2 Corinthians is another instance, but there it is at least substituted by a blessing (εὐλογητός)¹, so that the deviation is not that prominent. In Galatians Paul replaces his usual thanksgiving with a rebuke (θαυμάζω). Bruce very aptly remarks:

The most probable account of the omission of any thanksgiving here is that Paul was impelled by a sense of overmastering urgency to come straight to the point.²

With this exclamation he sets the tone of the letter. From the start, Paul leaves no uncertainty as to his rejection of the opponents and their message. He is quick to position himself and his gospel, sticking out his neck and being very emotional about it.³ He was astonished and perturbed⁴ – shocked: understanding their actions, or intended actions, as a perversion of the gospel of Christ (Gl. 1:7). In fact, it boiled down to abandoning God⁵ who showed them grace in Christ (Gl. 1:6). They were deserting the very One they were attempting to worship more effectively.⁶ He describes it as reverting to their pre-Christian life of slavery to “beings that by nature are no gods” (Gl. 4:8), and turning “back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits whose slaves you want to be once more” (Gl. 4:9).⁷ This, together with the fact that this is the only occurrence of θαυμάζω in Paul’s extant letters,⁸ enhances the urgency of the letter.

The expression of perplexity constitutes an emotional prelude, leading into the substance of the letter: It indicates with much feeling that the letter intends to provide an answer to the problem that lies at the root of the author’s perplexity. By expressing his perplexity, the author is telling his readers that he intends doing something about it through his letter. The very mention of his perplexity on account of their conduct is intended to make them sit up and take notice, because clearly the letter is going to deal with the problem which has caused the perplexity, intending to suggest its resolution by getting them to change their mistaken ways.⁹

To his mind this was not a tolerable misinterpretation of the gospel. It touched upon the heart of the gospel, completely distorting it. He refers to this position as μετατίθεσθε (Gl. 1:6). Its importance is enhanced by its being a Pauline *hapax*

¹ Stowers, 1986, 22.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 80.

³ Bruce, 1982¹, 79; J.H. Roberts, 1992, 329-38. F.W. Hughes, 1994, 216, mentions that Gl.1:1, 9 is contrary to Paul’s usual politeness.

⁴ Grundmann, 1965, 40, stresses that Paul uses θαυμάζω as a literary form to express surprise at the Galatians’ conduct just like the Greek rhetoricians of antiquity. I must add though, that Paul’s surprise was definitely not intended positively. It was most probably intensely negatively meant. Murphy-O’Connor, 1995, 60-1, even refers to it as: “[H]e is both deeply worried and profoundly disgusted.”

⁵ “The one who called you” could refer to Paul as the one who brought them the gospel in the first place, but scholarship is unanimous that this would not fit in with Paul’s view of subservience. It could refer to Christ (Luther, Calvin, Bengel), but in view of other references in Galatians (1:1; 5:8) and elsewhere (Rm. 4: 17; 8:30; 9:12, 24; 11:2; 1 Cor.1: 9, 26; 7:15, 17-24; Eph.1: 18; Php.3:14; etc.) it is clear that he is referring to God. See R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 15.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 15.

⁷ All translations from Greek into English are from the *Revised Standard Version* (second edition, 1971). Where a different translation is done, it is the author’s own.

⁸ Schmoller, 1989, 224, sites only one other occurrence, but then in the broader Pauline corpus of letters, at 2 Th. 1:10; also Bachmann & Slaby, 1987, 806.

⁹ J.H. Roberts, 1992, 336.

legomennon.¹ In Greek literature it is often used to refer to the change from one condition to another, which fits this context well and boils down to apostasy.² In this regard, Pao's labour on Pauline thanksgiving is noteworthy.³ Amongst other characteristics of Pauline thanksgiving, he stresses that Paul's thanksgiving is reserved almost exclusively for God. Added to this, he does not thank God for gifts received, but much rather for divine deeds of grace performed in the lives of fellow believers. He refers to this as dominant in Paul.⁴ Thanksgiving is also closely associated with doxology. In 1 Corinthians Paul affirms that believers can partake of meals sacrificed to gods and idols on condition that God is given thanks. This is born from a theology of creation. He had made everything and by giving thanks to Him one was acknowledging his Lordship over all creation.⁵ Associated with this was the acknowledgement of one's dependency on God and one's own frailty and lack of merit before God, resulting in thanks instead of boasting.⁶ In view of these remarks by Pao⁷ one is warranted to ask whether Paul was not implying more than meets the eye. In view of the above-mentioned notion of apostasy, there is a very real possibility that Paul is already implying their severance from Christ. He could be implying that, despite their former faith, he himself at least, was not certain that he could thank God for doing great works in their lives. Were they not, by reverting to law, actually reverting to independence from God and opening the door for boasting in their own merit once again. Indeed, this was an extremely serious situation that had to be urgently addressed.

Thurén correctly differs from many who hold the position that Paul was probably emotionally so upset that he reacted in anger and that his rhetoric was more about emotion than reason. How should his rhetoric be understood?⁸ Could one honestly hold the position that the urgency of the situation warranted the production of second-rate theology?⁹ It is my contention that it was this very urgency that called for precise theologising. Yes, the letter is emotionally loaded. In Gl. 1:8-9 he expresses a curse on anyone – he himself included – if that person were to present another gospel; but was it written in anger? Given his shock and emotion on receiving the news from Galatia and reflecting on it, could one honestly merely discard the rhetorical elements (*pathos*) on the notion that they are emotional outbursts? Thurén very aptly remarks:

There is, however, reason to doubt whether the author himself was overwhelmed by emotions. He presents himself in the text as perplexed, uncalculating, straightforward and impassioned;

¹ Bachmann & Slaby, 1987, 1254.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 82; Mußner, 1974, 53-5, when reading οὐτως ταχέως together with the verb, sees an allusion to the defections of Israel in the time of the golden calf (Ex. 32:8) and of the Judges (Jdg. 2:17). In the LXX it has the meaning "quickly from the way." One is reminded that the first Christians referred to themselves as of "the Way" (Ac. 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22); Bauer, 1979, 513; Tolmie, 2004, 47.

³ Pao, 2002.

⁴ Pao, 2002, 20.

⁵ Pao, 2002, 34-5.

⁶ Pao, 2002, 35-6.

⁷ Indeed this paragraph not even slightly echoes the magnitude of Pao's scholarly contribution in this respect.

⁸ Thurén, 1999, 302-20.

⁹ Thurén, 1999, 311.

the letter seems to be an instant response, a natural primitive reaction, to alarming news from the congregations. Yet a closer look reveals that this purposeful impression is consciously produced by utilizing effective contemporary rhetorical means. One would expect more unorthodox ways of expressing perplexity if the apostle actually were in frenzy.¹

Thurén applies Du Toit's² article on *vilification* to Galatians, finding that Paul applies almost all these devices to his Galatian opponents: hypocrisy (Gl. 2:13), sorcery (Gl. 3:1), moral depravity (Gl. 6:12-13) and a perverting influence (Gl. 1:7; 5:10, 12), and as ludicrous characters (Gl. 5:12) with secret intentions, who are threatened with eschatological judgement (Gl. 1:8-9; 5:10).³ Paul's judgement served on Peter, one of the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem, can also be included: "I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned" (Gl. 2:11). This method was applied in antiquity, and in Galatians, to wedge readers from the so-called villains, decreasing their *ethos*, and hopefully neutralising their influence.⁴ If one accepts vilification as a strategic rhetorical tool, and there is no reason to doubt this, Paul was not just emotionally shooting from the hip. Equal to his theological arguments, his rhetoric was well considered.

I am unconvinced, though, by Thurén's argument that Paul's portrayal of his theology is as dramatised and radicalised as his rhetoric.⁵ He argues that Paul presented two contradictory positions. In Gl. 5:2-4 he states that all is lost if any other position than his radical position is taken. On the other hand, in Gl. 6:15 he states: "neither circumcision nor non-circumcision counts for anything, but a new creation." Thurén could also have mentioned the earlier and similar sounding Gl. 5:6. He argues that Paul exaggerated his theological position, actually acknowledging the exaggeration in Gl. 6:15 (and Gl. 5:6). He wanted to state that the whole matter of circumcision was neither here nor there. It was about Christ. If I understand correctly, Thurén's position implies that Paul, in the space of two sentences, changes from viewing circumcision as severance from Christ to it being an absolute non-event. In which case one wonders why Paul wrote the letter in the first place; and, if he had actually calmed down and realised that he had overreacted in Gl. 5:6, why he did not call a halt to his letter and discard that which he had already written. Why, if he had overreacted, and acknowledged it as early as Gl. 5:6, does he immediately follow with the same train of thought as before that insight, when he questions the Galatians' obedience (Gl. 5:7)? He, as I will argue, erroneously concludes

the text does not indicate that Paul saw any dramatic difference in the practical life between the two versions of Christianity in Galatia.⁶

Is it not much more plausible to argue that Paul really felt as strongly about the Galatians' reversion as he states; that it was as good as severance from Christ, and that he was equally honest about circumcision being neither here nor there?

¹ Thurén, 1999, 309-10.

² Du Toit, 1994¹, 403-12.

³ Thurén, 1999, 312-3.

⁴ Du Toit, 1994¹, 412.

⁵ Thurén, 1999, 318-9.

⁶ Thurén, 1999, 319.

Paul regarded circumcision as part of a bygone era when it was required of Jews. Whether Jewish Christians continued the practice on a cultural level, was of no concern to him. It no longer had any theological, soteriological or ethical bearing. But, as soon as circumcision is imposed on Christians – Jew or Gentile – some form of theological, soteriological, salvation-historical or ethical reasoning obviously accompanies the imposition. This was a major problem for Paul. It indicated reversion to the present evil age from which Christ had delivered believers radically and absolutely.

If I am correct in discarding the notion that Paul's rhetoric was an emotional outburst, what end did Paul wish to serve? Nanos seeks the answer in irony on Paul's part,¹ describing Paul's rhetoric as "ironic rebuke".² In terms of the use of ironic rebuke between parent and child, its use in antiquity, and given the relationship³ between the congregation and Paul, its founder, ironic rebuke fits the picture very well. He argues that a parent sometimes rebukes an off-spring beyond what is deserved, factually accurate or even necessary. However, the child realises this and discounts it against their common history. Paul's rebuke of the opponents should be understood similarly.⁴ One should be wary of too easily making deductions with regard to the opponents and their views from Paul's reaction. Although I am not in agreement with his conclusion with regard to the agitators (he calls them "influencers"), I accept a strong element of irony in the letter. However, I doubt that one should so embrace⁵ this element as to superimpose it onto Galatians as its hermeneutical key *par excellence*. It would imply that one takes almost everything Paul says in Galatians with a pinch of salt. I am also sceptical of the parallel he draws with the parent to child rebuke as if the situations are emotively on a par. One should distinguish between Paul's emotions leading up to the letter and his *pathos* in the letter. The latter is not raw emotion. It follows after a period of reflection of unknown length. Even if Paul reacted very quickly and was as taken aback as he says, his use of rhetoric illustrates reflection, planning, and, by implication, greater emotional calmness than that of a devastated parent shooting emotional rhetoric.

Nanos' remark that even a soft rebuke by way of irony would have had a devastating effect on the Galatians, because of the heavy emphasis on shame in their culture,⁶ is useful. My contention is that Paul made use of rhetoric on all three rhetorical levels, namely *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, in order to impress on his readers the absolute seriousness and precariousness of their situation, and the

¹ Nanos, 2002.

² Nanos, 2002, 60.

³ The family metaphor is prominent in Galatians. He refers to men of faith as "sons of Abraham" (Gl. 3:7). The Galatians are all "sons of God" (Gl. 3:26), "Abraham's offspring" and "heirs" (Gl. 3:29; 4:7). They had "received adoption as sons" (Gl. 4:5). Gl. 4:21-31 reiterates this notion and climaxes with "So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman." In Gl. 6:10 the congregation is referred to as "the household of God." Most importantly, Paul refers to the Galatians as: "My little children" (Gl. 4:19).

⁴ Nanos, 2002, 60.

⁵ Olbricht, 1999, 124.

⁶ Nanos, 2002, 45-7.

need for them to not only reconsider their position, but realign with the true gospel urgently. They were not in a position in which they were honouring God's gracious work in them and had to realise that reversion to law in any form was tantamount to severance from Christ and apostasy.

2.2.2. *“Ὁ ἀνόητοι Γαλάτια, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν (Gl. 3:1)*

The use of βασκαίνειν (Gl. 3:1) has drawn much attention. The present concern is not the detailed semantics, but the measure in which it reflects and enhances Paul's urgency. Neyrey has done well in presenting applied social-scientific information regarding Paul's question.¹ He finds, in terms of Douglas' group-grid model,² the Galatians had a *strong group – rising grid* view. What Paul identified as indispensable for the congregation's group definition, was faith in Jesus Christ and being filled with the Spirit through whom they pray: “Abba! Father!” In terms of Paul's new definition

[Christ's] death, moreover, marks the exact boundary line between the former covenant of Law and the new covenant of faith and grace (3:13-14).³

Law had lost its defining position since the advent of Christ. No longer was holiness or righteousness defined by law, but through the Spirit.

The holy state of those who are righteous by faith is further expressed by the possession of the “holy” Spirit, which the holy God pours into human hearts, confirming and empowering them as “holy” (3:2, 5; 4:6).⁴

Christ is now the new boundary line and the end of the law. To be in Christ was now determining.⁵ Returning to the matter of bewitchment, Neyrey suggests it should not be understood as a matter of sorcery, but rather as an accusation that the accused has come under the influence, or has been influenced, to accept the point of view of an enemy who is either the devil or someone acting under his power.⁶ A threat had come from the wrong side of the boundary and influenced those on the correct side. This is referred to as being bewitched. In terms of the current notion of urgency, one must acknowledge that by applying an apocalyptic shift from the present evil age to new creation, from being enslaved to the elements of the world and without Christ to being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20) and dead to the world (Gl. 6:14), Paul was implying a boundary that had to be crossed. By drawing the devil or his aides into the picture, he underlines the seriousness of the matter. It was about being either on the side of the devil, or of God - that serious! Their being foolish was not about being naïve or having made a slight mistake. It was about aligning with the devil and the present evil age instead of with Christ in whom they had been crucified to the world and the world to them (Gl. 6:14). It was about turning things around,

¹ Neyrey, 1988, 72-100.

² For further detailed reading, see Neyrey, 1988, 77-91.

³ Neyrey, 1988, 79.

⁴ Neyrey, 1988, 79.

⁵ Neyrey, 1988, 81.

⁶ Neyrey, 1988, 91.

beginning with the Spirit and reverting to the flesh (Gl. 3:3); being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20) and then seeking severance from Him (Gl. 5:4).

2.2.3. *Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ (Gl. 6:11)*

In Gl. 6:11 Paul takes the pen from his amanuensis to close off with a brief summary and conclusion before greeting the Galatians. This in itself is indicative of his urgency.¹ There is no final consensus on why he refers to the large letters. Is it meant to be a slight touch of humour at his expense? Would he have done this to ease the tension slightly? It seems highly unlikely in view of the rhetorical elements already discussed. Would Paul, after such serious arguing of his case, at the point of wrapping up his argument, and immediately before vilifying his opponents once more (Gl. 6:12-13), consider being tongue in cheek in any way? It is doubtful. It seems more likely that Paul made this remark to stress his personal concern and the urgency of the matter by making use of larger letters.² This position is strengthened by his remark: Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω (Gl. 6:17). He wished not to be bothered again. They were to do the right thing immediately, because there was no other acceptable position. He is saying that as far as he is concerned, the matter is settled. They knew what had to be done and they were to go out and do it!

2.2.4. *Conclusion*

Paul probably lost his cool when he received news from Galatia that they were considering the reversion to certain laws. However, we have no knowledge of such a reaction. We have to work with that which is available and which is our object of study, namely the letter itself. As indicated above, Paul made use of terminology and rhetorical effects to convey a profound sense of urgency. The presence of a great deal of *pathos* in the letter is not reflective of emotional and theological instability on Paul's part. Paul probably reacted very speedily. It most definitely sounds like that. However, that does not mean that he overreacted, or that he was emotionally unstable, or that he had generally lost the plot and was reacting in desperation. His theology had already been totally reformed since the Damascus Christophany and ripened during the following period of ±14 years. Paul's letter is well worked out in terms of structure and theological argument. One can therefore quite safely assume that his choice of words was equally well considered in order to enhance the letter's *ethos* and *pathos* as much as its *logos*. In view then of Paul being in full control of himself, a most probable reason for his use of these rhetorical effects is that he wanted to impress on the Galatians the profound seriousness of the matter and the urgency for them to reconsider their position. After all, they were amongst his first missionary fruits in Asia Minor. Other congregations had also been exposed to the problem (Antioch for one – Gl. 2:11-14). Decisive leadership at the breakwater between being in

¹ Stowers, 1986, 61, refers to this practice as the addition of a personal touch. Although this was a practice in ancient epistolography, I disagree that it is the case here. Paul is at the very critical stage of summarising and concluding. He would not have been frivolous at this point.

² Schlier, 1971, 279-80, stresses Paul's pegging down of the main themes in urgency.

Christ and being without Him – especially in Gentile territory – had become vitally important. Not being in Galatia in order to deal with the problem personally, as in the case of Antioch, he writes a letter in which he does his rhetorical best to convince them that there is only one position to take – his, which he considers the gospel truth. They had to tend to the matter with great urgency!

3. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1. The timing of the urgent letter

Much has been written on this subject. Dates vary from as early as 48 CE¹ to as late as 56 CE.² The main question and driving force behind the dating of Galatians for the purpose of this dissertation is whether it was written before or after the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). The answer has a bearing on Pauline theology in general; on the understanding of Galatians in relation to the rest of the extant Pauline correspondence;³ on the history of early Christianity; and on the authenticity of Luke with regard to Acts, as will be indicated below. Obviously, an early date enhances the letter's urgency. It cannot be dealt with in detail in the current study, but we have to orientate ourselves with regard to the date. It will be done by means of posing the main questions in this regard and finding an answer that best fits all the questions.

3.1.1. *With what Pauline visit to Jerusalem should we equate Gl. 2:1-10?*

3.1.1.1. *A most important matter*

This is probably the single most important question to resolve with regard to dating Galatians. Probably the majority of scholars accept that Gl. 2:1-10 is Paul's version of the Jerusalem council recorded by Luke in Acts 15.⁴ If this is the case, a date after the council in 49/50 CE is obvious.⁵ But if it can be proven that they relate to separate incidents, a date before the council is possible and even probable.

Galatians records 2 Pauline visits to Jerusalem. Gl. 1:18 refers to a visit to Peter 3 years after the Christophany. Gl. 2:1-10 refers to a visit 14 years later when he met privately with James, Peter and John explaining what he preached to the Gentiles. He makes no mention of disagreement or debate. At the end of the meeting they agreed on 2 matters. *Firstly*, Paul would focus his mission on the Gentiles and the others on the circumcised; and *secondly*, he would remember the poor of the Jerusalem church.

According to Acts Paul visited Jerusalem at least 5 times.

¹ Cartledge, 1957, 112; Krimmer, 1981, 10.

² Robinson, 1976, 55-57; Joubert, 2000, 77.

³ Jewett, 1971, 108-11, provides an example of the impact of dating on argumentation.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 13.

⁵ Most scholars date the Jerusalem council between late 49 and early 50 CE. To prevent this issue from becoming a subject on its own and from distracting us from the real point of interest, I also accept this dating.

- a) Ac. 9:26-30 reports a visit after his Damascus experience, which is often referred to as his *conversion visit* and is equated with Gl. 1:18.
- b) In Ac. 11:27-30 Luke reports on the church in Antioch sending Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with famine relief. This is commonly referred to as the *famine visit*.
- c) Ac. 15:1-30 informs us of the Jerusalem council where the landmark decision was taken on the Gentile's position regarding law. This was the *council visit*.
- d) Ac. 18:22 makes mention of Paul's *hasty visit*. It is accepted that this refers to the Jerusalem Church, because of the absolute reference τὴν ἐκκλησίαν and the words ἀναβὰς ("went up") and κατέβη ("went down"). It is widely accepted that, although Jerusalem is not mentioned, it is implied.¹ The use of ἀναβὰς would not make sense if he were to refer to Caesarea,² since he was already there. On the other hand, the use of τὴν ἐκκλησίαν in the absolute would not make sense outside Caesarea unless it was 'n type of *terminus technicus* referring to the Jerusalem Church as the original congregation and origin of the rest of the church. "Going up" fits perfectly with OT (יָרַד) and other NT usage referring to "going up" to Jerusalem.³ It is strengthened by the use of "going down" to Antioch from Jerusalem, which is also used in Ac. 11:27.⁴
- e) Ac. 21:15-17 reports on Paul's so-called *collection visit*.

Why does Paul cite only 2 visits? Maybe he was dealing with a specific matter, referring only to that relevant to the situation.⁵ Luke, again, tried to reconstruct the early church's history and missionary endeavours, carefully describing the movements of the apostle to the Gentiles.⁶ More fundamentally, if Gl. 1:18 refers to the conversion visit (Ac. 9:26-30), to what visit does Gl. 2:1-10 refer?⁷ The following options exist:

- a) Gl. 2:1-10 relates to the Jerusalem council of Ac. 15:1-30. Ac. 11:27-30 is unrelated to the Galatian debate. This view held sway until early in the twentieth century⁸ and is still being defended today.
- b) Gl. 2:1-10 relates the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30. Galatians was written before the Jerusalem council. Defenders of the South Galatian destination find this position popular, especially since Ramsay revised his hypothesis.⁹

¹ Bruce, 1979, 379; Marshall, 1980, 301; J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 86.

² J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 86. If Luke were to refer to the church in Caesarea, he would probably have referred to them as "the believers", as he also does in Acts 21:7.

³ Ps. 122:1; Jn. 7:8; 11:55; Acts 11:2; 15:2; 21:12, 15; 24:11 and Gl. 2:1.

⁴ Marshall, 1980, 379.

⁵ Rhode, 1989, 66-7.

⁶ Schille, 1983, 229-30; Pesch, 1986, 314-6.

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxiv-lxxv, lists the most viable options.

⁸ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxiv.

⁹ Duncan, 1934, xxii f., Guthrie, 1970, 461-5; Bruce, 1982¹, 43-56; Drane, 1975, 140-3. A very interesting, although not altogether compelling argument is that of Talbert, 1967, 26-40. He argues that Gl. 2:1-10 refers to Ac. 11:27-30, but that the letter as a whole was written after the events of Ac. 15.

- c) Gl. 2:1-10 relates to Ac. 15:1-30, but Luke received two reports that he mistook as two separate incidents, fabricating the visit of Ac. 11:27-30.¹
- d) Gl. 2:1-10 is Paul's version of Ac. 15:1-30, but the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30 was originally part of the collection visit of Ac. 21:15-17. Luke moved it earlier to fit into his schematic portrayal of the expansion of Christianity.²
- e) Gl. 2:1-10 is equated with the Jerusalem council of Ac. 15:1-30. It should also be equated with the hasty visit of Ac. 18:22, with Ac. 11:27-30 being a Lucan fabrication motivated by the same reasons mentioned in c) and d).³

Scholars mostly accept a) or b). Because the others are speculative and unnecessary, if one of the former are accepted, we now briefly deal with a) and b).

3.1.1.2. *Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-30 as fundamentally dissimilar*

The identification of Gl. 2:1-10 with Ac. 15:1-30 is usually held because of (seeming) *similarities*. In both there is a meeting in Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas opposing Peter and James. Both debates deal with the question of observance of Jewish law by Gentile Christians. In both instances, Jewish Christian legalists prompted the debate.

There are, however, also *dissimilarities*.⁴ Paul states he went to Jerusalem because of a revelation (κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν - Gl. 2:2), while Luke states the Antiochian church sent him (Ac. 15: 2).⁵ Galatians states the meeting was in private (κατ' ἴδιαν - Gl. 2:2), but Acts insists it was a public meeting. One of the biggest differences, ironically, is that to which they agreed. According to Galatians they agreed on two above-mentioned matters: *firstly*, that Paul would go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Gl. 2:9); and *secondly*, that Paul and the Gentiles would remember the poor (Gl. 2:10). On the other hand, Ac. 15 not only reports four decisions, but at that, totally unrelated to Gl. 2:9-10, namely: abstinence from the pollution of idols, unchaste behaviour, what is strangled, and blood (Ac. 15:20). This is repeated in Ac. 15:29. If the incidents were at all related one would have expected an overlap of some kind with regard to these decisions.

True, these differences do not necessarily mean Paul and Luke refer to two different instances. It is also possible that Paul and Luke, within legitimate ancient historiographical practice, because of different approaches to the facts and different intentions, presented the facts surrounding the Jerusalem council from different perspectives. This would account for slight differences without having to call

¹ Haenchen, 1971, 400-4, 438-9.

² Beare, 1943, 298; Funk, 1956, 130-6.

³ Jewett, 1979, 63-104; Luedemann, 1984, 13f., 71f., 149f. Van Bruggen, 1973, 223-5, interestingly concludes that Galatians was written between Acts 15 and 18. He argues that both Paul and Luke had an agenda. Paul remains quiet about the council in order to serve the purpose of his letter, and Luke remains silent about the events of which Paul writes in Gl. 2:1-10 for the sake of reflecting unity in the church. His arguments are not convincing.

⁴ Refer to P.G.R. De Villiers, 1987, 35-6, for a more expanded list of differences.

⁵ Of course, it could be discounted if the revelation to Agabus is at the basis of the account. In that case, Paul would be referring to Agabus' revelation and Luke to the resulting decision by the Antiochian Church.

the integrity of either of the authors into question. However, accepting the integrity of both books,¹ it is difficult to explain why Paul – a first-hand witness to the Jerusalem council – would omit certain important facts mentioned by Luke. Why would he omit mentioning the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30? It would have added credibility to his case, reflecting his good intentions and positive attitude towards Jerusalem and added another instance where the Jerusalem church confirmed his ministry. It would have added value to his *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.² Could his *silence* regarding the *famine visit* not be explained by accepting that Gl. 2:1-10 reflects exactly that visit, with the Jerusalem council still a future event?

In Galatians Paul is seen pulling out all the stops in arguing his case. Why did he not mention the decision taken at the Jerusalem council? It would have strengthened his case considerably, especially since Luke cites the reason for the council meeting as disagreement on circumcision: the very matter precipitating Paul's letter to the Galatians.³ If he could cite the council's decisions reflected in Ac. 15, the letter dispatched by the council regarding these decisions, as well as the delegation delivering the letter on behalf of the council, it would actually sound the death knell for the opposition.⁴ This is especially true in view of the final decisions being very much watered down from the initial points of departure in Ac. 15:1 & 5, and not making even the slightest mention of circumcision. The only logical reason seems to be the fact that Galatians was written prior to the council.⁵ Together with this point, one must also ask, if circumcision occasioned both the Jerusalem council and Paul's letter, why did Paul not mention circumcision as the reason for his Jerusalem visit in Gl. 2:1-10?

Identifying Gl. 2:1-10 with Ac. 15:1-30 seems difficult enough to warrant a search in another direction, i.e. *equating Gl. 2:1-10 with the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30*. It seems very possible that they reflect different perspectives on the same visit.

3.1.1.3. *Can Gl. 2:1-10 be equated with the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30?*

Paul says he went to Jerusalem because of a revelation and met privately with the Jerusalem leaders, laying before them the gospel that he preached amongst the Gentiles (Gl. 2:2). One does not get the impression from Paul that his visit was intended solely to discuss the matter of how Gentile Christians should deal with the Jewish law. It seems more than probable that the revelation that drove him and Barnabas to Jerusalem was the prophecy by Agabus with regard to a coming famine (Ac. 11:27-28). Paul and Barnabas were then deputised by the church in Antioch to take the relief they were offering to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). Paul, being in Jerusalem, seized the opportunity to meet with the leaders

¹ Barrett, 1999, 57.

² Remindful of Du Toit, 1992², 470-2.

³ Ac. 15:1 gives the reason as: "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved;'" and Ac. 15:5: "But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.'"

⁴ Especially if they were from Jerusalem or somewhere in Judea.

⁵ Morris, 1996, 21.

there. It could well be that through Barnabas, who had previously been sent by Jerusalem to Antioch and had brought Paul to Antioch and worked alongside him for a year (Ac. 11:22-26), he became aware of his approach being different from that of the Jerusalem church. He wished to confer with them privately so as not to create the impression that his apostleship was secondary to theirs. Because it was a private meeting, Luke possibly did not know about it, or felt it unnecessary to report on.

According to Luke Barnabas was not sent by Jerusalem because they had heard of problems at Antioch or because their approach differed. One gets the impression he was sent to assist the young church there. He himself was pleasantly surprised and encouraged them (Acts 11:22-23). There was no animosity and definitely no explosive situation leading up to this visit as is reported of the situation leading up to the Jerusalem council. According to Paul the private meeting took place in exactly such a friendly situation (Gl. 2:9-10) and “the pillars” even urged Paul to convey the request that they remember the poor. This request makes perfect sense within the context of relief having just been brought,¹ in other words, in the context of famine relief. It seems perfectly plausible that Paul wrote to the Galatians on the eve of the Jerusalem council.² In which case, the opponents most probably started preaching their requirements with regard to circumcision between the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30 (also reported in Gl. 2:1-10) and the writing of the letter to the Galatians, prompting Paul to write his letter.

This leads to the question whether Paul’s movements reflected in Gl. 1:18 (going to Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion) and Gl. 2:1 (going to Jerusalem after 14 years) can be fitted into a time frame prior to the Jerusalem council. Two fixed dates in NT chronology are generally accepted. *Firstly*, it is accepted on the grounds of Acts 18:2,12 that Paul ministered in Corinth between two dates, i.e. from shortly after Claudius issued his edict against Jews in Rome in the ninth year of his rule (January 25, 49 CE to January 24, 50 CE), and into the reign of Gallio over Achaia (July 1, 51 CE till July 1, 52 CE).³ *Secondly*, it is accepted that Jesus was crucified in either 30 or 33 CE.⁴ With this in mind scholars generally date the famine visit at 46 or 47 CE and the Jerusalem council at late 49 CE or early 50 CE.⁵

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii. The use of the present subjunctive of *μνημονεύω* indicates a continuing action, meaning Paul and his co-workers were to continue remembering the poor (of Jerusalem) as they had been doing at that point. Joubert, 2000, 76-78, sees this as referring to an action that had been carrying on over an extended period before the writing of Galatians. According to him, the cursory reference to this remembering of the poor also means the Galatians were well aware of the collection and that they had already contributed. As a result he dates Galatians after I Corinthians (55/56 CE) and the collection visit at 57 CE. However, these conclusions are not compelling. The verb gives no clear indication of the length of the period of collection. If anything, it points to an ongoing process long after the meeting in Jerusalem. The cursory reference does not necessarily indicate prior knowledge on the part of the Galatians. The point merely being that, if the proposed time table below is accepted, the reference to the collection makes great sense, although it is not compelling.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 55.

³ Roloff, 1981, 270, 272; Pesch, 1986, 146-7, 150.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii.

If Jesus' death is taken to have been in 30 or 33 CE and Paul's conversion is assumed to have taken place 2 or 3 years later (32 to 33 CE or 35 to 36 CE) then 17 years would fit in perfectly if Gl. 2:1-10 were to be identified with the Jerusalem council. But, since we are trying to establish whether Ac. 11:27-30 can be identified with Gl. 2:1-10, the question is whether Paul's itinerary can be fitted into the time between his conversion (32/33 CE or 35/36 CE) and the writing of the letter between the famine visit (46/47 CE) and the Jerusalem council (49/50 CE)? It is only possible if it is assumed on reasonable grounds that the time lapse was not 17 years, but 14 to 15 years. Longenecker correctly motivates that this is possible if two of three assumptions are made, namely:

- That the 3 and 14 years run concurrently, both starting with Paul's conversion. This adds up to, at the most, 14 years.¹
- That part of a year is counted as a full year,² decreasing the 3 years to as little as 1 year and a few months, and the 14 years to as little as 12 years and a few months.³ This adds up to between 13½ and 14½ years.
- That Jesus' crucifixion was in 30 CE and Paul's conversion in 32/33 CE.⁴

3.1.1.4. Conclusion

Equating Paul's visit to Jerusalem reflected in Gl. 2:1-10 with the *council visit* in Ac. 15:1-30 seems to raise more questions than solutions. After having weighed the evidence, we conclude that equating Gl. 2:1-10 with the *famine visit* reflected in Ac. 11:27-30 provides a better solution to the problem of dating Paul's itinerary and Galatian letter. This being done, there is no reason why Paul's letter should of necessity be dated after the Jerusalem council. In fact, a date before the Jerusalem council makes more sense.

3.1.2. When did the incident at Antioch take place?

If Gl. 2:1-10 were to be identified with Acts 15 one would have to accept that the Antiochian clash between Paul and Peter took place after the Jerusalem council. It then seems strange that Peter would violate such a firm decision as the one taken at the Jerusalem council after such an elaborate and high profiled discussion involving "the pillars" as well as Paul, Barnabas and Silas, and in which Peter, according to Luke, played such a pivotal role (Ac. 15:7-11). Of course, the decision at the Jerusalem council was probably a compromise,⁵ and just as Paul would, 5 to 7 years on⁶ in his advice to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 8), feel himself less committed to all its parts, so Peter could too. However, if Gl.

¹ Does Paul mean "after 14 years" or "after another 14 years"? Betz, 1979, 83-84, attests to the fact that it is not at all clear what the other point of reference for the 14 year period is, opening many possibilities and allowing for our stance of the two periods running concurrently.

² Léon-Defour, 1983, 438; Myers, Simpson, et al, 1987, 215. Also Jewett, 1979, 53, although he accepts a figure nearer to 17 years.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 127.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxiii; Witherington, 1998¹, 8-9.

⁵ Barrett, 1999, 44.

⁶ Grosheide, 1957, 25-6; Guthrie, 1970, 441-3.

2:1-10 were to be equated with Acts 15, it would imply that Peter went back on the agreement extremely soon after the council's decision. This is improbable. One would also have expected Paul to remind him of his very quick retraction.

It seems more plausible to place the Antiochian incident before the Jerusalem council (late 49 – early 50 CE). Then one could explain Peter's position at that stage as one of uncertainty. He had recently, during the famine visit, heard Paul's explanation of his approach to Gentiles and accepted the fact that Paul would be ministering to Gentiles and they to circumcised (Gl. 2:1-10). Peter probably called to mind his own revelatory experience when God sent him into the home of another Gentile, Cornelius, with whom he even had table fellowship (Ac. 10:1-33; 11:2-3). After preaching to these Gentiles they became Christian, receiving the Holy Spirit with signs (Ac. 10:44-48). He had even been in a position where he had to defend himself before the circumcision party for having gone to the uncircumcised (Ac. 11:2-3).¹ Peter's conduct could then be explained as typical of well meaning Jewish Christians who had not had enough exposure (on an ongoing basis) to the new realities facing the primitive church as it shed its Jewish mould and took on a new symbolic universe and ethos.²

Paul, on the other hand, had been thoroughly challenged by the new realities in dealing with Gentiles turned Christian.³ He was no neophyte,⁴ neither as a Christian nor as an apostle to the Gentiles. What had become commonplace for Paul in both theological reflection and daily ethical practice at the breakwater between

¹ In this respect it is interesting that Luke places this revelation to Peter and the following experiences between Paul's conversion and initial ministry (Acts 9:1-31) and Paul's famine visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30) where "the pillars" gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Obviously, this is assuming Luke knew what had been said privately during the famine visit. It is most likely that he did, since Paul himself spilt the beans in Gl. 2. He could possibly have structured Acts in this fashion to point out that Paul and Peter were actually not at loggerheads with regard to the Gentile mission.

² Dunn, 1990², 129-82 operates from the premise that the early church regarded itself as a movement within Judaism, describing it as "a development of and within the religion of the Jews (a form of eschatological, messianic Judaism) not yet a distinct faith or separate religion" (p.11). Against this background the main parties in the Antiochian incident would strongly associate with "the mounting groundswell of Jewish nationalistic and religious sentiment" (p.11). He states that there was a range of attachments to Judaism stretching from the faithful Jew to the God-fearing Gentile (θεοσεβόμενος). His argument obviously assumes that this range was reflected in the Jewish Christian movement, from Israel and beyond its borders into the Diaspora. Akin to this range of attachments was an accompanying range of strict to less strict observances to laws regarding table fellowship, diet and purity (p.23). He then tries to explain Peter's actions and fears within this framework. Cohn-Sherbok, 1983, 69, finds Dunn's observations "fascinating" and worthwhile, but underlines that Dunn does not provide documentation in support of applying this detailed scenario to the incident under discussion.

³ Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 107-8, conceptualising on challenges posed by an alternative symbolic universe, succinctly stress: "[I]t may also happen that the alternative universe has a missionary appeal" (108).

⁴ Witherington, 1990, 9. Houlden, 1983, 58-60, argues (contra Dunn) that Paul had not up to then felt that strongly about not observing law. He would probably have felt comfortable within the ranges mentioned above. This implies that Paul only now, after the Galatians had been considering circumcision, considered law in Christianity, and that the parallel subject with which it is entwined, namely justification, was up to then reflected upon as if law in no way affected it. Paul's language in Galatians boils down to a choice between Christ and law (Gl. 2:19-20; 3:2-5, 25; 5:4). It is at the root of his theology and Christian life. He could not possibly have held that law was to be observed within the known and accepted ranges up to the incident at Antioch, and then changed his theology. In any case, not given his pre-Christian position of which we know that he was zealous for the traditions of his fathers (Gl. 1:13-14).

Christianity and paganism, was not the case with Peter. This makes it likely that Peter was motivated by one of two factors, or both, when he withdrew from eating with Gentiles in Antioch.

- *Firstly*, he had never before been exposed to so much *un-Jewishness* and, although he knew it was right to have table fellowship with Gentiles, he still had difficulty in adjusting his mind so as to be at ease with this new reality that he had previously accepted (Ac. 10). The arrival of fellow Jewish Christians might have made him feel exposed and uncomfortable, causing him to withdraw. In which case, Peter would have reacted out of uncertainty, uneasiness and human frailty.
- *Secondly*, he was primarily an apostle to the Jews. If he followed the same principle as Paul (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Ac. 16:3) he would not want to risk offending Jewish Christians who had not yet accepted the new reality. If this were the case, his reaction could, at the most, be described as overly sensitive¹ and born from a sense of responsibility towards his primary task.² Back home Peter had to contend with staunch Christians from the circumcision party.

In neither of the cases would it have been because of the insincerity of which Paul accuses him. Paul's reaction, as seen against the backdrop of the pillars' right hand of fellowship and acknowledgement of his apostleship to the Gentiles, could have been an overreaction of indignation, because he would have expected the pillars to take a stronger lead in this matter, especially because of their agreement.³ This incident reflects the social, psychological and theological framework in the early church in its struggle to come to grips with the new dispensation following on the OT and Judaism.⁴ In this respect Gl. 2:1-10, as equated with Ac. 11:27-30, reveals some of this struggle as experienced at the "highest level." This incident probably took place on the eve of the Jerusalem council where Peter and Paul would have sorted out their differences springing from Antioch. Paul's letter is best understood as reflecting his feelings before that consultation. Galatians could well have been the raw material with which Paul approached the council, increasing its importance and relevance.

3.1.3. *How must "οὐτως ταχέως" in Gl. 1:6 be understood?*

The predominant belief amongst defenders of the North Galatian hypothesis is that the phrase "so quickly" refers to a time shortly after Paul's second or third missionary journeys, and somewhere between 50 to 57 CE. It would in any

¹ Maybe even a misplaced sensitivity.

² E.P. Sanders, 1990, 186, makes the point that James could very well have been concerned about Peter's reputation amongst Antiochian Jews who were his mission field.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 9; Esler, 1995, 285-314.

⁴ E.P. Sanders, 1990, 170-188, reacts on the positions posed by Dunn, 1990², 129-82, and Esler, 1987. Sanders understands Dunn correctly that James' position regarding Antioch was that, although he did not expect stringent observance of dietary laws, he felt the practice in Antioch fell too short of Jewish custom. He largely agrees with Dunn. On the other hand, he rejects Esler's position. To his mind, Esler advocates that Jews had no table fellowship with Gentiles whatsoever and that Antioch was all about Gentile impurity, not the impurity of the food, as with Dunn. Esler reacted strongly to this in 1998, 98-102, refuting his ever having advocated such a strong position. Nevertheless, whether it was about the impurity of food or of Gentiles, the men from James were uncomfortable and Peter accommodating. This was unacceptable to Paul.

case imply a date after the Jerusalem council. If we accept the South Galatian hypothesis as the more likely option it makes a date shortly after the first missionary journey more likely and places the letter between 49 CE¹ and early 50 CE. In any event, it would then quite likely be before the council. “So quickly” is a relative and subjective phrase. Although a position on this phrase cannot remotely decide the matter of dating,² it definitely allows for both options.

3.1.4. *To what does “τὸ πρότερον” in Gl. 4:13 refer?*

This phrase is often understood comparatively, referring to the first of two or more visits, in which case the earliest date for the letter would be after Paul's second visit to Galatia (Ac. 18:23).³ However, grammarians indicate⁴ that in Koiné it should rather be translated as “originally”. In which case the necessity of two visits is dissolved and a date before the council remains probable.

3.1.5. *How are biographical indicators helpful?*

Witherington should be credited for reintroducing⁵ Campbell's⁶ article. He works on the premise that Paul's letters are inclined to refer to recent events. He arranges Paul's letters in terms of similarities, as well as the progression of events in Acts. This way, he notes that Barnabas and Paul are mentioned as immediate companions only in the time around Paul's first missionary journey.

A further autobiographical factor is that only in Galatians does Paul refer to his pre-Christian life and the time directly following his conversion in the way he does. True, he does refer to his pre-Christian life in Phlp. 3:5-11, but not in the same way. In Philippians his aim is to describe how his life and spirituality was defined in terms of the flesh, but that it had so changed that Christ was now the One in whom he was righteous. Previous orientations had passed. Paul's arguments are more in terms of principle.⁷ His conversion experience is implied, but very much in the background. In Galatians, on the other hand, the historical event of the epiphany is nearer to the surface. He relates the events following the epiphany. Could this, in light of Campbell's premise, mean that Galatians was written sooner after his Damascus epiphany and therefore before the Jerusalem council? Probably not! Paul's reference to this event is not unintentional, as if he could not refrain from referring to this majestic event in his life. He mentions it to underline his calling, and apostolic authority, as well as his capacity to understand the gospel.

Paul's references to Barnabas in Gl. 2:1, 9 and 13 are helpful in filling in the picture. He does not introduce Barnabas and quite clearly assumes the Galatians

¹ Guthrie, 1970, 458.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 45.

³ Guthrie, 1970, 457.

⁴ Moule, 1953, 98; Turner, 1965, 90-1.

⁵ Witherington, 1998², 327; 1998¹, 10.

⁶ Campbell, 1955, 80-7.

⁷ Matter, 1965, 76-81.

knew him.¹ Paul is known to be reserved with regard to mentioning names in his letters. In Galatians he only mentions names in the so-called autobiographical section², and, at that, only those of Peter (Gl. 1:18; 2:7, 8, 9, 11), James (Gl. 1:19; 2:9, 12), John (Gl. 2:9), Barnabas (Gl. 2:1, 9, 13) and Titus (Gl. 2:1, 3). Bearing in mind that in the narrative Peter was the central character at Antioch and therefore very prominent, and that James is only referred to in Gl.1:12 in an indirect way, it is significant in itself that Paul refers to Barnabas three times. Significant for our present concern, is the reference in Gl. 2:13. Paul uses the concessive *καὶ ὥστε* to express his total surprise at Barnabas being carried away and siding with Peter's stand, or shall I say, lack of making a stand for the gospel ("even Barnabas...").³ It is probable that the rift between Paul and Barnabas began here. However, one does get the impression that he regards Peter and James as the culprits and tries to soften the blow on Barnabas by implying that he was emotionally drawn along by the moment. In light of what they had experienced together he could not believe this development. His track record witnessed to the contrary (Ac. 13:2-14:26). The greater rift would follow shortly after the Jerusalem council (Ac. 15:39-41). Had that rift already taken place at the writing of Galatians Paul would probably not have been as defensive of Barnabas amid his surprise as pictured in Gl. 2:13.

True, one should be very cautious of reconstructing a situation on an *argumentum in silentio*. One is aware of other biographical indices, which are not important for our subject. However, the references to Barnabas, who had a special bond with Paul and his ministry, as well as with the Galatians, are important.

3.1.6. *Does the collection for Jerusalem indicate anything?*

The answer should be no. In any event, nothing conclusive can be deduced from the reference to the collection for the church in Jerusalem in Gl. 2:10. Despite some being of the opinion that Gl. 2:10 refers to Paul's having collected from the Galatians, or hinting at wanting to,⁴ others maintain Paul was not recommending the collection to the Galatians at all.⁵ Wedderburn correctly rejects attempts to include Gl. 6:6-10 as further motivation for Paul's collection to Jerusalem.⁶ As intriguing as the subject of collection is,⁷ whether Paul intended to include the Galatians in

¹ Bauckham, 1979, 61-3.

² Obviously, I am not including Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, referred to in a paradigmatic and narrative sense.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 157. I am largely indebted to Prof. A.B. du Toit for directing my thoughts thus.

⁴ Hurtado, 1979, 46-62; Söding, 1997, 26.

⁵ Martyn, 1997, 225; Vouga, 1998, 3-5.

⁶ Wedderburn, 2002, 96.

⁷ See Esler, 1995, 285-314, and the thoroughly researched work in Joubert, 2000, especially 71-150. Since much of what they argue from the social sciences has a bearing on how they view Gl. 2:10, and, in Joubert's case, also on dating Galatians, a short remark is warranted. I accept the notion of the agonistic personality of Mediterranean antiquity and do not wish to superimpose modern Western paradigms on the NT. I also accept that not all in Jerusalem were as understanding as Peter and James and indeed continued to pressurise the Gentile believers and the mission to Gentiles. However, does Esler not take the issue a trifle too far when he writes of the Jerusalem believer advocating circumcision: "In Gl. 2:4-5 Paul denigrates these opponents and presents himself as having successfully resisted their attack. These verses offer a vignette of a Mediterranean man at his agonistic best. They had taken on Paul and lost and there is nothing to suggest that they had

his collection as a reciprocal gesture for the acceptance of the gospel to the Gentiles, or not, its bearing on dating Galatians is disputable and inconsequential.¹

It does, however, more than probably have a bearing on Paul's rhetoric. It would have enhanced his *ethos* with the Galatians that he was willing to practice what he preached, and that he was willing to be of service to Jerusalem whilst he actually owed them nothing, and that he stuck to this decision even when Jerusalem disappointed him.

3.1.7. *Are there theological indices of note?*

R.N. Longenecker appropriately warns against founding Pauline chronology solely on theological indicators, because of the subjectivity involved. One must be extremely cautious of constructing a chronology of the development of individual theological themes, as well as of development within the themes, and then superimposing it onto Paul and his correspondence. However, one need not discount theological indicators altogether.

Yet it must also be said that having dealt first with historical, exegetical, and critical issues concerning the addressees and date, it is necessary to ask as well how the theology of the letter correlates with what has been concluded as to provenance on other grounds. The evidence drawn from various theological indices, therefore, may not be foundational for the case, but it certainly ought to be supportive, at least in the main, if there is to be any confidence in conclusions drawn from historical, exegetical, and critical inquiries.²

One of the main theological arguments against dating Galatians as early as it is done here, is the acceptance by many that 1 Thessalonians was the earliest of Paul's extant letters. This is based largely on the imminence with which Paul refers to the *parousia*. It is argued that 1 Thessalonians reflects a more primitive eschatology and that Galatians largely lacks this, because it gives prominence to the advent of Christ as the real turning point in God's dealings with man. This is argued on the assumption that the expectation of an imminent *parousia* faded as time passed on.³ But then, did the situations not radically differ? In the Galatian letter Paul is focused on addressing the problem of reversion to law. He employs apocalyptic, as will be argued in Ch. 2 of this dissertation, and refers to the advent of Christ as eschatological turning point, but eschatology as a theme is not addressed. On the other hand, in the first letter to

secured some advantage to sweeten their defeat. In terms of the model, Paul had grievously dishonoured them. As I have already explained, persons in this social context who have been so seriously shamed do not forgive or forget the insult. Bitterness and hostility will characterize their attitude towards him who has shamed them and they will seek every opportunity to obtain revenge" (p.305). Although much of his (and Joubert's) evidence and reasoning fits the picture on a purely social-scientific level, the bigger picture calls to the difference that the truth of the gospel made to Paul and the Jerusalem church. Was the Spirit inoperative? Were "the pillars" ineffective in convincing believers to change their ways? Obviously, this is not meant in modern Western terms, but in terms of the "law of Christ" and the Spirit? Paul states the fruit of the Spirit in Gl. 5:22-23, not to mention Jesus' own ethic, which is diametrical to Esler's description? It also reflects negatively on Paul's remembrance of the poor as born from strategy and not from the ethic of loving-service that he advocates in Gl. 5:6, 13 and 6:1-10.

¹ In this regard, I can do no better than Wedderburn, 2002, 95-110.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxiv.

³ Guthrie, 1970, 464-5; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxvii-lxxxviii.

the Thessalonians eschatology is a theme, because of a magnitude of problems in this regard in that city. Some were concerned about loved ones who had passed away before the *parousia* and others became inactive in their daily lives, because they failed to see the need for working in the light of the expected imminent return.¹ In this regard Bruce correctly writes:

[I]t is hazardous to plot the development of Paul's thought on the basis of occasional letters each of which dealt with a situation as it arose, that the apocalyptic note of 1 and 2 Thessalonians represents Paul's reaction to the eschatological excitement in the church of Thessalonica, just as the quite different note of Galatians represents his reaction to the legalism which was infiltrating the churches of Galatia. If the main emphases of Galatians are given at best a secondary place in the Thessalonian correspondence, it might be asked, why should it be surprising that the main emphases of 1 and 2 Thessalonians receive barely secondary attention in Galatians?²

Theological indicators fitting an earlier date, though not foundational, are:

- Paul's heavy emphasis on revelation as opposed to tradition is more likely in the earlier setting. A movement from tradition to revelation is less likely.³
- If one, as many who date Galatians later do, regards Paul's positions on law in Galatians and Romans as conflicting or developed it would be even more likely that Paul would move from a morally freer situation (Galatians) to a morally more principled position (Romans).⁴
- There is also the movement from a functional (Galatians) to a developed christology (Romans), as well as the possibility of Galatians having a very basic ecclesiology as opposed to a more developed view in Romans and Philippians.⁵

3.1.8. Conclusion

It seems fair to conclude that Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians between late 48 and mid 49 CE on the eve of the Jerusalem council (probably taking place between late 49 CE and early 50 CE). We cannot be sure about the question whether the Jerusalem council had already been called for, or, if that were the case, whether Paul was already aware of it. There is a very real possibility that this letter precipitated the convening of the Jerusalem council by "the pillars".⁶ What is certain is that if this date is accepted, the letter to the Galatians provides us with insight into Paul's frame of mind when he went up to Jerusalem, as well as with the raw material with which he approached the council.⁷ What transpired after the Jerusalem council according to Acts 15 shows that Paul's opinion with

¹ Guthrie, 1970, 565-6; Best, 1977, 19-20.

² Bruce, 1990, 54.

³ Drane, 1975, 142.

⁴ Drane, 1975, 142-3. However, in this dissertation (Ch. 6) it will be argued that there is no fundamental difference on law between the two letters.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxvii.

⁶ It remains but a possibility. If the agitators were as serious about their message as Paul was about his, they possibly returned to Jerusalem and reported their shock and dismay at Paul's gospel to "the pillars". This also means that "the pillars" had not necessarily taken a position with the agitators, but that they could quite objectively have decided to settle the matter once and for all and on the basis of consultation. Who knows?

⁷ This was also put forward by Ralph Martin in a discussion with Barrett as reflected in Hagner (ed.), 1999, 85.

regard to circumcision and the Law of Moses was largely accepted.¹ Seen in this light one could argue that the letter to the Galatians could be seen as the early Church's view – albeit disputed – of freedom in Christ, whilst wrestling to put it into practice. Bruce's words regarding this position are very apt:

It must be conceded that, if this is so, Galatians is the earliest among the extant letters of Paul. I know of no evidence to make this conclusion impossible, or even improbable. Even on this early dating, Paul had been a Christian for at least fifteen years, and the main outlines of his understanding of the gospel, which took shape from his Damascus-road experience, would have been as well defined by then as they were ever likely to be. Galatians, whatever its date, is a most important document of primitive Christianity, but if it is the earliest extant Christian document, its importance is enhanced.²

3.2. The opponents and why they agitated Paul

Paul did not write for the sake of keeping in touch. Clearly, something serious had transpired since his departure from the Galatian churches. Something drastically disturbing must have happened to prompt Paul to abandon the conventional stylistic approach, which is also his approach in his other letters, of conveying thanks after his initial greeting. In fact, he replaces it with a rebuke (Gl. 1:6-10). He accuses them of turning to a different gospel (Gl. 1:6) that had been perverted by others (Gl. 1:7). Such people are even accursed (Gl. 1:9). He even calls the Galatians foolish and asks who had bewitched them (Gl. 3:1). He says that he is in travail with them (Gl. 4:19) and perplexed about them (Gl. 4:20). He even wishes those who mislead the Galatians would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:11). He wanted to defend the truth of the gospel (Gl. 1:8, 9; 2:4-5), which he believed to be under threat in Galatia. Who were the people who had disturbed the Galatians in their understanding of the gospel since Paul left?

Against whom did Paul have to defend the truth of the gospel and his apostolic authority? This is not easy to determine. There is no clear-cut evidence as to who these agitators could have been. The only available primary source is the letter itself. Paul does not identify his agitators in the letter.³ He does not address them at all. He only takes up the issues they introduced to the Galatians. He does not list the issues either and we are left to deduce as intelligently and re-

¹ Not in any way implying that Paul was solely responsible for convincing the council. It must also be mentioned that there is a very real possibility of the decision being a compromise between the freedom promoted at the council by both Paul and Peter and the rightist position requiring circumcision and the observance of Mosaic law. If this is the case, it probably illustrates the church's struggle to come to grips with life on the cutting edge of the new aeon that had arrived in the advent of Christ. If, after the declaration of his position in the letter to the Galatians, Paul was willing to make a compromise, it also illustrates his sincerity with regard to unity in the church's ranks. The question can be posed as to why Paul would retract on this decision in his first letter to the Corinthians in which he advises them that food offered to idols could be eaten as long as it does not cause the stumbling of a fellow believer (1 Cor. 8:1-13). Not that this is really our concern in this treatise, but in a certain sense it could enhance the notion of the letter's early dating. The longer the time span between Galatians and 1 Corinthians, the easier for Paul to have decided that the matter of believers eating food offered to idols by pagans should be separated from the issue of idolatry amongst believers (1 Cor. 10:1-22). As time moved on, Paul would feel himself freer to ignore the compromise and interpret the situation amongst pagans according to his acknowledged position as apostle to the Gentiles.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 55-56. Refer also to Marshall, 1997, 44.

³ Du Toit, 1994¹, 406-7, observes that merely by withholding the opposition's names Paul denigrated them.

sponsibly as possible what they could be. A further problem is that of rhetoric. The situation disturbed Paul deeply. He pulls out all stops to try to rectify a situation with the second-best means available after a personal visit, i.e. by correspondence. For this reason we must take Betz' remarks seriously.

Not everything that Paul denies is necessarily an accusation by his opposition, and not everything that he accuses his opponents of doing or thinking represents their actual goals and intentions. Paul's references must be interpreted in terms of their rhetorical origin and function before they can be used as the basis for conclusions about the opponents.¹

3.2.1. *The danger of mirror-reading*

Although it has much to offer in setting the scenario, one should be wary of a too meticulous use of this method, easily involving dangerous subjectivity and imaginative exposition.² In his widely acclaimed article, Barclay convincingly exposes dangers and difficulties involved in mirror-reading a text like Galatians. He points to the same difficulties as Betz above, saying that Paul was not reacting directly to the opponent's message, "but responding to its effects on the confused Christians in Galatia."³ Referring to "the distorting effects of polemic," he remarks:

this is no calm and rational conversation that we are overhearing, but a fierce piece of polemic in which Paul feels his whole identity and mission are threatened and therefore responds with all the rhetorical and theological powers at his command. We hear him not just 'talking', but 'shouting', letting fly with abusive remarks about the Galatians (as credulous fools, 3.1-3) and the opponents (as cowards, fit only for castration, 6.12; 5.12).⁴

He stresses the problem of reconstructing the context on an assumed understanding of the text and then interpreting it in terms of the wrongly reconstructed context. This "circularity" stresses the hermeneutical problems involving mirror-reading.⁵ One should be careful and suspicious of such attempts.

One needs to spell out exactly what assumptions are involved here. Such an exercise depends on: (a) Paul's knowledge of the exact vocabulary used by his opponents; (b) Paul's willingness to re-use this vocabulary either ironically or in some attempt to redefine it; (c) our ability to discern where Paul is echoing his opponents' language; and (d) our ability to reconstruct the meaning that they originally gave to it. Such is our uncertainty surrounding each of these assumptions that I regard the results of any such exercise as of very limited value. They should certainly not be used as the cornerstone of any theory, as has all too often been done in recent scholarship on Galatians.⁶

¹ Betz, 1979, 6.

² Brinsmead, 1982, is exemplary of irresponsible mirror-reading. Aune, 1984, 147, finds it "justified by faith alone!"

³ Barclay, 1987, 75.

⁴ Barclay, 1987, 75. He gives credit to Eckert, 1971, and Mußner, 1974, for having highlighted this aspect.

⁵ Barclay, 1987, 77.

⁶ Barclay, 1987, 82. On p. 84-5 he reflects on criteria to take into account when trying to mirror-read legitimately. They are: (a) *Type of utterance*. Is Paul asserting, denying, commanding or prohibiting? Whatever the case, one could assume that there were those in complete agreement with him and others in complete disagreement, also allowing for various positions between these poles; (b) *Tone*. A casual remark would probably be less crucial than one made with emphasis. (c) *Frequency*. A repeated return to a matter would enhance its importance. (d) *Clarity*. Only statements of which the meaning is reasonably clear can be used in reconstructing the context. Ambiguity and polemical distortion obstruct the reconstruction. (e) *Unfamiliarity*. If Paul uses terminology or makes a statement unfamiliar to him in other letters, it is possibly akin to the situation at hand. (f) *Consistency*. Unless it is perfectly clear that Paul is responding to more than one type of op-

Whilst saying this, one should also be attentive to hearing Paul's allusions to and reflection on that which his opponents quite obviously stood for.¹ Following E.P. Sanders' lead with regard to the historical Jesus,² Barclay suggests that one's findings be classified in categories varying "from 'Certain or Virtually Certain' through 'Highly Probable', 'Probable', 'Possible' and 'Conceivable' to 'Incredible'." These nuances could be helpful in determining the context as soberly as possible. He concludes that Paul's opponents were certainly Christians and most probably of Jewish origin.³ They were probably from the Jerusalem Church, because of the prominence of Jerusalem in the letter. They wanted, and most probably expected, the Galatians to be circumcised⁴ and to observe at least some of the laws, including calendar requirements (Gl. 4:10). The reason being, that they most probably understood the law as remaining the hallmark of God's people and the only way to live righteously.⁵ They argued from Scripture, most probably making particular use of the Abrahamic traditions.⁶ They brought Paul's gospel and authority as apostle into question,⁷ and many Galatian Christians found their arguments persuasive.⁸ This brings Barclay in line with most conservative scholars.

3.2.2. *Diversity of opinion with regard to agitators*

Detail on the diversity of opinion is unnecessary. The following points of view have crystallised as the main positions regarding Paul's agitators.⁹

- a) They were Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. Some argue they claimed James' support,¹⁰ representing a circumcision party within the church, ad-

ponent or argument, it must be accepted that he is addressing a single situation. (g) *Historical plausibility*. Whatever the combined results of these criteria, it must fit that which we know is historically true.

¹ Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32.

² E.P. Sanders, 1985, 326-7.

³ Barclay, 1987, 86. His reference to "another gospel" (Gl. 1:6-9) indicates they were Christian even though he regards their message as a non-gospel. Gl. 4:30 most probably refers to the opponents who were thus probably Jewish.

⁴ Barclay, 1987, 86-7. It is unnecessary to motivate their obvious position on circumcision. Amongst other texts, Paul refers to it explicitly in Gl. 6:12-13 and implicitly in Gl. 5:2-4, 11-12. It is not beyond question that they had insisted that the Galatians be circumcised, but they did take circumcision as central to their gospel.

⁵ Barclay, 1987, 86-7. The weight of evidence suggests Torah observance was prominent in their gospel. Circumcision was obviously central; Gl. 4:10 suggests they observed a specific calendar; Paul was concerned about "works of law" (Gl. 3:1-10) and tried to prove its temporary nature (Gl. 3:6-4:11); and Gl. 4:21 refers to the desire to be under law. Add the parenetical section (Gl. 5:13-6:10) indicating how life in the Spirit truly helps one live according to God's will.

⁶ Barclay, 1987, 87. Paul's elaborate references to the Abrahamic traditions make it probable that he was reacting to their use of these Scriptures. His complicated and even obscure interpretation of the texts indicates that he was trying to counter their persuasive interpretation of Abraham.

⁷ Whether they did it purposefully is uncertain. From Paul's heated reaction and references to them, the fact that he emphasises his apostleship even in his *praescriptio*, and continues to do so with regard to Jerusalem and the "pillars", one can deduce that they probably questioned his authority. At the least, one senses that their (insensitive) actions and deliberations caused uncertainty amongst the Galatians. Subsequently the latter doubted Paul's interpretation.

⁸ Barclay, 1987, 87. Gl. 1-2 testifies to this position.

⁹ Cousar, 1982, 3-5 has been helpful in summarising these positions, considering the second as most plausible.

¹⁰ F. Watson, 1986, 54, 59-60. Betz, 1979, 7, rightly points to the fact that the "men from James" (Gl. 2:12) did not criticise Paul, but Cephas. On the other hand, Paul accused Cephas, not 'the men from James,' of com-

vocating the retaining of ceremonial laws, as opposed to Paul's message of radical freedom.¹ The idea would have been to complement Paul's message with a specific Christian lifestyle based on the Abrahamic Covenant, as they understood it.²

- b) They were Jewish Christians without specific support from the Jerusalem church and its pillars.³ Paul's preaching had to be supplemented by circumcision,⁴ which also safeguarded them against zealous Jewish harassment. Although, on this point many commentators warn against taking Paul's words in Gl. 6:12 at face value, arguing that it could just as well be Pauline rhetoric.⁵
- c) Gnostic Jewish Christians independent of the Jerusalem church and not particularly bothered about the law; their interest in circumcision and calendar observance stemming from syncretistic inclinations.⁶
- d) Gentile Christians who felt that Paul initially also practised circumcision, but abandoned it because of Gentile pressure. Out of loyalty to the Jerusalem leaders, they took up the cause of Judaism.⁷
- e) There were two opposition groups. In Gl. 1-5:12 Paul addresses a group of Judaizers wanting Christians to submit to the law. From Gl. 5:13-6:10 he addresses another group, i.e. spiritualists who felt they were above moral issues.⁸

In an interesting article Martyn probably takes it too far when he categorises the agitators as a law-observant mission of such a kind that one wonders how the Galatians could possibly have regarded their message as a gospel. He writes:

pulsive 'Judaizing' of the Gentiles." Logically, this takes the pressure off having to accept the agitators in Galatia as necessarily from James.

¹ Not all necessarily include James. So Guthrie, 1970, 466-8; Dunn, 1993¹, 11; Witherington, 1998¹, 25. Gager, 2000, 69 & 79, insists the opposition was not necessarily unified, describing it as a "broad stream within the Jesus movement as a whole." He is incautious, though, when he adds the names of James, Peter and Barnabas and maintains that they "not: only insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers but actively and persistently combated Paul and his Gospel."

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, xcvi. He adds (xcviii) that their view that full acceptance by God included circumcision and law-observance as Jewish lifestyle, boiled down to: "both legalism for full salvation and nomism for Christian living."

³ Martyn, 1985¹, 307-13, illustrates the very real possibility that the Gentile mission was not as monolithic as was assumed in the day of Adolf Harnack. There is clear evidence of a law-observant mission to the Gentiles in the second century. If it had its roots already in Paul's time, it is easier to assume that James probably had nothing to do with the mission of the agitators to Galatia.

⁴ Cousar, 1982, 6. Duncan, 1934, xxxiii, is of the opinion that the activities of the Judean Jewish Christian movement mentioned in Acts 15 and spreading as far a field as Antioch could have influenced the Galatian churches. They would most probably have had the support of local Jews.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 6-7. Jewett, 1970/1, 204-206 argues that this text reflects a renewed action by Zealots and that Jewish Christians could have tried avoiding persecution by circumcising Gentile Christians. Suffice it to say that without mention of Zealots in Galatians the evidence does not necessitate a connection between the agitators and the Zealot campaign. However, it could have been an aggravating circumstance.

⁶ In this regard Schmithals, 1956, 25-67, is rather alone in his view. Gnosticism would probably have a problem with close observance of the law.

⁷ It is not supported well. A Jewish background would fit better. This view is held by J. Munck, 1959, 87-134.

⁸ Ropes, 1929, 25-7.

They necessarily view God's Christ in the light of God's Law, rather than the Law in the light of Christ, and this means that Christ is secondary to the Law. Paul thus seems to have no fear of being contradicted when he repeatedly says they avoid taking their theological bearings from the cross.¹

It is highly unlikely that this assessment of the Jewish Christian mission into Galatia is correct. The Galatians experienced the Holy Spirit (Gl. 3:3, 5) and miracles (Gl. 3:5) when Paul brought the gospel to them. They had seen Christ portrayed as crucified (Gl. 3:1). They had changed from not believing in Christ to believing in Him. They had done this after clearly hearing from Paul that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ makes all the difference. If they had known the Jewish religion and the importance of law in Judaism, and despite this, still chose to become Christians, why would they now revert to something, not only very Jewish, but equally unchristian. In fact, if this were the case it could just as well be described as a specifically Jesus-oriented Messianic school of thought within Judaism! It seems much more plausible that the agitators were genuinely proclaiming Christ as saviour, but that they had given circumcision and law a prominent position of some kind in their gospel. This position might have had a noble origin – e.g., a morally correct life for followers of Christ – but the prominence given to law by the agitators left Paul more than uncomfortable. In fact, he frowned upon it in disgust!

3.2.3. *A call to caution*

In a fine and clear-headed contribution, Sumney calls for greater caution.² *Firstly*, he investigates Paul's very specific and explicit remarks regarding his agitators and concludes that they were from outside the Galatian congregations. They clearly required circumcision of the Galatians. Whether they regarded Paul as an opponent is unclear. What is clear is that Paul regarded them as dangerous.³ *Secondly*, he investigates Paul's allusions and concludes that they urged the observance of holy days, but that it is not sure whether they demanded it. They argued that the Galatians did not understand Paul properly on circumcision. Therefore, Paul had to clarify his position. What would probably have surprised them was Paul's insistence that if they followed the opponents' position on circumcision they would also have to observe the rest of the law.⁴ *Thirdly*, he investigates so-called affirmations that were directly aimed at the opponents, but warns that they are not reliable and should not be taken into account, "because identifying elements of the opponents' teachings from these verses requires unwarranted and uncontrolled mirror reading."⁵ He concludes that irrefutable evidence that the opponents held a different view from Paul on eschatology or pneumatology, or that they questioned his apostleship, is lacking.⁶ What they definitely advocated was

¹ Martyn, 1985¹, 316.

² Sumney, 1999.

³ Sumney, 1999, 140-1. Nanos, 2000, 151, chooses to refer to them as "influencers." He argues along the same lines as Sumney, stating: "[I]t is likely that [Paul's] defensive posture is rather in anticipation of the response to his message should the addressees heed his instruction," and: "Calling these people 'agitators' and 'troublemakers' merely mimics Paul's value judgements; it does not advance interpretation of the situation."

⁴ Sumney, 1999, 152-3.

⁵ Sumney, 1999, 156.

⁶ Sumney, 1999, 157-8.

circumcision and the observance of certain holy days. He finds no clear evidence that they wanted more at that stage.

By calling for circumcision and the observance of certain holy days, they clearly call for a different kind of relationship with the Jewish law than Paul is willing to allow. But it remains unclear exactly what that relationship is.¹

He asks why Paul reacted as he did if they did not differ from him that much and if they did not necessarily see themselves as his opponents? Whatever their intentions, Paul regarded them as opponents. His previous experiences, especially at Antioch, had probably made him very aware of the consequences of a stance on law somewhere to his right.² He thus actually took the position of opposing the introduction of law in whatever limited form to Christian faith and living, to its final consequence. The latter motivated him to argue so strongly, and not necessarily the opponents themselves.

Although Sumney might be a trifle too cautious, I can identify with his plea for an approach working largely with certainties. There is no compelling reason why more information is needed to understand the Galatian letter. I must add, though, that there is enough evidence to conclude that Paul definitely saw his agitators as opponents. He was not merely quixotically advancing onto an imaginary opposition in Galatia, because he had had similar experiences in Antioch, and possibly elsewhere.³ His use of the first person singular in opposition to the third person plural in Gl. 6:11-18, as indicated below, is telling. The same holds for Gl. 3:1 where Paul refers to their having been bewitched and thus fallen victim to someone, as well as his remark that he wishes those of the opposite persuasion would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:12). Add to this his defence of his apostleship for the sake of the truth of the gospel, which makes more sense in a situation of opposition; as well as the strong possibility that the letter was written just before the Jerusalem council, then a concrete opposition is highly probable. That their intentions were not necessarily malicious is quite possible. Paul's reaction, though, unless it is heavily laden rhetorically, is too hefty simply to accept their credentials.

3.2.4. *What was their perverted message?*

From the above position it is difficult, if not impossible, to know exactly what their message was. It seems best rather to focus on what Paul says the gospel is and is not. Paul was, whether their intentions were malicious or even well meant, concerned that, whatever their stance on law was, it would bring the cross of Jesus Christ into jeopardy in some way or another. It seems a safer route to assume that Paul was not necessarily arguing his case in terms of their presentation of the matter, but that he was opposing ascribing a primary position to law in

¹ Sumney, 1999, 157.

² Sumney, 1999, 159.

³ Kruse, 1992, 262-4, motivates that Paul experienced persecution for not preaching circumcision. We must add though, this persecution was not necessarily from the Galatian opposition. However, it at least tells us something of the backdrop against which Paul wrote and why he was so heavy handed.

whatever form, in Christianity. In the process, he argued the matter to its logical conclusion and implied consequences.

3.2.4.1. *Paul's own story as hermeneutical key to the opposing message*

Paul's so-called autobiographical section (*narratio* - Gl. 1:11-2:21) is mostly interpreted as a defence of his apostleship, the latter having been challenged, either intentionally¹ or unintentionally.² We have seen that the juridical rhetorical approach by distinction, introduced into Pauline scholarship by Betz, was introduced largely on the assumption that Paul wished to repair his embattled authority. Even before Betz' impetus it was largely accepted that at least Gl. 1-2 was written in defence of Paul's authority.³ Chrysostom (345-407) is noted as the oldest known source in this tradition.⁴ Obviously, Paul defends his authority. There was no question about it being part and parcel of his defence of the true gospel. However, to regard the *narratio* as largely concerned with apostolic authority is an exaggeration robbing the letter of one of its arguments in defence of the gospel, which was his main concern.⁵

[I]n 1.1-12, ἀπόστολος occurs only in 1.1, while all attention is focused on εὐαγγέλιον as the main topic (1.6; 1.7 [2x]; 1.9; 1.11 [2x]). In the letter as a whole, ἀπόστολος and derivatives occur four times, εὐαγγέλιον and derivatives fourteen times. This is reason enough to try a different approach and to analyse the argument from a reader's point of view – that is, to look at the direct and indirect instructions for the reader incorporated in the text.⁶

Lategan suggests that the *narratio* be considered as one of Paul's arguments supporting the true gospel against the other gospel. He applies and expands on a notion introduced earlier, mainly by Lyons,⁷ that Paul uses his self-account to emphasise the God – man antithesis. The entire *narratio*, from Gl. 1:11-12, is crucial for the rest of the letter.⁸ He states the εὐαγγέλιον he preaches is not κατὰ ἄνθρωπον (11), neither did he receive it παρὰ ἀνθρώπου, but δι' ἄποκαλύψεως (12) – a notion already present in Gl. 1:1, 6-10 and referring to the nature of the gospel.⁹ Although the origin of the gospel is obviously implied,

¹ The opponents could have questioned Paul's authority, because "the pillars" did not commission him. They could have perceived "the pillars" to be the only legitimate interpreters of the Christian belief system and Scriptures. It would suit their case if they could silence Paul this way.

² By bringing another interpretation to the Galatians' attention and convincing them to whatever degree, it would inadvertently bring up the question of Paul's authority to interpret Scripture correctly.

³ Lightfoot, 1890, 92-101.

⁴ Gaventa, 1986², 310.

⁵ Lategan, 1988, 416-7; Witherington, 1998¹, 89.

⁶ Lategan, 1988, 417-8. According to Moule, 1953, 59, κατὰ followed by an accusative could mean "in accordance with" or "in terms of" a certain standard. Bauer, 1979, 407, elaborates on this notion of norm, standard or comparison. In Gl. 3:15, e.g. Paul uses κατὰ ἄνθρωπον to introduce a human example, something from the human world that humans will understand, giving it a less judgemental connotation. However, for the rest one already senses the introduction of the negatively loaded term κατὰ σάρκα, which is the antithesis of κατὰ πνεῦμα to which we turn in Ch. 3.

⁷ Lyons, 1986, 146-64. Also Cosgrove, 1988, 119-46; and Gaventa, 1986², 326, who accept Paul features prominently in the *narratio*, not for apologetic reasons, but because his experience was typically Gospel like.

⁸ Lategan, 1988, 418-9. The *narratio* proper beginning at Gl.1:13-2:14. Lyons, 1986, 171, also supports the notion that Gl. 1:11-12 introduces Gl. 1:13-2:21 in which he substantiates his claim made in Gl. 1:11-12.

⁹ Lategan, 1988, 420. He elaborates on 421-3.

one should not read it exclusively as such, as if Paul was against tradition and human transmission in principle, but rather as a reference to norm.¹

The gospel does not conform to human criteria, does not take human considerations into account. It does not function in a human way, does not honour human preferences. This is what distinguishes it from the 'other gospel'. Paul is making a profound theological statement which is of decisive importance for the rest of his argument.²

Paul reflects on his own pre-Christian life according to the tradition of his fathers as in opposition to God's grace in Christ (Gl. 1:13-14). He refers to his own experience of coming to faith and receiving his vocation to be an apostle to the Gentiles, and his visit to Jerusalem and "those who were apostles before me" (Gl. 1:15-2:10), including the negative remark on those brought in "to spy out our freedom" (Gl. 2:4) and the positive one on their agreement (Gl. 2:9-10). He follows with Peter's subsequent inappropriate behaviour at Antioch (Gl. 2:11-14) based on fear of the circumcision party (Gl. 2:12), and includes his rebuke of Peter (Gl. 2:14). Having done this he has illustrated the difference between the true gospel and the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*.

This is followed by theological reflection (Gl. 2:15-21) on the biographical accounts of Gl. 1:13-2:14, introduced in Gl. 1:11-12 as examples of how the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* operates. Despite Betz' defence of an apologetic approach, one can agree that "Gl. 2:15-21 should be seen as Paul's *propositio* that "sums up the *narratio*'s material content" and "sets up the arguments to be discussed later in the *probatio*."³ Longenecker is probably correct that the *propositio firstly*, reflects the points of agreement between the adherents of the two gospels, i.e. that no one is justified on the basis of works of law, but by faith in Christ (Gl. 2:15-16). *Secondly*, it states the point of difference negatively, on the notion that Christian freedom inevitably leads to libertinism (Gl. 2:17) and that prevention of this tendency calls for the implementation of a legal basis (Gl. 2:18). *Thirdly*, it states the difference positively, i.e. being dead to law and living to God (Gl. 2:19); and being crucified with Christ, so that Christ lives in him (Gl. 2:20). He wraps up the *propositio* (and the *narratio*) by once again contrasting justification through law and God's grace in Christ's atoning death (Gl. 2:21),⁴ and so returns to his point of departure in Gl. 1:11-12, giving content to the difference between his gospel and the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*. In short, Paul introduces the *narratio* by contrasting the true and the *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* "gospel" (Gl. 1:11-12). He follows with autobiographical information to illustrate the different effects of the two gospels (Gl. 1:13-2:14).⁵ He moves on to reflect theologically on the contrast between the two (Gl. 2:15-21), and the difference Christ makes in the believer (Gl. 2:20). This results in a chiasmus (*fig. 1.1*).

¹ Lategan, 1988, 420-1.

² Lategan, 1988, 420.

³ Betz, 1979, 114. Du Toit, 1991, 225, suggests that it is not a true summary. However, it does reflect the context broadly.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 82.

⁵ Koptak, 1990, 263, emphasises that where the other gospel operates it brings division where there once was unity. "There is only unity in the gospel, which is both revealed and circumcision-free."

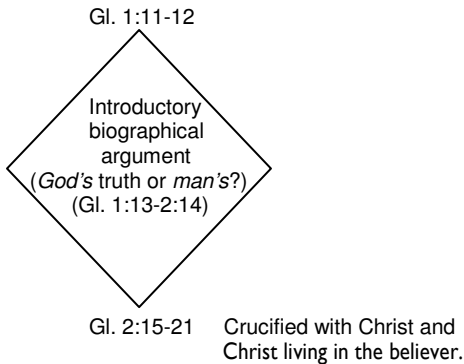


fig. 1.1.

Importantly, Paul moves from the personal to the so-called paradigmatic “I”.¹

In terms of the theory of argumentation, Paul is addressing a universal audience. At the same time, his argument is not wholly metaphoric or a-historical, it is related to his experience – and even more importantly - it has its basis in the death of Christ on the cross.²

It should be clear that the so-called autobiographical section is about much more than Paul’s defence of his apostleship. It is about the fundamental contrast between God and man’s notions of justification. It is fundamentally about being crucified with Christ and His living in the believer, or being without Him, seeking justification through works of law. It is about an existential association with Christ, his cross and his resurrection; it being so dear to one that it is as though one were actually crucified and continues to live as though Christ lives through one. What was at stake for Paul was no small issue. It was not about himself or another.³ Neither was it about different and acceptable variations on the theme of Christian living. Whatever the opponents’ arguments were and to what extent they actually wanted to see law reintroduced to the Galatian community, for Paul it was as serious as choosing between God and man! The tone that he sets in his introductory argument is the tone with which he persists throughout the letter. For him there was no middle position!

3.2.4.2. Paul’s own hand as hermeneutical key to the opposing message

In a stimulating article in search of a hermeneutical key to Galatians Weima explores the Paul’s words in his own hand (Gl. 6:11-18). He indicates a few contrasts between himself and his agitators.⁴ The reason for seeking the hermeneutical key in the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18), more specifically in Gl. 6:12-17, is well founded. Witherington, though taking Galatians as deliberative, agrees with Betz that the essence of the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18), namely the so-called *peroratio* (Gl. 6:12-17),

¹ Betz, 1979, 122.

² Lategan, 1988, 427.

³ Barclay, 2002, 146. Hays, 1983, 29-30, remarks that one should not regard Paul’s story (*narratio*) as the centre of the gospel. He uses the story in service of the gospel, which is found in Gl. 3-4. Paul’s own story is not at the centre of his letter. At the centre is the Christological story.

⁴ Weima, 1993, 90-107. In seeking a hermeneutical key in this section he has the support of scholars of the calibre of Betz, 1979, 313; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 288-9; Morris, 1996, 185; Witherington, 1998, 444.

fulfils the function, as Betz would have it, of the summation of the main arguments and the stirring up of emotions in support of the authors view. In this regard he finds enough correspondence between the *peroratio* (Gl. 6:12-17) on the one hand, and both the *exordium* (Gl. 1:6-11)¹ and *propositio* (2 Gl.:15-21)² on the other.

The conclusion makes clear what the other Gospel being advocated was, and how the Gospel of circumcision was not to be followed, as it was not the true Gospel. Instead the Galatians must stay faithful to the Gospel Paul had preached when he was there, a Gospel summed up in the *propositio* in 2:15-21.³

Weima draws attention to Paul's concentrated use of the first person singular in a very short space, deducing that Paul wanted to confront his opponents and their claims head-on in the strategic letter closing.⁴ Add to this the equally heavy emphasis on the third person plural consistently referring to the agitators' conduct and motives (five times in verses 12-13). There are also three references to the Galatians in the very same verses (12-13), in each case showing the Galatians as the agitators' victims. Thus, the *conclusio* was probably nothing less than a final showdown between Paul and his agitators. Weima also identifies a chiasmus in Gl. 6:12-16, heavily emphasising Gl. 6:14 in which the cross is stressed as the dividing line between Paul and the agitators.⁵

C	(v.12)	ὄσοι - negative judgement on opponents of Paul.
B	(v.13)	οὐδὲ γάρ ἀλλὰ (circumcision versus non-circumcision)
A	(v.14)	ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
B'	(v.15)	οὐδὲ γάρ ἀλλὰ (circumcision versus non-circumcision)
C'	(v.16)	ὄσοι - positive judgement on supporters of Paul.

fig.1.2.

He identifies four contrasts between Paul and his agitators in this chiasmus.

- a) *Contrast 1* deals with their *motive of boasting* (Gl. 6:13). Whether one understands the want of boasting in the flesh of the Galatians literally as an endeavour to increase their social standing amongst nationalistic Jews,⁶ or whether one understands it as a Pauline caricature of the agitators,⁷ is irrelevant. It is about their self-interest – about being successful in gathering

¹ Introducing the subject, stating perplexity, cursing opponents and stating the integrity of the author's view.

² Summarising the outline of the problem at hand as communicated in the *narratio* (1:12-2:14) and providing a transition to the *probatio* (3:1-4:31) where the different proofs are set out.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 444. Du Toit, 1991, 225, rejects Betz' position of a summary, but accepts that the *peroratio* reflects the main thrust of the rest of the letter.

⁴ Weima, 1993, 94. Besides referring to his taking up the pen (Gl. 6:11), Paul refers to himself thrice in each of verses 14 and 17.

⁵ Weima, 1993, 94.

⁶ Bligh, 1969, 490-1; Bruce, 1982¹, 270.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 314; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 290-1.

circumcised Gentiles, as opposed to Paul's noble motive of *boasting only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gl. 6:14).¹

- b) *Contrast 2* deals with the *motive of avoiding persecution* (Gl. 6:12). What persecution this could be is unclear. Weima follows Jewett's lead² with regard to a surge in Zealot activity in Judea between 46 and 52 CE, leading up to the Jewish War in 66 CE. This is possible, but there is no textual evidence of this persecution going as far as Galatia, or of this alleged threat of persecution by the agitators being connected with the Zealot one.³ Witherington's solution that the feared persecution was about honour rating is enlightening, but not his view that the agitators were seeking to increase their honour rating with local Galatian Jews.⁴ There is no evidence that there was a threat from that source so far removed from Jerusalem. Betz is probably correct in stating that we cannot be sure of any form or source of persecution. However, his reason for saying this is slightly too cynical. He maintains that Paul's rhetoric at this point is too subjective to accept any historical or concrete basis for a fear of persecution.⁵ All this being said, I maintain Paul must have had some basis for making this accusation. It could have been as serious as Jewett's scenario. It could well have been in line with a concern about an honour rating with regard to different groups. We cannot be sure, but Paul would not very likely have made the observation in this critical section without some form of concrete persecution.⁶ What is of utmost importance is that in this contrast it is once again the agitators' self-interest that motivates them to avoid *persecution for the cross of Christ* (Gl. 6:12). Paul, on the other hand, bore "the marks of Jesus" (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ - Gl. 6:17), probably referring to his past sufferings for the sake of the Gospel.⁷ This obviously enhances Paul's integrity and honour, founded on the cross and not on self-interest.
- c) *Contrast 3* deals with the *external motive of circumcision versus non-circumcision*. The specific issue that brought their internal motivation to the fore was the pressure they exerted on the Galatians to circumcise (Gl. 6:12, 13). Paul argued that this distinction was no longer important (Gl. 6:14). What was important was being part of the new creation (Gl. 6:15). Circumcision is, of course, a theme running through the whole letter and it is specifically connected with the *cross* in Gl. 2:21 ("For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose")⁸ and Gl. 5:2 ("If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you").⁹

¹ Paul echoes his earlier remark (Gl. 1:10) that he does not seek the favour of men, whilst his opponents are self-serving. See also Du Toit, 1994², 157-61.

² Jewett, 1970/1, 204-6.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 447-8.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 448.

⁵ Betz, 315-6.

⁶ One wonders whether his reference to persecution could make any sense in the concrete, historical setting in Galatia if there were no persecution in any form at all. The absence of any threat would make Paul's remark as puzzling then as it is for us now, and would probably not have enhanced Paul's integrity.

⁷ 2 Cor. 11:23-27. He refers in Gl. 5:11 to still being persecuted and in Gl. 4:29 alludes to it. Dunn, 1993², 347.

⁸ Obviously, the cross is implied. "Law" being the wider concept, but precipitating in the matter of circumcision.

⁹ Once again the cross as symbol of Christ's salvific work is implied.

To maintain the necessity of circumcision...is to deny the completeness of Christ's salvific work on the cross (see 1:4) and the new age that that event has brought about.¹

- d) *Contrast 4* deals with the *theological contrast of world versus new creation*. The words κόσμος (Gl. 6:14, twice) and καινή κτίσις (Gl. 6:15) are contrasted. That to which Gl. 1:4 already attested (*deliverance from the present evil age* through Christ's giving up of Himself)² is now described from the flip-side of the coin, i.e. that *new creation* has dawned through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fundamentally significant, this contrast is at the fulcrum of the chiasmus. One's position with regard to the cross of Christ not only determines whether one is self-serving and finds continued significance in circumcision, or whether one is at the opposite end. One's position with regard to Christ determines whether one is still part of the world without Christ and his deliverance, or part of the new aeon in Christ.

It is clear from this analysis of Gl. 6:11-18 that the contrasting elements Paul identifies have one common denominator – the cross of Christ.³ The cross of Christ is the dividing line between the age of the flesh, self-interest, perverted intentions and law, on the one hand, and the new creation in which these phenomena are absent. For Paul there is nothing less at stake in this controversy than the heart of the gospel – the truth of the gospel, as he calls it - the cross of Christ! By being in step with the cross of Christ he was part of the new creation, whilst those advocating such matters as the Law of Moses and circumcision were still part of the present evil age and not willing to take up the stumbling block of the cross (Gl. 5:11 - τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ).

In the passionate polemical statement in Gl. 5:11 a different aspect of the σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυρου is to the forefront, namely, repudiation of the message of grace and of freedom from the Law. The short saying ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυρου tacitly presupposes the idea that offence is of the very essence of the Gospel. This is not to be abandoned at any cost, nor is it to be softened by treating the cross and circumcision as equally good alternatives. To do this is to weaken the uncompromising demand for faith and to render nugatory the offensive character of the cross, but in so doing to make equally ineffective the saving power of the cross and faith.⁴

His agitators might not have realised the implications of their stance, especially if they were from Jerusalem and its Jewish mission. They might have thought they were carrying on where Paul left off, illustrating the need for a council of missionaries to meet in order to reach agreement on the matter.⁵ However, taking Paul's rhetoric to have some historical basis, it seems they disagreed with Paul, rather than merely regarding his gospel as insufficient. Their intentions might have been noble, but according to Paul they were misguided and their effects were detrimental to the gospel and to the Galatians.

¹ Weima, 1993, 100.

² Strongly present in Gl. 2:20, 21. Crucifixion well represented in Gl. 3:1, 13; 4:5; 5:11, 24.

³ Dunn, 1993², 337.

⁴ Stählin, 1971, 354. Guhr, 1976, 708-9. Also H.W. Kuhn, 1975, 36-7.

⁵ In which case the incident could have led to the Jerusalem council, probably following within months of the letter.

Looking at the discussed chiasmus from another angle, Paul is saying that in the midst of, and covered under the over-inflated debate on whether Gentile believers should be circumcised or not, lies the real issue. This issue is the real determining factor for measuring the truth of the gospel and deciding on what side of the divide one finds oneself. There is only one factor deciding whether one is an insider or an outsider; whether one is part of the Israel of God (Gl. 6:16) or not; whether one has peace and mercy (Gl. 6:16) or not; in fact, whether one is a new creation (Gl. 6:15). This factor is faith in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: the only entity in which Paul wished to glory!

3.2.4.3. *The truth of the gospel: freedom through the cross!*

Paul uses the phrase “the truth of the gospel” (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) twice (Gl. 2:5, 14). Scholars differ on the meaning of the phrase. It could mean the “true gospel” as opposed to the perverted one,¹ “the real consequences of the gospel,”² or “the integrity of the gospel.”³ The context of Gl. 2:5 is that Paul, Barnabas and Titus went to Jerusalem to share with those of repute (Gl. 2:2) the gospel that he preached amongst the Gentiles. He specifically mentions Titus’ not being compelled to be circumcised (Gl. 2:3). In the next verse he contrasts this position with that of so-called false brethren who had been brought in to spy on their freedom and to bring them into bondage again (Gl. 2:4). To this Paul, Barnabas and Titus would not submit for a moment, so “that the truth of the gospel might be preserved.” Clearly, whatever “the truth of the gospel” is, it is contrasted with a position in Christianity (he calls them “brethren”) that places a high premium on circumcision, and which is, to Paul’s mind, false and a new form of bondage. On the other hand, he aligns himself and his understanding of the gospel, not only with the truth, but also with freedom. This he says after dealing extensively (Gl. 1:4, 6, 7) with the gospel as God’s gracious deliverance in Christ; and stressing that the gospel came to him by revelation of Christ, and not through teaching or tradition (Gl. 1:12). He returns to this subject in Gl. 2:20, which we determined is the theological culmination of his introductory argument in which he contrasts the true gospel and the “gospel” κατὰ ἄνθρωπον. This recurs in Gl. 6:14 where the cross of Christ is once again central to his gospel.

The context of “truth of the gospel” in Gl. 2:14 is slightly different. Its immediate context is table fellowship.⁴ Cephas had been eating with Gentile Christians in Antioch (Gl. 2:12), obviously at ease. He had had the experience of which we read in Acts 10. In addition to that, Paul had met with him, James and John and they had agreed on Paul’s gospel to the Gentiles being correct (Gl. 2:1-10). The protasis of Gl. 2:14 probably suggests that Peter had already abandoned Jewish dietary laws when eating amongst Gentiles.⁵ But when Jewish Christians came

¹ Bultmann, 1967, 139.

² Schlier, 1971, 73; Mußner, 1974, 111.

³ Lightfoot, 1890; 107; Betz, 1979, 92.

⁴ Nanos, 2000, 153, makes it quite clear that we should not include Peter and those from the Antioch situation amongst the Galatian “influencers”. Paul merely draws from experience.

⁵ Jewett, 1971, 108, 248.

to Antioch he withdrew from eating with Gentiles and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. The detail of the matter does not concern us now. Suffice it to say that although those from the circumcision party were the ones to stir up the situation, Paul's argument was not with them, but with Peter and Barnabas who had been carried away by the situation. He accuses them of insincerity (Gl. 2:13) and condemns them (Gl. 2:11) for not being "straightforward (ὀρθοποδέω) about the truth of the gospel" (Gl. 2:14). They were not consistent to the point where they had to abandon old traditions for the sake of the truth. The effect of their insincerity was the breaking up of table fellowship between people who had been freed from old labels and taken up in a new group, namely that of faith.¹

It seems Paul meant this phrase ("truth of the gospel") to be multi-dimensional. In Gl. 2:5 the phrase clearly contrasts the true gospel – Paul's gospel of freedom – with the gospel of bondage of the false brethren. At least circumcision is implied as part of the bondage, but then as the epitome of Jewish law observance. In Gl. 2:14 this meaning would be implied, but the integrity of the gospel in the concrete daily living of the congregation is in the foreground. It was the gospel without prejudice towards certain people. The truth of the gospel is related to the equality and unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Fellowship between the two authenticated the truth of the gospel.² It will be argued that this gospel did not demand legal requirements of believers. In fact, it was law-free and had to remain so. He would not allow the law in whatever form to be imposed upon the believers, because it would tarnish the integrity and life-changing ability of the gospel.³ Titus was therefore not compelled to be circumcised. This does not necessarily mean that he was not circumcised. He could have been, but then as an exercise of his freedom.⁴

As far as Paul was concerned, Cephas had jeopardised the integrity of the gospel in Gl. 2:11-14. There were Jewish Christians who were more concerned about their Jewishness than pronouncing the freedom Christ obtained for them (Gl. 1:4; 5:1). In the process, Cephas inadvertently questioned the integrity of the faith of Gentile Christians, as if they lacked the fullness of faith that some form of law observance could have provided. To Paul's mind, this point of view compromised the doctrine of justification by faith, even bringing it into jeopardy.

He [Paul] is most likely saying that he stood on principle about a Law-free Gospel so that his Gentile converts wherever they were or would be could be benefited. Paul sees as at the core of the truth of the Gospel a fundamental commitment to the freedom we have in Christ.⁵

¹ Esler, 1998, 119.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 158-9.

³ Van Aarde, 2002, 517, equates *truth* in Gl. 2:5 and 2:14 with the Afrikaans word *krag*, which could, as he seems to imply, mean *strength, authority or influence*. He argues ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is contrasted with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. The former is from God in his faithfulness, bringing with it a radical change of life – freedom. The latter, being from men, changes nothing and emphasises man's bondage to human conventions.

⁴ Bruce, 1982¹, 115.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 138.

In particular, it [“the truth of the gospel”] has in mind the true gospel proclaimed by Paul as opposed to the false gospel advocated by the Judaizers (cf. 1:6-9) – i.e., the gospel that has as its consequence Gentile freedom.¹

Had it been about Jewish Christians merely eating according to the habits with which they grew up, as was probably the case in Jerusalem, Paul would probably not be bothered. However, this was about Gentile Christians never having been subjected to these laws. To expect them to eat according to Jewish habits would be nothing short of imposing such laws as part of the gospel.² This would also be the case for Jewish Christians were they to understand the law as part of the gospel. The gospel was law-free. To maintain its integrity, law could not be allowed to cast a shadow on the gospel.

3.2.5. *The gospel truth as only choice*

It is clear from above that there is a very real danger of reading more into the background of Paul's letter to the Galatians than the letter itself unreservedly allows for. For this reason, one should be cautious of assuming as fact that which is based on probability while determining the scenario in which Paul felt prompted to write his letter. He played a pioneering and fundamental role during his and Barnabas' first missionary journey into Asia Minor (47-48 CE)³ as recorded in Ac. 13:14f. They founded churches in the southern part of Galatia, mainly amongst believers of Gentile ancestry. It seems wondrous workings of the Spirit accompanied their conversion (Gl. 3:2-5). After Paul left Galatia controversy arose as to the relationship of Gentile Christians to Judaism, the latter being the religion from which Christianity stems. Were Gentile converts to be circumcised? Whether Jewish Christians from Jerusalem prompted the issue, or only gave advice in an already developed or developing debate is uncertain. Whether they actively denigrated Paul and/or his position is equally unclear. Within the boundaries of a cautious approach we can accept that they probably advocated circumcision and at least parts of the law (dietary and calendar laws) to supplement Paul's gospel with, to their mind, a substantial ethic. Judging from Paul's reaction, it seems this ethical supplement was so emphasised in Galatia that it reeked of salvation by human merit, if only with a whiff.

Coming from a Gentile background and entering a new religion, most of them would probably have experienced an ethical void. Because of the presence of Christian Jews amongst them and the visit of itinerant missionaries, they probably felt inclined to follow the rules of the religion from which Christianity originated. It came to Paul's attention that there was a debate over the need for Gentile Christians to be circumcised. Paul's concern was for the truth of the gospel. He stressed his apostolic authority, not in defence of himself, but in as much as the discrediting of his authority could have led to the falsification of the gospel. The circumcision theme runs through the letter, because Paul used it to point to the

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 53.

² Morris, 1996, 81.

³ Bruce, 1977, 475; Witherington, 1998², 44.

implications of demanding any law observance from Gentile Christians. He does not differentiate between laws. He mentions circumcision, calendars and diet, not because he narrowed law down to these, but because he was presented with them. It was the point of entrance into a larger subject, Christian freedom. It seems that he wanted to gather them at the point where they found themselves, i.e. circumcision and law, and guide them to that ultimate point of freedom. He tried to precipitate the debate by indicating that law as a whole, and its individual applications, had no place in new creation characterised by freedom through Christ's cross and resurrection.

In Christ God freed man to be a new creation. To subject believers in Christ to law in any form would jeopardise their freedom. It would be a return to their pre-Christian slavery. He wanted them to understand the full implications of what God did in Christ. He delivered them from the present evil age into a new creation. They were now free from anything characteristic of the previous aeon. If anyone were to deviate from this position, his motives had to be questioned. Only self-interest could make one continue on a course that places the cross in the shadows. If any form of law were advocated as necessary for salvation or ethics, it would jeopardise the truth of the gospel, that through "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gl. 6:14). Nothing was now as important as being part of new creation (Gl. 6:15).

4. CONCLUSION

On the eve of the Jerusalem council and at the watershed between faith in Jesus Christ on the one side, and paganism and Judaism on the other, a fundamentally un-gospel like element presented itself from within the faith community. Law observance in some form (circumcision, dietary, and calendar laws) was presented as necessary for believers in the gospel – either as identity markers of the faith community, or for salvation in some supplementary way, or as a necessary aid for Christian ethical behaviour. It had all the markings of dividing the community of faith and jeopardising the integrity of the gospel itself. In the latter case it cast doubt on the integrity of the cross of Jesus Christ, seemingly helping people of faith to deal with an ethical void.¹

Being aware through divine revelation of the radical difference brought about by the advent of Christ (Gl. 1:12); being overwhelmingly certain that salvation was only through the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus (Gl. 1:1,4; 2:20); and being convinced that through the Spirit Christ was now living in the believer (Gl. 3:2-3; 4:6; 5:25) who had been crucified to the world and the world to him (Gl. 6:14), Paul was heavily burdened by the Galatians' misunderstanding of the times (Gl. 1:4; 3:1). They had begun with the eschatological Spirit and were now reverting to practices characteristic of the present evil age existing before Christ's ad-

¹ Hay, 2000, 294, makes a very valid point, suggesting that the Galatians were not thinking of abandoning faith in Christ. They were seeking a little more security than they felt Christ could provide. This would probably be true especially of the ethical guidance in Christianity.

vent. Consequently, he wrote a letter from the heart to the Galatians. He made use of a vast array of rhetorical mechanisms and effects (apologetic and deliberative elements, rebuke and irony, as well as elements of the ancient rhetorical effects of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*) in order to defend the true gospel of freedom in Christ (Gl. 1:6-12; 5:1).

He wrote the letter with the greatest sense of *urgency*. There could be no doubt in the mind of the readers concerning the seriousness with which Paul viewed the matter of reversion to circumcision and other elements of law.¹ The gospel itself was at stake. Paul would leave no stone unturned and do nothing in half-measure in his efforts to convince the Galatians of the foolishness of the so-called other gospel, which was actually a non-gospel. It seems likely that the letter was written shortly before the Jerusalem council and that its content most probably reflects the thrust of Paul's position at that council. This enhances the letter as a landmark in the development of Christianity, as well as its relevance for modern believers in their efforts to stand firm in the freedom for which Christ set us free!

¹ Krimmer, 1981, 11.

CHAPTER 2

APOCALYPTIC – PAUL’S PARADIGM SWITCH TOWARD THE FREEDOM MOTIF

In the previous chapter it was emphasised that Paul considered the situation in Galatians to be extremely serious. The truth of the gospel was at stake. By means of the letter and the eclectic implementation of available rhetorical mechanisms, he wished to address the situation as a matter of extreme urgency. In this chapter Paul’s apocalyptic use of language¹ and allusion to apocalyptic in Galatians will be considered. It is necessary to illustrate how he uses it to emphasise the arrival and revelation of a totally new and radically different situation since Christ’s advent, cross and resurrection. Since the object of this thesis is to determine as clearly as possible what freedom entails in Galatians, it is fundamentally important to get a firm grip on the context within which Paul operated, as well as the medium he employed to reframe the Galatians’ mindset. It will be argued that, although the subject is contentious, one should not ignore apocalyptic as if it had no role in Judaism and early Christianity. It was a reality. Being confronted with an opposing theological, soteriological and ethical stance in Christianity, Paul applied apocalyptic to reframe his readers’ thought world. He did not use an apocalyptic style; nor did he refer to future apocalyptic events. He made use of apocalyptic allusion, using certain terms with a profound apocalyptic connotation, as well as disclosure language.

He wanted the Galatians to grasp the radically new dispensation that had arrived with the advent of Christ, and in which they shared through faith in Christ. This had implications for their way of life or *ethos*. With the advent of Christ, they had moved from the old dispensation to new creation. They could not think of their position, status and way of life as merely a continuation of the present evil age – not even as it presented itself in Judaism. By using apocalyptic allusion Paul emphasised *discontinuity* with Judaism and the consequent soteriological and ethical reorientation needed since Christ’s advent, death and resurrection. Apocalyptic² was not only a fine tool to use with regard to changing the Galatians’ symbolic universe, but also to impress on them the urgency of the situation. They had to realise what time it was. Since Christ’s advent they were living in the hoped for eschatological time. They could not retrace the track back into the time before Christ. Believers were urgently to align themselves with the cross through which they were crucified with Christ and through which they were now dead to the old world. Christ was now living in them and they could not live with one foot in the old and the other in the new aeon.

I will take the approach that it is not at all necessary to make a choice between a salvation-historical and an apocalyptic approach. The theology of Galatians is best understood in terms of a combination.³ They need not be exclusive of each other.¹

¹ Or is it “Paul’s use of apocalyptic language?” Whichever way, the intention should become clearer.

² The term will be defined more closely in §3 of this chapter.

³ Barclay, 1988, 99.

1. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN APOCALYPTIC RHETORICAL ANGLE

R.G. Hall², in an article that has sadly not received due attention, investigated the interesting possibility of Paul's having made use of *Jewish apocalyptic rhetoric*, which he describes as “a revelatory *topos*.”³ He contends that, although Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks were formative for rhetorical activity throughout the Mediterranean world, they would not simply replace native rhetoric.⁴ According to Hall the fact that most rhetorical interpreters struggle to fit the logic of Paul's arguments into the Greco-Roman rhetorical models, probably means that they have “largely neglected forms of argumentation developed by apocalyptists and other ancient Jewish and Christian writers.”⁵ Hall investigates the juridical arguments of three Jewish apocalyptic writings, namely “The Astronomical Book” (1 *Enoch* 72-82), “The Animal Apocalypse” (1 *Enoch* 85-90) and “The Argument for Circumcision” (*Jubilees* 15). He then applies them to Galatians. He identifies four elements common to these apocalyptic writings, and evident in Galatians. *Firstly*, there is a claim to *inspiration* (also in Gl. 1:10-2:21). *Secondly*, there is a revelation of *divine judgement* ordering the world into righteous and wicked camps (also in Gl. 3:1-5, 7-29; 4:1-11; 4:21-5:1; 5:16-6:10). *Thirdly*, there is a call to *join the righteous camp ruled by God* and to repudiate the wicked realm ruled by other forces (also in Gl. 4:8-11, 12-20; 5:1, 5:16-6:10). *Fourthly*, it is implied that the author's *course of action* is the correct one (also found in Gl. 4:12-20; 5:2-15; 6:11-12).⁶

Are these common features sufficient to actually speak of an apocalyptic rhetorical style? It seems to be not the style, but the content, that suggests Paul had an apocalyptic motif. It would be safer to speak of *an apocalyptic frame of mind* in Paul's presentation of his gospel in Galatians. Once again it must be stressed that Paul had a characteristic way of writing letters based on that of his *Umwelt* (both Hellenistic and Judaic). There is no reason to seek a rhetorical model according to which Paul would slavishly mould his arguments. However, Hall's position is valuable. It does not suggest that Paul moulded Galatians into an apocalyptic style or used only one rhetorical mechanism. In fact, he writes:

This paper assumes that analysis of the deliberative rhetoric of Galatians requires recourse to native rhetoric as well as to the Greco-Roman handbook tradition.⁷

He demonstrates how both the juridical and deliberative Greco-Roman rhetorical models fit the picture and that they need not exclude each other. He help-

¹ Marshall, 1988, 612-3, confirms that Oscar Cullmann, after World War II, became the main protagonist of *Heilsgeschichte*, denouncing Bultmann's demythologising of the gospel's kerygma, and, in effect, his dehistoricising of it. Thus it was not developed to counter apocalyptic. It was done to place salvation firmly in history.

² Hall, 1996, 434-53.

³ Hall, 1996, 436.

⁴ Hall, 1996, 435.

⁵ Hall, 1996, 435, cites Classen, 1991, 31, and argues that one should take other than the usual forms of argumentation into account, such as those of philosophers, apocalyptists and other Jewish and Christian writers.

⁶ Hall, 1996, 439.

⁷ Hall, 1996, 436.

fully stresses that certain elements seem to dominate Jewish apocalyptic literature and that these are found in Galatians. In this respect his title is very apt, stating that Paul is (merely) “arguing *like* an apocalypse” (my accentuation). He does *not contend* that Galatians *is* an apocalypse or that Paul slavishly followed the rules of apocalyptic writing.¹ This fits in well with the previously stated position that Paul made full use of what he had at his disposal to advise the congregation pastorally on the truth of the gospel, and to influence their future thinking and decisions on matters theological and ethical. What he stresses is that Galatians should be understood as revelatory in nature. Paul wanted to reveal to them the truth that had previously been revealed to him. He wanted to stress that it was without human pollution, authentic gospel to the core!

Considering the earlier motivated point that Paul wrote a letter from the heart, it is more than likely that Paul’s Jewish roots played a dominant role in his letter. In this respect Jewish apocalyptic rhetoric should be investigated, while steering clear of any notion of Paul using a fixed apocalyptic style. Galatians is a letter and was intended to be exactly that. It should not be regarded as an apocalypse. It does, however, contain and employ profound apocalyptic elements.

2. APOCALYPTIC AS A CONTENTIOUS TERM

What makes an apocalyptic view on Paul attractive is the realisation that Jewish apocalyptic had a great influence on the symbolic universe of Early Christianity. Research into apocalyptic and eschatology in the NT has come a long way since Albert Schweitzer² extensively tabled the subject of interpreting the Christ event eschatologically. Much has also been done since Käsemann³ raised the eyebrows with his powerful and, for many, enigmatic statement – albeit contentious – that “apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology.”⁴

Marshall reflects on this statement in a very concise and helpful article.⁵ He points to the fact that Käsemann’s definition of apocalyptic was nothing more than the expectation of the imminent return of Christ.⁶ It was therefore more in line with eschatology than with apocalyptic. From this angle, and with evidence provided by numerous scholars,⁷ he argues that, although the imminent *parousia* was a very central motif in early Christian theology, it was not as central as Käsemann would have

¹ Collins, 1979, 9, defines the genre: “Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.” Dunn, 1990¹, describes its literary characteristics as pseudonymity, visionary and symbolic, esoteric, surveying history from an earlier perspective, reflecting the response of faith in crisis, and containing exhortation.

² Schweitzer, 1910; 1912; 1931.

³ Käsemann, 1965; 1969; 1971.

⁴ Käsemann, 1969, 102.

⁵ Marshall, 1987, 33 - 41.

⁶ Marshall, 1987, 36. Bultmann, 1967, 476-82, reflecting on his student’s view, states that not apocalyptic, but eschatology, is the mother of early Christian theology (482).

⁷ Amongst others, authors to whom reference will be made later in the chapter, like: Dunn, 1990¹; Rowland, 1982; Bornkamm, 1967, 815f.; Lohse, 1971, 48 – 67.

us believe.¹ This being said, the importance of apocalyptic should not be played down and will be given due attention. However, it does not fall within the scope of this study to pay detailed attention to the debate on exactly what apocalyptic is² and how it differs from eschatology,³ or to what extent it should be used as an hermeneutical key to Paul in general. However, the matter will not be sidestepped. Reference will be made to scholars holding varying interpretations and opinions on apocalyptic and eschatology, both terminologically and phenomenologically. We will be making use of authors who reject, ignore, or uphold the notion that apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology. The term features prominently in Paul's Galatian letter. The fact that ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκαλύψις occurs (only) four times in Galatians (Gl. 1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23)⁴ should not deceive us. It will be illustrated that Paul enhances its prominence by setting it in a certain context.

One would have to decide on a position in this regard in order to maintain academic integrity and refrain from subjective choices bent on proving a certain point rather than seeking the truth – the truth of the gospel about which Paul wanted to be straightforward (Gl. 2:14). Failing to take a position could lead to dogmatological opportunism and inconsistency, making scientific research difficult and the understanding of Pauline theology inaccurate, if not impossible. If we accept the scientific premise that a text set in a specific context has a limited range of meanings;⁵ and if Galatians is as context-related as accepted, it is imperative to narrow down the context as accurately as possible, and with that, the range of possible interpretations.⁶

¹ Marshall, 1987, 38.

² The debate is covered in detail by amongst others scholars like Matlock, 1996 and Johnson, 1989.

³ Keck, 1984, 230. He writes that 'apocalyptic' may be the most misused word in the scholar's vocabulary because it resists definition. The mere use of the word as a noun (an Anglicised form of the German noun 'Apokalyptik') calls for confusion. Furthermore, 'apocalyptic' and 'eschatological' are often regarded and used as synonyms. Glasson, 1981, 105, describes it as "a useless word which no one can define and which produces nothing but confusion and acres of verbiage." A sobering remark in this regard comes from the very renowned scholar of apocalyptic, Collins, 1991, 24: "Apocalyptic" is an ambivalent term, insofar as it refers to different kinds of material, but it is not significantly more ambivalent than other terms such as 'prophecy' or 'wisdom' that we freely use to characterise the ancient literature. The way to overcome the ambiguity is not by rhetorical flourishes banning all use of the term...but by qualifying it and making distinctions where necessary.... and not allowed to float freely as an intuitive 'theological concept.'"

⁴ Schmoller, 1989, 55.

⁵ Barr, 1961, 218. He coined the expression illegitimate totality transfer. This occurs when the semantic value of a word in a specific context is added to its semantic value in another and the sum of these values is then read into a specific word. Nida & Louw I, 1988, viii-ix, xv-xvii, observe: "The first principle of semantic analyses of lexical items is that there are 'no synonyms' in the sense that no two lexical items ever have completely the same meanings in all of the contexts in which they might occur." This does not rule out "variation for the sake of rhetorical purposes." Secondly, differences in meaning are marked by textual or extra-textual context. Thirdly, "meaning is defined by a set of distinctive features that define the limits of the range of referents which may be designated by a particular verbal form." "...The ultimate objective is to obtain a statement of meanings which reflects the greatest overall coherence within the system." The fourth principle "states that figurative meanings differ from their bases with respect to three fundamental factors: diversity in domains, differences in the degree of awareness of the relationship between literal and figurative meanings, and the extent of conventional usage." Fifthly, "the different meanings of the same word and the related meanings of different words tend to be multidimensional and are only rarely orthogonal in structure."

⁶ Barton, 1995, 73; Thiselton, 1979, 75-79.

2.1. Apocalyptic under attack

It is a pity that scholars have used both the word and the phenomenon of apocalyptic indiscriminately,¹ resulting in many being overly suspicious of its use and interpretation. Glasson scathingly attacks apocalyptic as a tool to understand NT theology.² Although he does not reject the existence of the apocalypse as genre, he rejects apocalyptic as an encompassing worldview and hermeneutical tool with which the NT is to be unlocked. He quite rightly remarks there was not one single worldview that could be characterised as absolutely apocalyptic. He finds it difficult to accept that the multitudes to which Jesus spoke were predominantly apocalyptic in worldview. What they listened to every Sabbath was the reading from the Law and the Prophets.³ He finds it strange, if the NT writers were so strongly influenced by apocalyptic, that save for the one clear reference in Jude 14-15 to Enoch 1:9, the extra-canonical apocalypses are not quoted, but rather the OT. He remarks:

There is nothing in the vital pre-Christian period to justify the confident statements which have been made for 70 years, and which are still being made today. The result is that a good deal of New Testament discussion has been based on a colossal blunder.⁴

These are harsh words with an undertone of irritation. On the other hand, they sound a clear warning that one-sided hermeneutics could lead to skewed interpretation. His criticism that the artificial dissection of the Early Christian world view into separate, and almost unrelated parts, and then over-emphasising one element at the cost of others, should be taken seriously.⁵ But it is equally true that the apocalyptic view of life was operative at the time of Jesus' advent. There might have been sections of the Jewish population who were more aware of it than others, but it was there in varying degrees. It would be irresponsible to think rabbis would reflect on the Law and Prophets without conveying teaching influenced by apocalyptic. To deduce from the use of quotations from primarily the OT and not as much from extra-canonical apocalyptic literature, that apocalyptic was not active in Paul's time, is wrong.⁶ One would have

¹ Vawter, 1960, 33, remarks: "Hermann Gunkel protested that 'apocalyptic' was a word too readily used by authors who did not have an agreed definition of what it meant." To this Youngblood, 1988, 213, adds: "Definitions of apocalyptic tend to be either so general as to be vacuous or so specific as to eliminate from consideration a substantial number of erstwhile apocalypses."

² Glasson, 1980/1, 99-105.

³ Glasson, 1980/1, 104-5.

⁴ Glasson, 1980/1, 102.

⁵ Glasson, 1980/1, 100.

⁶ W.D. Davies, 1999, 684, writes: "First-century Judaism was often moved by intense eschatological expectations. Sporadically these instigated activist messianic contenders, but more often, precisely because these expectations were so fantastically glorious that they could only be realized by God himself, they induced political quietism. Apocalypists confined bloody armeddons to their dreams, their wars to their writings: it was for God not man to bring in the End. Although not exactly popular, their visions were not confined to esoteric circles and schools, but were in the first-century Jewish air and often shared by Pharisees. Paul's designation of himself as a Pharisee by no means implies distance from eschatological speculation: his use of such terms as 'the fullness of time' (Gl. 4:4), 'the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. 11:15), 'the mystery' (1 Cor. 2:7; 15:5; Rom.11: 25; 16:25) or 'the mysteries of God,' the trumpet announcing the end (1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:5), in-

to ignore Early Christianity's tireless, and even at times (too)¹ innovative, efforts to illustrate its Jewish roots and that it was founded on Yahweh's OT promises.² It could be argued that the studying of the OT as a whole was the foundation or seedbed of early Christian theology.³ The resurrection of Christ, rather than his return, was fundamental to early Christian theology. To come to grips with the post-resurrection situation, meant they had to delve into the OT.

2.2. In defence of apocalyptic

Fortunately the study of apocalyptic has come a long way since Glasson's criticism. Many have taken up the challenge of redefining apocalyptic in the NT and refining its application in exegesis and hermeneutics. Elizabeth Johnson⁴ investigates the influence of both apocalyptic and wisdom literature in Romans 9-11 on the suspicion that a choice between the two with regard to influence in the NT is a false dichotomy and that the answer lies in their confluence.⁵ She investigates early Jewish documents usually associated with apocalyptic and finds that each of them at some point made use of both apocalyptic and wisdom, leaning to one or the other.⁶ Going a step further to Rm. 9-11 she finds:

The line of thought is profoundly structured by the apocalyptic categories of eschatological salvation, God's wrath and wealth of mercy, and the destiny of the people of God. But Paul's argument also uses sapiential traditions to describe God's freedom to elect impartially (9:20-23), to show how the gospel is the near word of God's wisdom (10:6-8), and to reveal a heavenly mystery about God's saving intentions (11:25-27). Because this mystery and the discussion which it brings to a close provide a glimpse into God's wise ordering of history and redemption, Paul concludes his argument – and the argument of the letter to this point – with a hymn in praise of God's wisdom (11:33-36). The apostle's ascription of praise for the marvel of salvation is a traditional Jewish hymn to God's wisdom, because, inscrutable as they are from a human perspective, God's judgements and ways have indeed been proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In sum, the inter-sections of apocalyptic and wisdom traditions in Romans 9-11 afford Paul the means of maintaining a theological tension between God's faithfulness and God's impartiality, a tension he never resolves because it is constitutive of the character of God.⁷

deed the whole structure of his thinking, bears witness to this. His interpretation of Christ can only be understood against a background of Jewish Apocalyptic, which has been called the mother of his theology."

¹ In terms of modern exegesis and hermeneutics.

² Ellis, 1979², 199-219.

³ Marshall, 1987, 39. Youngblood, 1988, 215, also calling on support from Ladd, 1957, 192-200, and Vawter, 1960, 38-9, states there seems to be reason enough to accept at least 'an embryonic form of apocalyptic' around the time of Amos and Hosea. P.D. Hanson, 1971, 464, 468, attaches it to the exilic period around Ezekiel. Christensen, 1984, 682, traces it to late 7th century BCE during the time of Josiah's reform before Judah's exile.

⁴ Johnson, 1989, is one of the most responsible studies on the subject. She stresses the importance of not compartmentalising the worldview or theology of Early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism. Aune, 1993, 27, specifically stresses the role of mantic wisdom as a source of apocalyptic, as well as a profound sense of divine revelation. P.D. Hanson, 1979, 1-8, 402-8, stresses Jewish apocalyptic was fully home-grown. The need to explain calamitous events and cultivate hope in a righteous God, called for a new way of speaking about history and the future. These social factors were the stimuli in the movement from prophetic to apocalyptic eschatology.

⁵ Johnson, 1989, 78-80.

⁶ Johnson, 1989, 153-58.

⁷ Johnson, 1989, 255-56. In a slightly different vein Rowland, 1999, 787, also stresses the importance of wisdom literature in the development of Jewish apocalyptic. He adds: "The questioning spirit of biblical wisdom tradition and the interpretation of dreams and visions are antecedents which should not be ignored in our at-

2.3. Apocalyptic as emphasising disjunction

Dunn has been helpful in providing a more nuanced approach to diversity of theological thought in Early Christianity, distinguishing between four strands of thought that do not exclude one another, namely Jewish, Hellenistic and Apocalyptic Christianity, and Early Catholicism.¹ He explains how Christianity began as an apocalyptic sect in Judaism and how its apocalyptic was aligned with that of John the Baptist and Jesus.² They assigned a fundamental position to Jesus' resurrection as the initialisation of the general resurrection of the dead in their theology. Together with this dawning of the age of resurrection, they expected the imminent return of Christ. In this sense one could describe apocalyptic as the mother of Christian theology.³ But how should apocalyptic theology be defined? Dunn helpfully supplies major characteristics of apocalyptic theology.

- The belief in two aeons in total disjunction to each other;
- The present age is regarded with pessimism and the age to come with hope;
- The expectation of an eschatological climax in which God's enemies are judged and his people saved;
- The belief that it would be a time of resurrection;
- The end of all things is imminent;
- Reality is regarded in its cosmic dimensions;
- In the end God is seen to reign sovereign over the cosmos fulfilling the hope of his people. It is only He who can bring the new age about.⁴

The significant point is the radical difference between the two ages so that they have very little in common, also regarding their respective modes of living. This is fundamentally important for understanding Christian freedom. Of course, this disjunction raises the question whether the salvation-historical approach to Paul can still be functional in such a scenario. Oscar Cullmann himself writes:

Finally, we note that in the genesis of New Testament salvation history, all events, the past, the present, and the ones expected in the future, are summed up in one event as their high-point and mid-point: the crucifixion of Christ and the subsequent resurrection.⁵

Constitutive of all salvation history is the fact that the disclosure of it is attributed to its authors both in Old and New Testaments to a spiritually comprehended revelation about particular events.... Salvation history does not come by way of reflection about history.... Rather, it comes primarily because of a consciousness of having received a special prophetic revelation through the Holy Spirit.⁶

tempt to elucidate apocalyptic origins. Thus it would be wrong to assert that apocalyptic has its origin either in prophecy or in wisdom; both have contributed much to apocalyptic" (788).

¹ Dunn, 1990¹, 235-37. He refers to these strands of thought as "dimensions and emphases within first-century Christianity which all overlap and interact to some degree" (236).

² Dunn, 1990¹, 309-10.

³ Dunn, 1990¹, 316-25.

⁴ Dunn, 1990¹, 312-7; Vielhauer & Strecker, 1992, 549-51.

⁵ Cullmann, 1967, 86.

⁶ Cullmann, 1967, 98.

It will become clear that my take on the matter of apocalyptic allusion in Galatians does not contradict salvation history.¹ It will be argued that Paul implemented apocalyptic allusion in order to stress very profoundly that the Christ event was not merely another point in salvation history, or merely the fulfilment of another promise in a series still to follow. By way of apocalyptic allusion Paul stressed that everything held together in the Christ event. His advent and resurrection was and remains the pivotal event, irrevocably and radically changing the salvational paradigm. The Galatians had to realise that in Christ they were now in the new aeon and had to live accordingly. In a very concise article Dunn combines Paul's salvation-historical and apocalyptic features, concluding:

In short, we may say that it was the continuity in the discontinuity, the apocalyptic climax of the salvation-history that constituted the heart of his gospel.²

2.4. Apocalyptic as emphasising disclosure

Bornkamm's view on apocalyptic is significant. He maintains that disclosure of divine secrets was the main theme of later Jewish apocalyptic.³ Rowland convincingly illustrates that eschatology, often found in apocalyptic, is not always present and there is no specific apocalyptic eschatology. If apocalyptic and eschatology are to be separated apocalyptic must find its definition in something other than eschatology and *parousia*. *Disclosure* fills the gap well.⁴ He states:

Apocalyptic, therefore, is a type of religion whose distinguishing feature is a belief in a direct revelation of the things of God which was mediated through dream, vision or divine intermediary.⁵

Barry Matlock, although not suggesting answers to the problem of what apocalyptic is, is very critical of the use of the term.⁶ What concerns him is the overrating of the influence of apocalyptic and the lack of a clear definition in terms of which it can be applied.⁷ He is especially critical of J.C. Beker's new impetus⁸ to apocalyptic as an hermeneutical tool to Paul.⁹ He underlines that the vagueness surrounding the topic too easily leads to "*illegitimate totality transfer*"¹⁰ of, well, apocalyptic proportions."¹¹ He suggests that the direction in which to look for a solution to the meaning of apocalyptic could well be the notion of *revelation*, as pointed

¹ N.T. Wright, 1994, 237.

² Dunn, 1994², 388.

³ Bornkamm, 1967, 815.

⁴ Marshall, 1987, 37. The question as to how apocalyptic and prophecy differ and whether the former is not merely a form of the latter, presents itself. We will not delve into this matter. Suffice it to cite a remark by Rowley, 1963, 38: "Speaking generally, the prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalypists foretold the future that should break into the present."

⁵ Rowland, 1982, 21.

⁶ Matlock, 1996.

⁷ Matlock, 1996, 310.

⁸ Beker, 1970, 303-20; 1980; 1982; 1988, 364-77; 1990. We turn to Beker at 4.1 below.

⁹ Matlock, 1996, 247-50, 299-305.

¹⁰ Referring to Barr, 1961, 218.

¹¹ Matlock, 1996, 282. This is also the conviction of Rowland, 1982, 355.

out above. According to Matlock, Sturm¹ has been helpful in this respect, although he finds the use of the term unnecessary, seeing that its wide variety of definitions clouds the term and usually calls for explanation.²

2.5. Apocalyptic as emphasising the advent of the Spirit

The Spirit as subject in Galatians will receive more attention in Ch. 4 of this dissertation as illustrative of the plight-solution paradigm in Judaism, and in Ch. 6 in terms of Christian living. In the current chapter the point is merely made that the Spirit was a very important element in both Jewish and Early Christian apocalyptic. Already in the OT reference is made to a future in which God's Spirit would work wondrously and endow man with a new sense of service to the Lord.³ It is also found in extra-canonical literature.⁴

Their experience of the wondrous works of the Spirit signified the arrival of the last aeon for the early Christians in the same way the resurrection of Christ did. The early Christians had experiences that were too difficult to explain in terms of this world order. They had to believe they were in the last days in which the Spirit would be operative. Ac. 2:17-18 reflects this as according to prophecy.⁵

One can certainly conclude that the early Christians were apocalyptically minded in that they believed that they were living in the last days, but their horizon was not formed exclusively by the hope of the imminent *parousia*. The resurrection of ^{Jesus} and the gift of the Spirit as immediate experiences must have been of basic importance, and it was out of their present experience of Jesus that they were led to cry "Maranatha".⁶

2.6. A preliminary conclusion on apocalyptic

Against this backdrop of, on the one hand a renewed interest in apocalyptic and understanding Paul in apocalyptic fashion, and on the other hand, critical questioning of one-sided apocalyptic interpretation, a position with regard to the present study has to be taken. As in the case of rhetoric, it is equally important not to superimpose a specific theological approach to matters on Paul. To consider everything he writes unreservedly from an apocalyptic angle would be irresponsible. But, all things being equal, sticking with Galatians, in terms of the above characteristics of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic, one senses that Paul's theology has an apocalyptic angle to it featuring at a much deeper level than meets the eye. Galatians is not overtly apocalyptic as in the genre of the apocalypse, it is not written in an esoteric style, and it does not make use of visions and symbolism. On the face of things there are no dramatics. It is not aimed at giving information with regard to the *parousia* or about revealing details about life hereafter. However, Galatians

¹ Sturm, 1989,17-48. Sturm emphasises the term as a theological concept rather than a literary form. It is about God revealing himself to the world in Christ.

² Matlock, 1996, 312-3.

³ Ezk. 36:24-32; Jl. 2:28-29. See my Ch. 4 where more attention is paid to the matter.

⁴ Tengström & Fabry, 1993, 419-24.

⁵ Marshall, 1987, 39.

⁶ Marshall, 1987, 39.

features a substantial number of, what would traditionally be called, apocalyptic traits. We will be turning to these features in the following pages.

The letter is concerned with the Galatians' understanding of and aligning with the gospel in this life. It is about choices for daily living; about understanding the time they live in – knowing what time it is – and living by the good news that set them free, and not in terms of previous orientations – Jewish or otherwise.¹

What time is it? One hardly needs to point out that the matter of discerning the time lies at the very heart of apocalyptic; and as the preceding motifs show, in none of his letters does Paul address that issue in terms more clearly apocalyptic than in Galatians. What time is it? It is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ, the time therefore of rectification by that faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit, and thus the time of the war of liberation commenced by the Spirit.²

It was about a radically new situation and, consequently a new orientation towards living life after the advent of Christ, his cross and his resurrection. We now turn to a closer investigation into the anticipated fundamental role of apocalyptic in Galatians.

3. IS PAUL'S THEOLOGY IN GALATIANS ALL THAT APOCALYPTIC?

3.1. J.C. Beker's dilemma with apocalyptic coherency in Galatians

J.C. Beker must be credited for coining the terms *coherency* and *contingency* in Pauline theology.³ He argues that beneath the surface of Paul's theology lies a "deep structure" of perfectly coherent thought from which Paul draws when he addresses contingent situations on "surface level."⁴ The seeming anomalies in his letters must be seen as contingencies reflecting how his coherent theology operates in his letters.⁵ His thesis is that Paul's coherent theology can be described as thoroughly apocalyptic.⁶ According to Beker Paul sees the coming *parousia* as the eschatological turning point in history. He does, however understand the resurrection of Christ as an apocalyptic event that cannot be separated from the *parousia* and the general resurrection to take place at that time.

¹ Gager, 2000, 62, remarks: "Paul's preoccupation with the Gentiles remains incomprehensible apart from his eschatological framework. For it had long been a central belief in many streams of Judaism that in the final stage of history God would incorporate or redeem righteous Gentiles into the people of God. Leo Baeck put it succinctly: 'The coming of the Messiah and the coming of the Gentiles are interconnected.' This is Jewish faith and such was Paul's faith." Dunn, 1998, 318, also mentions the movement from one epoch to another, adding that it is not merely a change from BC to AC, but a transition capable of affecting every age and transforming each individual.

² Martyn, 1985², 418. One is also reminded of Jeremias, 1971, 139-40, who stresses that apocalyptic underscores both the urgency of the time of grace and the opportunity to re-align.

³ Beker, 1980, 11-15.

⁴ Donaldson, 1997¹, 35-8, calls to caution regarding Beker's model. His concern is not with the basic concept or with Beker's conception of the central and coherent core. His concern is that the two-level structure might be too sharply divided. His question is whether there should not be a level in between "for a body of theological explication, in which the theological implications of Paul's core convictions for significant topics...were developed for their own sake rather than for their usefulness in a particular situation" (36). "He has perhaps made too sharp a differentiation between the two levels, over emphasising the contingency of the surface and the coherence of the core in the process" (37). Donaldson's suggestion is helpful. However, with a view to our subject we will not elaborate, since he is not in disagreement with Beker's principle or the scope of the coherent core.

⁵ Beker, 1980, 17.

⁶ Beker, 1980, 135, 143.

It is a proleptic event that foreshadows the apocalyptic general resurrection of the dead and thus the transformation of our created world and the gift of new corporeal life to dead bodies. Resurrection is a historical-ontological category, manifesting in this world the dawning of the new age of transformation.¹

Jewish apocalyptic was a mechanism by which God's people were given hope and called upon to look further than what meets the eye to an apocalyptic point of divine incision into time, when unrighteousness would meet its match and God's people would be restored. Paul's theology was a re-orientation of apocalyptic thought in order to make his readers and congregations understand present suffering and unrighteousness as part and parcel of the interim between Christ's resurrection and *parousia*. Paul's re-orientation amounts to this point as about to be reached in Christ's imminent return. The resurrection of Christ heightens that expectation.²

However, this being said of Pauline theology as a whole, Beker encountered a problem with Paul's apparent³ non-use of apocalyptic in his letter to the Galatians, and an equally puzzling silence about the expected *parousia*. This made Galatians the maverick of Paul's undisputed letters.⁴ He tried to explain it in terms of his distinction between coherency and contingency, arguing that Galatians was written to address a specific situation with regard to the position of the law in Christian life. Because of this heightened contingency Paul was forced to put his coherent apocalyptic theology on hold.⁵ However, if one takes Beker's arguments concerning a coherent theology at the heart of Pauline thought seriously, this position of his with regard to Galatians seems precarious. Granted, Paul would not easily be prescribed to by a specific style – not even his own characteristic way of writing – and that he could have diverted from his usual train of thought because of the contingency of a specific situation. However, it is most unlikely in this case. Would Paul be so easily deterred? This is not about superficial matters or mere rhetoric. It is about theology operating at a deep level. This letter of grave concern with all its rhetoric, urgency and emotive input – a letter in which Paul expresses that the truth of the gospel is at stake (Gl. 1:6-12; 2:2,5) – should certainly be seen as written from the heart of the apostle's theology.

Whether law and its function or malfunction in the Christian community is merely a matter of contingency, is highly questionable. The mere fact that "the pillars" in Jerusalem deemed it necessary to call a council on the matter raises the suspicion that the problem was probably more widespread. The fact that Paul had previously encountered a problem in Antioch and felt it necessary to discuss the matter of law and gospel with "the pillars" earlier on during a visit to Jerusalem, enhances the idea that as Jewish Christians moved out into Gentile territory, law surfaced as a fundamental issue. Be that as it may, in Ch. 3 it will be argued that

¹ Beker, 1980, 153.

² Beker, 1980, 152.

³ That is according to the features usually associated with apocalyptic.

⁴ B.W. Longenecker, 1998, 6.

⁵ Beker, 1980, 58.

Paul's handling of the matter in his Galatian letter is on a much more fundamental level. The point will be argued that Paul takes the matter of law right back to the reason for its having been given, namely to deal with flesh and sin until the advent of Christ. This is taking the matter to the heart of the truth of the gospel!

Add to this that at the time of writing to the Galatians Paul was no theological novice. He had been a Christian and apostle to the Gentiles for at least 14 years. His theological reflection had been done quite thoroughly at that stage.¹ Obviously, although it is not recalled in his correspondence, Paul, as heavy calibre former Pharisee, would by then have discounted the contingency of the Galatian context against his internalised coherent theology. His clear theological reasoning; the ease with which he incorporates scripture into his arguments; his recalling of discussions with Peter and the other "pillars"; and his disturbance with the Galatian problem, creates the impression that he had cleared his mind on this issue quite a while before writing, or even well ahead of the emergence of the problem. Having had his Damascus Road experience, and going into Gentile territory and mission fields immediately thereafter, it was imperative to consider this matter thoroughly. If the letter is dated on the eve of the Jerusalem council,² it provides us both with insight into Paul's frame of mind going up to Jerusalem, as well as with the raw material with which he approached the council. One wonders whether Paul could have approached the council with anything less than his coherent thoughts.

Galatians is probably the earliest surviving letter of Paul. If this view is incorrect, then the palm must be awarded to 1 Thessalonians. On either assumption, however, not only is there a maturity of understanding in Paul's earliest letter, but also we gain the firm impression that much of what he is saying was not thought up freshly for the occasion but represents his settled views. Likewise, the fact that he can assume so much common understanding on the part of his recipients confirms that he was not suddenly producing new ideas that nobody had ever heard of previously.³

Beker acknowledges Paul's apparent non-use of apocalyptic in Galatians.

Galatians threatens to undo what I have posited as the coherent core of Pauline thought, the apocalyptic co-ordinates of the Christ-event that focus on the imminent, cosmic triumph of God.⁴

3.2. J.L. Martyn's revisitation of apocalyptic in Galatians

Martyn comes to Beker's rescue regarding Paul's apparent non-use of apocalyptic in his highly acclaimed and much quoted article.⁵ He convincingly argues that Paul's extensive use of antinomies in Galatians enhances its theological "deep structure" as thoroughly and coherently apocalyptic.⁶ He argues Paul has a different orientation point for the inception of the eschatological time than in his other un-

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 9.

² Accepted in Chapter 1 as the current position.

³ Marshall, 1997, 44.

⁴ Beker, 1980, 58.

⁵ Martyn, 1985², 410-24.

⁶ Beker, 1980, 16-9.

disputed correspondence.¹ He argues Galatians does not take Christ's *parousia*, but his *advent* as eschatological turning point.² Of course, there are references like Gl. 5:5, 24; 6:8 where Paul implies the *parousia*³ and hints towards future fulfilment. The facts are, however, that Paul does not expound the matter of future fulfilment in Galatians and he does not introduce it as the eschatological turning point as he does with the advent of Christ. This is the position of most modern scholars, amongst them Wayne Meeks who writes:

In Gal 1:4 is a clause that sounds very much like the one with which we began in 1 Thess 1:10: "...Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, in order to rescue us from the present evil age." But in 1 Thessalonians the emphasis was on waiting for the Jesus "who saves us from the coming wrath." Here Jesus has already done something to pluck us out of "this present evil age". The emphasis throughout Galatians is on present fulfillment of eschatological hopes.⁴

This emphasises the importance of John Gager's article⁵ on the use of "end-time language" in the Pauline letters. He argues one should not approach Pauline letters with an overall hermeneutical key without considering that Paul might have different intentions and nuances in different situations. In this regard Meeks' above-mentioned extract is exemplary. Martyn argues that Paul is saying in Galatians that since the cross of Jesus Christ there are now two worlds. There is the old world dominated by flesh (σάρξ) and new creation (καινή κτίσις-Gl. 6:15) dominated by the Spirit (πνεῦμα - Gl. 5:22-25). In the old world of flesh life is characterised by pairs of opposites like law-observance and non-law observance or those of the baptismal formula (Gl. 3:27-28), i.e. Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, and male and female, to which Paul adds circumcision and non-circumcision. The opposites belong to a world that does not have real existence anymore. In Christ people who would normally be opposed to each other in the old world, are now one. New creation does not have pairs of opposites in itself, but is known for its anthropological unity in Christ.⁶ What is true of new creation is that it is characterised by being in total opposition to flesh, which is now aligned with law (Gl. 5:16-18; 6:13). The tradition of Abraham is also involved, accentuating this new opposition with the use of two sons, two mothers, two covenants and two Jerusalems diametrical to each other; stressing the difference between the two positions as being aligned either with Spirit, faith, freedom and the fruit of the Spirit, or with flesh, law, bondage and works of the flesh (Gl. 4:21-31). The new position since Christ's advent is that Spirit and flesh are totally dislocated; exclusive of each other;⁷ in battle with each other.

And the Spirit, sent by God into the realm of the Flesh, has started this warfare. Thus the warfare of the Spirit versus the Flesh is a major characteristic of the scene in which the Galatians – together with all other human beings – now find themselves.⁸

¹ This is of course also the position in 2 Corinthians.

² Martyn, 1985², 420. Also Marshall, 1997, 49.

³ Marshall, 1992, 201.

⁴ Meeks, 1983¹, 695.

⁵ Gager, 1970, 325-37.

⁶ Martyn, 1985², 414-5.

⁷ Malan, 1992, 431.

⁸ Martyn, 1985², 416.

This was brought about by the triple crucifixion of Christ, cosmos and Paul (Gl. 6:14). The consequence of the apocalyptic advent of Christ and his Spirit is that

the space in which human beings now live is a newly invaded space, and that means that its structures cannot remain unchanged.¹

There seems to be enough evidence that Paul's theology had more than just an apocalyptic ring to it and that the letter to the Galatians was no exception.² It does, however necessitate that one shifts the traditional focus on the *parousia* to the advent and resurrection of Christ and its implication for Christian living in the interim – exactly that with which Paul is concerned in the letter to the Galatians. Keeping all the criticism of the apocalyptic approaches in mind, one would do well not to superimpose apocalyptic on Paul as if that were his starting point, but rather to remember that Paul employed apocalyptic to serve a specific function, i.e. to proclaim the truth of the gospel. Longenecker reminds us:

Paul's basic Christian conviction and the starting point of all his Christian theology was not apocalypticism, but functional Christology – that his commitment was not first of all to a programme or some timetable of events but to a person: Jesus the Messiah.³

In this regard a very important qualification is called for. By describing Paul's theology as apocalyptic, the intention is not to promote apocalyptic as the hermeneutical key *par excellence* to Pauline theology. It is rather to point to the fact that apocalyptic is part of the coherent centre of Pauline theology and has to be thoroughly taken into account when explicating a Pauline passage.⁴ In a very illuminating article Achtemeier suggests that one moves from a *coherent centre* to a *generative centre*. With that he means to find a core conviction from which other convictions – central or to the contingent periphery – would be generated in order to illuminate different situations.⁵ He suggests Paul's *generative core* is his conviction that God had raised Jesus from the dead.⁶ This is enough to call attention to the Jewish view that the resurrection of the dead would inaugurate the new aeon, alluding to apocalyptic.

¹ Martyn, 1985², 417.

² One must acknowledge to scholars like R.N. Longenecker, 1985, 87, that eschatology is not presented as a subject in Galatians, but the phenomenon of apocalyptic is certainly operative. Aune, 1993, 27, summarises the main aspects of apocalypticism. It is not coincidental that these aspects are traceable in Galatians. He emphasises the temporal dualism of apocalyptic and the radical disjunction between the two ages, with an overriding pessimism concerning the first and a sense of hope regarding the latter. This theme is overt in Gl. 1:1-5. The immanent arrival of God's reign is not overtly present, but could well be alluded to in Gl. 2:20 where Paul refers to his having been crucified with Christ; the curse on Christ for hanging on a tree (Gl. 3:13); the stumbling block of the cross (τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ – Gl. 5:11); and in Gl. 6:7-8 where those who sow to the flesh reap corruption as opposed to those of the Spirit who reap eternal life. Equally, he strongly alludes to the cosmic perspective (Gl. 6:15), although the cataclysmic final event is still to come (p.31), as well as a reidentification of the Israel of God being broader based than the physical entity (Gl. 6:16).

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1985, 93.

⁴ Loubser, 2001, 344-78, provides us with an illuminating article regarding Beker's one-dimensionality. However, with the necessary qualifications, one is still indebted to Beker for drawing apocalyptic back into the core of Pauline convictions.

⁵ Achtemeier, 1996, 138.

⁶ Achtemeier, 1996, 138-9. See also Lohse, 1996, 157.

4. APOCALYPTIC ALLUSION IN GALATIANS' VOCABULARY

Paul's terminology includes terms that allude to the expectancy among many Jews of an apocalyptic event that would see the demise of the present age that was seen to be evil, and the rise of the age to come in which God would rule supreme and exclusively.¹ All these terms are not equally obvious to modern day readers, but do become better discernible when the text is read more closely and in the context of its *Umwelt*. A few terms and phrases are very prominent.²

- Words and phrases associated with disclosure and revelation: ἀποκαλύψις in its varied forms (Gl. 1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23); τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες (“when they saw” - Gl. 2:7); and γνόντες (“they perceived” - Gl. 2:9).
- Words regarding the eschatological fulfilment of the promise (ἐπαγγελία) to Abraham in the lives of those who believe in Jesus (Gl. 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29; 4:23, 28).
- Gl 1:4 in its entirety is apocalyptically loaded with Jesus' giving of himself (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν) in order “to deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν)
- Paul refers to the advent of Christ in Gl. 4: 4-5 as: “When the time had fully come (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ) those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gl. 4:4-5).
- Gl. 1:1 refers to “God the Father, who raised him (Jesus) from the dead” (θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν).
- He explains the covenant in terms of two sons: one according to flesh, the other according to promise (Gl. 4:21-31). He refers to two women representative of those under law and in slavery and travail, and those of the promise who are free. He also explains it in terms of the Jerusalem above and below.
- The Spirit (πνεῦμα - Gl. 3:2, 3, 5, 14; 4:6; 5:5) fulfills an important role in the letter. The apocalyptic notion is enhanced by opposing Spirit and flesh (Gl. 4:29; 5:16-18, 22, 25; 6:8).
- In Gl. 6 Paul uses a variety of eschatological terms that enhance the apocalyptic angle to the letter. In Gl. 6:2, 5 Paul refers to the bearing (βαστάζειν) of burdens, one another's (2) and one's own (5). In Gl. 6:7-9 the metaphor of sowing (σπείρειν) and reaping (θερίζειν) is very prominent, together with the encouragement not to grow weary (ἐγκακεῖν) or to lose heart (ἐκλύεσθαι - Gl. 6:9). He adds that the world has been crucified to him (ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται - Gl. 6:14), it has reached its end for him; and he is now focused on the new creation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15). Israel of God (Gl. 6:16) could have an eschatological bearing. In Gl. 6:12 Paul makes mention of his agitators being fearful of persecution (διώκειν), whereas he himself has followed the different route and bears the marks of

¹ Dumbrell, 1997, 395-7.

² For the time being these terms and phrases are merely mentioned and will be discussed below.

Jesus on his body (Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω, ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί - Gl. 6:17)

Paul's approach, although not esoteric and not overtly apocalyptic, is one that I would, for lack of a better term, refer to as an *allusional apocalyptic approach*.¹ Throughout the letter Paul alludes to that which is hidden from those without faith, but which is recognised by those of faith.² Within the Judeo-Christian tradition of which the Galatians were a part and in which apocalyptic featured, probably in varying degrees, allusions to apocalyptic subjects and terminology would have been powerful rhetorical mechanisms by which the readers would themselves come to discover that which Paul had wanted them to discover. The readers would have experienced this exercise as revelatory.

In addition to Martyn's motivation of apocalyptic features in Galatians we tend to other terminology enhancing the letter's apocalyptic tone, beginning with the word group related to *revelation* or *disclosure*, and moving on to the vast array of terms and phrases associated with the division between the two aeons, and the Spirit's presence.

4.1. The motif of disclosure in Galatians

A cursory survey of the matter illustrates that Paul places a heavy emphasis on this aspect. Meeks refers to it as a form of appeal by Paul.³ In other words, it is part of Paul's rhetorical strategy. The gospel and Jesus Christ, its content, as well as faith, was revealed (δι' ἀποκαλύψεως) to him (Gl. 1:12) and the Galatians (Gl. 3:23;⁴ 4:9). Although he does not use ἀποκαλύψις in Gl. 4:9 the notion of revelation is strongly represented in "you (who) have come to know" (γινόντες - aor. part. act.)⁵. It was something God revealed into their symbolic universe.⁶ It was not from man,

¹ Although he does not use this terminology, one is reminded of an article by Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32, strikingly pointing to Paul's use of allusions to shared backgrounds, shared kerugma and the shared Jesus tradition as a mechanism to enhance his gospel. Hall, 1996, 436, makes the observation that the argumentative force of this type of approach does not depend primarily on logical reasoning, but on the explanatory power of world view being disclosed. Hays, 1989¹, has done extremely well in providing scholarship with a better understanding of Paul's hermeneutic. He finds that Paul would, for instance, thoroughly revise the view on Torah, stripping it of its normative significance. On the other hand, he would insist that he upholds law. He does this by using Scripture's narrative of God's election of and promise to Abraham, and then reshaping it to a narrative of God's righteousness as ground for the unity between law and gospel. At this deeper level he sticks to the earlier tradition, although his own selection of themes is not traditionally rabbinic. He then contends that the divine act of God in Christ illuminates these narratives, revealing hidden meanings. In this regard Hays (157-8) states: "Within this narrative framework for interpretation, Paul's fragmentary references to and echoes of Scripture derive coherence from their common relation to the scriptural story of God's righteousness. Though the quotations seem eclectic and scattered, they usually must be understood as allusive recollections of a wider narrative setting from which they are taken." Hays, 1996, 30-47, is equally enlightening.

² Gl. 3:1-9; 3:22; 4:21-31; 6:7.

³ Meeks, 1983², 115-6.

⁴ Obviously this reference reaches wider and includes Christians in general.

⁵ Although an active participle, it is in the nature of the word's meaning and context to refer to something having happened to them. Particularly the use of the aorist makes it clear Paul is referring to their having come to faith by God's gracious initiative at a given point. Thus, their "coming to know" is the flipside of his "having revealed".

⁶ Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 92-128. We will return to this subject in §5 (ii) of this chapter. Berger and Luckmann refer to symbolic universe as "an all-embracing frame of reference, which now constitutes a universe in

but of divine origin (Gl. 1:1, 11), implying revelation from God. Although Paul was zealous for the traditions of the fathers, it pleased God to reveal his Son to Paul (Gl. 1:16). After fourteen years he went up to Jerusalem by revelation (Gl. 2:2). There is also a hint or allusion to this being revealed to “the pillars”, when “they perceived (γινόντες) the grace that was given to me” (Gl. 2:9).

4.1.1. *Disclosure in the salutatio*

It is striking that as early as in his *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) Paul gives a distinctly apocalyptic ring to his letter. He speaks as an apostle whose authority was “not from men or through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Gl. 1:1). His apostleship is not our concern at this point, but the means by which it was conveyed to him is. If God did not mediate it to him through man, He must have given it to him directly or via a heavenly being. Whichever, Paul’s apostleship was divinely authorised. This is revelation in any language and in Paul’s time apocalyptic talk. According to Wilhelm Egger semantic analysis of the *salutatio* reveals a concentration of actors and associated actions involving God the Father, Jesus Christ, Paul and his co-workers, and the churches of Galatia as the recipients, creating “a eulogy of God’s saving action”.¹ He adds:

The readers are to accept the letter as an apostolic communiqué (hence the emphasis on authority), and they are to find in the letter an answer to the question of salvation (Law or Grace) that moves them.²

Referring to both Jesus Christ and God the Father Paul confirms there is no higher authority by which to speak than that given directly by God.³ Further, by placing Christ chronologically before the Father in his prepositional clause, usually using the reverse order in references to both Jesus and the Father,⁴ he creates the impression that he is referring to the Christophany (Ac. 9) as the actual point of reception of this authority.⁵ He received it from Christ in that revelation, but Christ as one with God the Father. If Gl. 1:12 (“through a revelation of Christ”) refers to the same issue it is even clearer.⁶ Right from the outset he hints at the revelation of Christ to him on his road to Damascus. It was awesome for a human being to have had the privilege of God revealing something to him. It placed him in the league of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, the other prophets and Daniel. In this regard reference is often made to the possibility that Paul’s double assertion to his authority not being from man, but from God, alludes to the same type of situation found in Am. 7:14-15. In the latter case, as probably also with Paul, his prophetic authority⁷ is called into

the literal sense of the word, because all human experience can now be conceived of as taking place within it. The symbolic universe is conceived of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place within this universe.”

¹ Egger, 1996, 98.

² Egger, 1996, 98.

³ Dunn, 1993², 26-7; Bruce, 1982¹, 72-3.

⁴ E.g. Rm. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Phlp. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Phlm. 3.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 5; Witherington, 1998¹, 73.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 39.

⁷ In Paul’s case it is his apostolic authority, which could be equated with the prophetic in the O.T.

question. Amos is referred to as a “seer” and he refers to himself as a “prophet”, but not from human lineage. God called him. Amos states this in the context of five visions given to him (Am. 7:1–9:4). This background, together with visionary callings of many other prophets, certainly hints to revelation of some kind in Galatians.¹ Paul follows up the hint with more explicit references in Gl. 1:11- 2:21.

4.1.2. Disclosure in Gl. 1:11 – 2:21

In Gl. 1:11-2:21, that has come to be known as Paul’s autobiographical section, he subtly emphasises this apocalyptic talk, saying that he did not receive the gospel from man (ἄνθρωπος), nor was he taught it, “but it came through a revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) of Jesus Christ” (Gl. 1:12). He accentuates this notion by introducing the matter with the words: “For I would have you know” (Ἦνθαρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν - Gl. 1:11). This could be seen as a disclosure formula² introducing the more apocalyptic terminology to follow. Once again he reiterates the “not.... nor, but” construction (Gl. 1:11-12) that he used in Gl. 1:1. In the first case he used it to authenticate his apostleship as being not of human, but of divine origin. In the second case he did it to authenticate his gospel as coming not from human sources, but, once again, by divine revelation.³ He continues by saying that God, who “set me apart” and “called me,” “was pleased to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) his Son to me” (Gl. 1:15-16). In this regard one is reminded of the descriptions of the callings of Jeremiah (Jr.1: 5) and the Servant of Yahweh (Is.49: 1-6). This suggests that Paul regarded himself as not just a messenger, but truly in line with the Israelite prophets.⁴ He adds that he did not confer with flesh and blood including those who were apostles before him. When Gl. 1:10 is read within its immediate context of Paul referring to his former life and vocation in contrast to his new life and vocation (Gl. 1:13-14), it seems he wanted to break away from any notion of his gospel as pleasing people. He also had no need for authentication from human sources. His gospel was totally removed from any human origin. It came to him by revelation from Christ.⁵ No higher authority could be called upon,⁶ therefore he needed no authentication from Jerusalem (Gl. 1:16-2:2).⁷

If one were to follow Stendahl’s cue that this section has precious little to do with conversion from one religion to another, but only with Paul’s call to apostleship to the Gentiles,⁸ one could argue Paul was merely defending his apostleship and apostolic authority as equal to that of the Twelve, having also received it from Jesus

¹ Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 91. Hansen, 1994, 207, most definitely regards it as such.

³ Hansen, 1994, 207.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 30. Newman, 1992, 196-207, explains the Christophany as the defining moment of God’s glorification in Paul’s life. Paul experienced this as his being written into God’s story (207).

⁵ Koptak, 1990, 103-4.

⁶ Kertelge, 1992, 340.

⁷ Lategan, 1988, 425-6, emphasises that Paul’s apostleship should actually not be brought into the equation. It was not about Paul’s apostleship, but about the contrast between divine revelation and human involvement. Paul’s message was a divine revelation free from human defilement or even just involvement.

⁸ Stendahl, 1976, 7-23.

Christ. Stendahl's position must be refuted in being "right in what he affirms,¹ but wrong in what he denies."² Paul is not explicitly recounting the total meaning of the Damascus experience. He most definitely implies his call to apostleship, but, strikingly, he antithetically compares his present life after the revelation with his former life in Judaism. He places the gospel divinely revealed to him in stark contrast to the tradition handed down to him, and for which he was zealous. What he does not do is to mention zeal for God in tradition. It is merely human. Divine revelation is emphasised in Gl. 1:16 as opposed to tradition in Gl. 1:14.³

He does, however, have the problem that he had only himself to authenticate his revelation. To get past this problem he stresses the radical change in his life since the event.⁴ In this respect there was nothing to quibble about.⁵ The life in which he persecuted the church violently (Gl. 1:13) and advanced beyond many others in his zeal for the traditions of his fathers (Gl. 1:14) had been turned around diametrically by God's gracious revelation to him. This antithesis between the former and present Paul is an existential one. In this regard it is striking that the reaction of the churches in Judea was: "He who *once* (ποτέ) persecuted us is *now* (νῦν) preaching the faith he *once* (ποτέ) tried to destroy" (Gl. 1:23). A temporal switch had taken place. Not only had his vocation changed, but also his life. In other words, the contrast between his life before the revelation and afterwards is in itself telling or revealing. Others saw it and witnessed to it. In this regard Barrett's view is that Paul primarily recalls his conversion and "[E]very true conversion carries with it a call."⁶ Segal, who did a thorough study on Paul as apostle and apostate, probed the question as to what constituted conversion in Pharisaic terms. He remarks:

The cost of leaving Pharisaic Judaism was also not a small one. The special laws of Judaism were a source of solace and pride to all who observed them. The commitment Paul made in giving them up should not be undervalued. As he himself says, he gave up everything of significance to follow the consequences of his vision.⁷

To this Witherington adds:

In sociological terms, one would have to say that Paul underwent a thorough resocialization. His symbolic universe was not merely altered, in some respects it was turned upside down, for example in regard to his view of the Mosaic Law before and after conversion.⁸

¹ Stendahl reacted against the so-called distortions caused to the term "conversion" by involving psychological elements such as the guilt of individuals driving them to seek forgiveness in "conversion", as well as the baggage associated with changing of religions. In this regard Hurtado, 1993, 276, is correct in stating: "Paul continued to think of himself as a member of his ancestral people. He had undergone a profound change in his understanding of what his God demanded of him, but thereafter considered himself to be serving the God of the Old Testament for whom the Jewish people were specially elect (eg., Rom.11: 28-29). So, if conversion involves renunciation of one religion for another, in this sense too Paul was not a convert." Moule, 1987, 43, along with most scholars, shares this point of view.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 112.

³ Winger, 1994, 72.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 66-7. Kertelge, 1992, 340 also emphasises the autobiographical section as evidence authenticating his revelation and enhancing the importance of the revelation.

⁵ Winger, 1994, 80; Meeks, 1983², 176-7.

⁶ Barrett, 1985, 110.

⁷ Segal, 1990, 114.

⁸ Witherington, 1998¹, 111.

Paul seems to be stating that the Christophany had changed his vocation as well as life style and orientation. Even Beverly Gaventa, who is very wary of taking Paul's Damascus experience at face-value, at least acknowledges that whatever the details and actual nature of the experience, Paul underwent an "abrupt, unexplained change." She explains it as a "cognitive shift" in which Jesus is recognised as the Messiah. What is important is the radical change accompanying the experience, which Paul interprets christologically.¹ It was clear to all that Paul had changed. That in itself was indicative of his having had some divine experience.

Du Toit is probably correct in suggesting that ἀποκαλύπτω in Gl. 1:16 indicates that Paul is referring to a divine revelation, resulting in an inner enlightenment.² He argues, together with other scholars,³ that ἐν in ἐν ἐμοί should not be understood as an ordinary dative meaning "to me",⁴ but as a local dative ("in me") referring to the revelation as having taken place in him. However, he urges that this inner transformation brought about by the revelation, was not merely an inner experience. It included an audition through which vital information with regard to his commission to the Gentiles was revealed to him.⁵

Where one positions oneself regarding the facts of the Christophany, be it Seyoon Kim's⁶ maximalist,⁷ or Paula Fredriksen's minimalist position, or somewhere in-between, one must accept that Paul regarded the gospel as he proclaimed it as divine revelation. For him the Christophany, however it is explained, placed him and his message in line with the prophets. Hansen states:

As a prophet spoke with revelational immediacy when he said, 'the Lord says', so Paul spoke out of his personal encounter with the risen Lord.⁸

¹ Gaventa, 1986¹, 22-28, 37-8. Hurtado, 1993, 278, remarks that Gaventa is "unconvincingly sceptical." This being said, the fact remains that even though she rejects the actual occurrence of the Christophany, she has to acknowledge the radical nature of its effect. Further up this alley are the arguments of Paula Fredriksen, 1986, 3-34, in which she argues that Paul's recollection of his conversion or calling on the road to Damascus was merely a rhetorical mechanism to legitimise his present position. She bases this supposition on sociological studies that show that "converts" to a new religious orientation are inclined to use the language of the new religion to describe the conversion event, so that it does not really reflect the actual happening. She also found Augustine's conversion accounts to have changed over a period of ten years as he himself changed his religious views.

² Du Toit, 1996, 81.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 32; Dunn, 1993², 64; and also Witherington, 1998¹, 106.

⁴ In an earlier article: Du Toit, 1989, 321, in which he likewise advocated against the revelation being merely an inner enlightenment, he also accepted the ordinary dative use.

⁵ Du Toit, 1996, 81-2.

⁶ Kim, 1981, 102-4, regards the Christophany as a historical event, fundamentally influencing Paul's theology. In fact, his position is that Paul developed his theology very soon after his Christophany – at the latest just before the Jerusalem council, but probably earlier. Although it was not developed singularly from the revelation on the road to Damascus, but involved the reflection on and conceptual apparatus of the tradition from which he stemmed, the latter could only be functional via the revelation. He describes the revelation as an "objective, external event" that "had a soul-stirring effect on the very centre of Paul's being"(56). It was also "an experience of inner illumination (2 Cor.4.6)."

⁷ Using the description of Hurtado, 1993, 279, in reference to the position of Seyoon Kim.

⁸ Hansen, 1994, 208. In this regard Kertelge, 1991, 46-61, argues that Paul's reference to revelation does not necessarily or exclusively refer to the Christophany. He compares Galatians' and Corinthians' revelations to Matthew 11:25-27 & 16:17. In the former Jesus thanks God for revealing "these things" to babies and hiding it from the

This prophetic stance is enhanced when Paul states: “Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed; thus the law was our custodian until Christ came.” “Until faith should be revealed” (εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι – Gl. 3:23) is paralleled with “until Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν – Gl. 3:24), referring to the same event. Dunn refers to this as:

technical apocalyptic terminology...having the sense both of heavenly unveiling, and climactic turning point in the divine purpose.¹

To this Hansen adds:

Paul’s participation in that apocalyptic event occurred when ‘God was pleased to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) his son’ in him (1.16). The revelation Paul received was more than the revelation received by the prophets of old. They were given the promise; Paul was given the revelation of the Son ‘in the fullness of time’ (4.4). They looked forward to the end of the world and the new creation – the eschatological climax of God’s purpose in history. He became a paradigm of the apocalypse for the church to follow.²

Paul states that he went up to Jerusalem fourteen years after God’s revelation to him for no reason save, once again, a revelation (κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν) urging him (Gl. 2:2). At the time he also met with the Jerusalem leaders, laying before them his understanding of the gospel. It is not clear what this revelation was. Whether it was directly aimed at Paul or given to another is equally uncertain. It could have been a vision or a strong inner awareness of God’s calling. He could have received it in a trance, in a state of ecstasy, or in a fully conscious state. The fact is, Paul presents the decision to go to Jerusalem as divinely ordained. It was by God’s initiative and guidance that Paul went to Jerusalem. There is a real possibility that this revelation could be connected to the revelation to Agabus of a coming famine (Acts 11:27-30). He was amongst the Jerusalem prophets who visited Antioch at the time of Paul’s ministry there. The Antiochian reaction to the prophecy was to send Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem with their collection. It is very likely, as argued in the previous chapter, that this visit, and not the council visit (Ac. 15), presented Paul with the opportunity to share his understanding of the gospel with the Jerusalem leaders. It could well be that Paul retrospectively interpreted this revelation to Agabus as having a twofold purpose: famine relief and the opportunity to speak to “the pillars”. For the sake of his argument, he stresses the latter purpose, rhetorically creating the impression that the revelation was actually primarily aimed at the discussions. By not expressly stating that it was via the prophecy to

wise. In the latter Peter confesses Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responds by stating: “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” In both instances revelation is not ecstatic or visionary. The essence is God’s initiative and authentication – even though it is not seemingly spectacular. In the latter the revelation is also Peter’s authentication as leader. This was also Paul’s experience.

¹ Dunn, 1993¹, 48. Oepke, 1965¹, 578 and Kim, 1981, 71, underwrite the opinion that ἀποκαλύπτειν and ἀποκαλύψις are apocalyptic technical terms. Kim finds confirmation for this in Eph. 3:3 where the author, in describing the Christophany, joins ἀποκαλύψις with μυστήριον “which is its complementary word in the apocalyptic language.” This is in keeping with the view of Bornkamm, 1967, 815-7. Kim also finds the term joined with the δόξα of God in 2 Corinthians 4:6., “which was part of the eschatological expectation in the prophetic, apocalyptic and Rabbinic writings.” This, again, is confirmed by Von Rad & Kittel, 1964, 245-7.

² Hansen, 1994, 208-9.

Agabus that he went to Jerusalem, but implying this “common knowledge” event, he actually stressed the divine intervention by means of allusion.

Paul's elaborate use of εὐαγγέλιον (7 times) and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (5 times) in Gl. 1 & 2, and then an almost total silence regarding these words in the rest of Galatians, should count for something.¹ Amidst the heavy emphasis on revelation in this section, he emphasises that the gospel he had been preaching and which had always involved freedom from law and circumcision, was not based on anything less than divine revelation. It was absolutely not based on the traditions in which he grew up and which the Jerusalem Church was still practising in some form. His gospel was the divine and true one, unblemished by man and his traditions. The latter is also emphasised in this section as that from which he was independent.² In fact, they were now themselves seemingly a threat to the truth of the gospel.³ The reaction of “the pillars” was that “*they saw* that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised” (Gl. 2:7 - ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας), and that “*they perceived* the grace that was given to me” (Gl. 2:9 - καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι). Without pushing the point, one wonders whether Paul was not hinting at the possibility that the conveying of his understanding of the gospel and missions amongst the uncircumcised was a revelation to them, and that they accepted it as divine authorisation for Paul's comprehension of the gospel. They could have received testimony of the fruit of Paul's mission prior to the meeting (Gl. 1:23). At the meeting Paul would probably have informed them, not only of the content of his gospel (Gl. 2:2), but also of the reaction of the Gentiles. This would have included signs of the Spirit's presence amongst (Gl. 3:2, 5) them. The presence of Titus amongst the Antiochian delegation was testimony to the success of Paul's mission and gospel.⁴ One should read ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες (Gl. 2:7) together with καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι (Gl. 2:9) – everything in between being an elaboration of what they saw. In that case the two aorist participles ἰδόντες (Gl. 2:7) and γνόντες (Gl. 2:9) become parallels, with ἰδόντες referring to the evidence of Paul's success and γνόντες to the resulting insight on the part of “the pillars”.⁵ This implies Paul's being entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised (Gl. 2:7) is again paralleled with the grace given to him (Gl. 2:9). “The pillars” considered the evidence and recognised God's authority and activity in it. It dawned on them that Paul's comprehension of the gospel and ministering of it was by divine authority.⁶ This is not dramatically apocalyptic, but apocalyptic in the sense of being revelatory in nature, or at least disclosing of divine grace at work not only in Paul, but also in “the pillars”. In any event, although Paul attached great value to the ecclesiastical discussions in

¹ Schmoller, 1989, 200-1 cites εὐαγγέλιον in Gl. 1:6, 7,11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14 and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in Gl. 1:8 (2 times), 9, 16, 23; 4:13. The latter merely refers back to the time when he initially brought the gospel to them.

² Kertelge, 1992, 342-7.

³ Kertelge, 1992, 346.

⁴ Dunn, 1993¹, 105.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 55.

⁶ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 88.

Jerusalem, and even needed them as they needed him, this was secondary to real authentication of the truth of the gospel. The truth of the gospel could “only be maintained if its foundation in Christ, and the divine revelation” were safeguarded.¹

4.1.3. Disclosure in Gl. 3:1 - 5

In this pericope Paul expresses dismay with the Galatians for considering another gospel than the one he brought (Gl. 3:1). He describes their initial hearing and acceptance of the gospel through faith as the receiving of the Spirit (Gl. 3:2, 5). Apparently this experience was of a profound nature and accompanied by miracles (Gl. 3:5).² In other words, it was experiential or existential and a vivid landmark in their spiritual beginnings as Christians.³ Paul refers to this hearing of and coming to faith very vividly when he refers to the Galatians as: “You, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified” (Gl. 3:1). “Publicly portrayed” (προεγράφη) can be explained differently.⁴ However, it seems clear Paul wanted to stress the clarity with which the gospel was presented to them: as if Christ was crucified right in front of them; as if seeing Him with their own eyes (οἷς κατ’ ὀφθαλμοῦς). He definitely stresses the vividness of the disclosure of Christ by the Spirit so profoundly that it enhances the revelatory character of the event. As certainly as Jesus was revealed as the Christ and miracles attested to his divine origin, and in as much as Jesus was revealed to Paul as the Christ, amongst others on the road to Damascus, he was revealed as such to the Galatians via Paul’s ministry (ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις - Gl. 3:5 and ἐνεργέω - Gl. 2:8⁵). With regard to δυνάμεις being used in the plural form together with the participle ἐνεργέω, the meaning is literally “wondrous works/miracles”.⁶

The miracles add a strong apocalyptic element. Although the NT mostly reflects Jesus’ miracles and, in comparison, not many of the early church’s, one can assume that in both Jesus’ and the early church’s cases they had the same function. They were not performed for their own sake, but to serve God’s purpose in a specific situation.⁷ In Christ’s case it was to serve as evidence of his power as the One

¹ Kertelge, 1992, 349. Dunn, 1990², 108-128, provides a well-reasoned argument for Paul’s need to emphasise his independence from Jerusalem with regard to the authenticity of his message, but also his acknowledgement of his authority in making fundamental decisions affecting the whole church. However, when he wrote Galatians his acceptance of that authority had already been tarnished.

² Dunn, 1993¹, 157-8; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 105-6.

³ Bruce, 1990, 122, adds the important insight with regard to the receiving of the Spirit, that it “was no mere matter of logical conviction or of an inner glow: it was accompanied by more substantial evidences. Not only were there the tokens of divine power which attended their response to the preaching... but there were the more durable tokens of changed lives, lives in which the fruit of the Spirit, a harvest of ethical graces, had begun to manifest itself.”

⁴ Betz, 1979, 131, provides information with regard to the techniques used by ancient orators to create the effect of something having happened right before the listeners, e.g. drawings and impersonations. It is doubtful that Paul had this in mind. He is probably right when he relates it to the miracle stories of the gospels. They most definitely had the function of emphasising a specific matter communicated by the orator. Witherington, 1998¹, 205, remarks that impersonation is an option in the sense of “bearing the marks of Christ” (Gl. 6:17). Dunn, 1993¹, 152, stresses the importance of both Paul’s preaching and life as manifesting the effect of the gospel.

⁵ Dunn, 1993¹, 106.

⁶ Bauer, 1979, 207-8; Dunn, 1993¹, 158.

⁷ Schweizer, 1971, 43-5; Ridderbos, 1976², 115.

in whom the Kingdom had come. In other words, the miracles signified the eschatological salvation promised by God and recognised only by faith.¹ It is also the case with the signs and miracles accompanying the testimonies of the apostles. The miracles would therefore not only authenticate the witness or apostle as operating on God's behalf, but also attest to the work of the Spirit amongst them,² and, in fact, of God's presence manifested.³ In other words, the miraculous powers revealed God's presence through his Spirit, and also the arrival of the new aeon.

They indicate the coming of the kingdom and point to the cosmic palingenesis mentioned in Matthew 19:28. But they are not the beginning of this palingenesis, as if the latter were the completion of the miracles. For this palingenesis is something of the future world aeon; because it embodies the resurrection of the dead and the renewal of the world, it does not belong to the present dispensation.⁴

Apocalyptic in the coming to faith event in Galatia is enhanced by the intimate relation with the reception of the Spirit, promised to appear in the last days.⁵

It is also enhanced by the use of the formula: "Who has bewitched you?" It should be remembered that in first century Mediterranean society there was a very strong belief in the so-called evil eye.⁶ One person could attain power over another by casting his eyes upon that person and imparting the evil from within, believing that the eyes were the windows to the spirit of man.⁷ The implication is most probably that Christ portrayed before their eyes, had the positive effect on them of faith and the reception of the Spirit with accompanying miracles. Subsequent to that they had begun to reason differently from what was expected and consequently Paul reasons that someone had bewitched them or cast an evil eye upon them.⁸ In Gl. 4:12-17 Paul recalls how he met them whilst he had a bodily ailment of some kind. People with such ailments were usually considered to possess an evil eye.⁹ Yet Paul, the carrier of the true gospel, did not have an evil effect on them. In fact, they would have been willing to pluck their own eyes out for him (Gl. 4:15). This stresses another point of apocalyptic times, namely, when God is at work, forces of evil are also revealed as operative. Paul and the Galatians were living in the apocalyptic time in which his agitators were demonstrating action against the gospel.

So, in conclusion, this pericope has a profound revealing and apocalyptic character. By stressing their experience of the Spirit and accompanying miracles at their coming to faith, and with the use of vivid language, Paul enhances the idea that not only did the believers expect the new aeon to come, but it had been revealed to them

¹ Goppelt, 1978, 196-198, underlines the important point that Jesus' miracles were all about a new dispensation of life with no room for the demonic. He hardly ever did signs with the intention to judge. The only one being the withering of the fig tree, but then it was more like a visual parable.

² Hofius, 1976, 626-33.

³ Dunn, 1993¹, 158.

⁴ Ridderbos, 1976², 119-20.

⁵ Refer to §4.2.2. below.

⁶ Witherington, 1998¹, 202; Derrett, 1995, 65-8.

⁷ Derrett, 1995, 66-8; Elliot, 1991, 148.

⁸ Witherington, 1998¹, 203.

⁹ Elliot, 1991, 149.

and they had experienced it. In contrast to this, others had partaken in the opposite work, casting an evil eye upon them and hindering God's actions through his Spirit.

4.1.4. Disclosure in Gl. 3:23 – 29

Paul clearly states to the Galatians (Gl. 3:23) that their faith in Christ had radically changed their status from being under the custodianship of the law to being sons of God. In fact, it changed life so radically that even social fundamentals such as distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and freeman and male and female had been repealed (Gl. 3:28). This radical change had, once again, come about by revelation (*ἀποκαλυφθῆναι*). It was not a human discovery by way of, for instance, study, but the revelation by divine initiative of a way previously unknown.¹ Martyn emphasises the combined effect of *ἀποκαλυφθῆναι* and the instances of *ἔρχομαι* (Gl. 3:23 as an aorist and Gl. 3:26 as a perfect participle) as focussing on an "invasive movement from beyond." Whereas the opponents were concerned with the conditions by which Gentiles could partake in the people of God, Paul emphasised that the gospel was not about how man could change his position. He could not, because the present evil age and its enslavement engulfed him. The gospel was about God's movement – apocalypse – into the present evil age from which He would deliver or free man.² His varied use of the verb *ἔρχομαι* with regard to Jesus Christ as content of faith³ is, according to Dunn, a deliberate use of the apocalyptic notion of two ages. He understands this revelation as immediate and an eschatological finality.⁴

The advent of the Son and of his Spirit is also the coming of faith, an event that Paul explicitly calls an apocalypse (note the parallel expressions 'to come' and 'to be apocalypsed' in 3:23).⁵

Eschatological revelation is enhanced by the preceeding abundant use of *ἐπαγγελία* ("promise")⁶ as both a noun and a verb.⁷ It is revisited at the end of our pericope (Gl. 3:29). Add to this the use of *διαθήκη* ("will" – Gl. 3:15; "covenant" – Gl. 3:17). Clearly, this promise had been fulfilled in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, and the eschatological time "had fully come" (Gl. 4:4).

4.2. A further array of apocalyptically loaded terminology in Galatians

In this section the aim is not a detailed discussion of the terminology. These will be dealt with in time. Our aim is to highlight the terminology and illustrate how it enhances the apocalyptic climate of the letter.

¹ Morris, 1996, 118.

² Martyn, 2000, 254-5. De Boer, 2002, 21-33, writes very much in the same vein as Martyn. It was about God revealing Christ into this world and believing this gospel on the grounds of the christological revelation.

³ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 143. Witherington, 1998¹, 268 and R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 145-6 agree with Ridderbos arguing that the use of the article qualifies faith, referring to its content (*fides quae creditur*) and not to the human response (*fides qua creditur*), since the latter had been on earth from at least the time of Abraham.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 198.

⁵ Martyn, 1985², 417.

⁶ Gl. 3:16, 17, 18 (twice), 19, 21, 22.

⁷ "Promise" as subject will not be dealt with here. What is of concern here is its apocalyptic overtones.

4.2.1. *Apocalyptic vocabulary concentrated in the salutatio*

Apocalyptic terminology in the *salutatio* is discussed under one heading, as will be done with the conclusion, because of the heavy concentration of these terms in the two sections, and in preparation of the proposed notion of Paul's letter being apocalyptically enveloped to enhance the reframing of the Galatians' symbolic universe.

4.2.1.1. *Present evil age* (τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ)

In Jewish apocalyptic a distinction was made between the so-called *present age* and *the age to come*.¹ They are described in many symbolic ways. The end of the *present age* is often depicted in vivid metaphors of cosmological catastrophe. This has been misinterpreted by many as literal predictions and resulted in understanding apocalyptic literature as negative and pessimistic about life in present form. This is not without reason, because the present evil age was thought of as a time in which Satan ruled. We shall see in the next chapter that it underlined Israel's plight and enhanced their hope for the new age to come. Bruce describes the present evil age as:

an age dominated by an ethically evil power – one which, far from being 'according to the will of our God and Father,' is totally opposed to it.²

N.T. Wright remarks that the temporal distinction in Jewish apocalyptic was primarily to enhance Israel's hope and expectation in troubled times. The focus was on the future, the time of salvation, meaning: "liberation from Rome, restoration of the Temple and the free enjoyment of their own land."³ He describes the Jewish apocalyptic view of the time of salvation much in *Pauline* fashion.

It would be the real forgiveness of sins; Israel's God would pour out his holy spirit, so that she would be able to keep the Torah properly, from the heart. It would be the 'circumcision of the heart' of which Deuteronomy and Jeremiah had spoken. And, in a phrase pregnant with meaning for both Jews and Christians, it would above all be the 'kingdom of God'. Israel's God would become in reality what he was already believed to be. He would be King of the whole world.⁴

4.2.1.2. *Raised from the dead*

Returning to Gl. 1:1, it must be noted, given early Christianity's symbolic universe, that Paul's reference to Christ raised from the dead by God (τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν) would have set all ears on edge. In Jewish apocalyptic it was accepted that the "time to come" would be inaugurated by the resurrection of the dead.⁵ This is attested to by passages such as Dn. 12:2; 1

¹ Dunn, 1993², 36; Schürer, 1979, 495. Sasse, 1964, 206, states that First Century Christianity borrowed this distinction from Jewish apocalyptic. H.C. Hahn, 1978, 831, confirms that Paul himself followed this tradition in his theology.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 76.

³ N.T. Wright, 1992, 299-300.

⁴ N.T. Wright, 1992, 301.

⁵ B.W. Longenecker, 1998, 45; Dumbrell, 1997, 399; Witherington, 1998¹, 74; Bruce, 1982¹, 73; Dunn, 1993², 29. I am quite aware of the debate as to whether this notion developed from the OT or via Hellenism. Bauckham, 1998¹, 277, argues that the Jewish Apocalyptic literature on resurrection developed from the OT. He

Enoch 51:1-2; Apoc. Mos. 13:3; 28:4; 41:3; 63:2; 2 Bar. 1:2; and Mt. 27:52-53. At that stage the first Christian communities had already accepted this as their most fundamental belief. The formulaic language (also found in Ac. 3:15; 4:10; Rm. 8:11; 10:9; 1 Th 1:10; 1 Pt. 1:10) reflects this.¹ Dunn draws attention to the important fact that Paul implies a disjunction between the present age ending in death and the new age inaugurating new life.² It was not simply a chronologically smooth move from one age to another at a given point in time, so that the old disappeared and the new reigned supreme. Something very decisive happened. God raised Jesus from the dead. The new creation had been inaugurated for all to whom He had revealed Himself, in order for them to partake in it. Alongside this new creation the old would still persist, but had been defeated.³

Paul reinterprets the apocalyptic thought world of his day. *Firstly*, he links the advent of the eschatological age to the person of Christ. The eschatological age dawned in Him. He was raised from the dead (Gl. 1:1). The believer had been crucified with Christ and Christ now lived in him, so that he lived by faith in the Son of God (Gl. 2:20). The Galatians had received the Spirit (Gl. 3:2),⁴ also described as the Spirit of the Son (Gl. 4:6), which was notably expected within Judaism as a gift of the eschatological time (Ezk. 37:14; Jl. 2:28-30).

The most fundamentally new thing in Paul's eschatology is his insight that the sending, death upon the cross, and resurrection of Jesus constitute the turning point in the ages.⁵

Secondly, in Galatians the eschatological turning point is not Christ's *parousia*, but rather his death and resurrection⁶. Although the *present evil age* had not vanished and believers still lived in it, they had been delivered from it: rescued, not removed, from the present dispensation. It had no more power over them. They had been freed.⁷ The *parousia* would bring about the consummation of the eschatological age, but the latter had been inaugurated irreversibly in the Christ event.⁸ One should not think in terms of dying and merely rising again into life as

makes special mention of Is. 26:19 that refers to the earth as the place where the dead find themselves and from where they will resurrect. It puts the matter in terms of the earth giving birth to the dead. This notion has been challenged by Porter, 1999^f, 58. He argues that it is not altogether clear whether Is. 26:19 refers to bodily resurrection or to national restoration. He also regards the Qumran reference to resurrection as spiritual restoration rather than bodily resurrection (67). To his mind much more should be made of bodily resurrection entering Judaism via Greek and Roman religion (68-80). As intriguing as the debate might be, it does not currently concern us. Fact is, Jewish Apocalyptic of Paul's time accepted the new aeon would be inaugurated by bodily resurrection. If it truly is so that Greek and Roman religions supported the notion of resurrection, it does enhance the appeal of the metaphor with the Galatian audience.

¹ Dunn, 1993^d, 28.

² Dunn, 1993^d, 29.

³ Koperski, 2002, 269, includes reference to eternal life from the Spirit (Gl. 6:8), and, possibly, new creation (Gl. 6:15) and the reference to Christ's living in Paul (Gl. 2:19-20) as resurrection terminology in Galatians.

⁴ Branick, 1985, 666, states: "Existence according to the Spirit takes place fully only at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-44), yet the resurrection of Christ has already taken place." Brown & Coenen, 1978, 277.

⁵ Bornkamm, 1969, 199.

⁶ Marshall, 1997, 49; Den Heyer, 1998, 121; Aune, 1993, 31; Hays, 1989^g, 192.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 42; Witherington, 1998^h, 76.

⁸ Kümmel, 1973, 146. Sampley, 1996, 114-31, draws an interesting comparison between Galatians and Philipians. He tries to indicate that the Galatians were spiritually still immature and Paul orientated them to the

usual. In this regard scholars distinguish between resuscitation (e.g., Lazarus who was brought back to life by Jesus), and Jesus' resurrection. In the case of resuscitation people were brought back to the same old pitiful age and life in which they "passed away". However, in Jesus' case it was new age breaking into man's plight.¹ Although resuscitation anticipated resurrection, Jesus' resurrection was the life-changing event, inaugurating the eschatological new order into the present evil age in anticipation of the general resurrection that had now become irrevocably certain. Hagner refers to it as "the cornerstone of the gospel".² Christ's resurrection is not merely another milestone on the redemptive-historical road. It inaugurates the restoration of all creation.³

The whole issue of eschatological life is enhanced when one considers that both in the OT and the NT *physical* and *spiritual* death were "inextricably bound up with each other".⁴ Schmithals states that by dying with Christ (Gl. 6:14) one dies to this world in which one has to seek life while enslaved to law, sin and worldly powers. This mode of existence harbours death in its midst. The endeavour to justify oneself continually in the ever-presence of death actually makes one partake in death, in this life. Importantly, moving to the section below on deliverance, he writes:

Freedom from death, in the sense of a death-bringing obligation continually to justify oneself, gives to the man who knows that he has been accepted by God the freedom to give himself without reserve to his neighbour.⁵

God gives life. To be near Him meant to live, even amongst life's trials.⁶ It was about more than physical life. They had to live according to Yahweh's words. The struggle to do this emphasised that it was always a life under threat, ultimately of death as removal from God's sight.⁷ In Christ all this changed.

4.2.1.3. *To deliver*

Christ "gave himself" (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν) "to deliver (ἐξέλθαι) us from the present evil age" (Gl. 1:4). In Gl. 4:4-5 Paul states: "When the time had fully come (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ) those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons". And all of this was "according to the will of our God and Father" (κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ

beginning of their path of faith. His terminology, according to Sampley, reflects this position. The Philippians, on the other hand, were spiritually more mature, and oriented to the *parousia*, which is envisioned as the end of their path of faith. I do not believe the terminology in Galatians makes such a strict division possible. In Galatians Paul, e.g. refers to sowing and reaping (6:8-9) and accountability (6:4-5). These notions are closely associated with the *parousia*. However, what he inadvertently illustrates is that in Galatians the advent, death and resurrection of Christ is a more prominent eschatological orientation point than the *parousia*.

¹ Hagner, 1998, 101, 118-20; Brown & Coenen, 1978, 277.

² Hagner, 1998, 120.

³ Hansen, 1999, 222.

⁴ Schmithals, 1975, 436. See also Bauckham, 1998², 88-9, who holds that Second Temple Judaism made a connection between individual resurrection and corporate restoration of Israel.

⁵ Schmithals, 1975, 439.

⁶ Link, 1976, 478, 481.

⁷ Link, 1976, 479.

πατρός ἡμῶν - Gl. 1:4). Paul was sure that there was an ordained time¹ for Christ to come into the world. Clearly the act of deliverance (ἐξέλιπται) in Gl. 1:4 and the act of redemption in Gl. 4:5 refer to the same act. Consequently the “time to come” is the time that had arrived in the advent of Jesus Christ, the solution to Israel’s plight. When that time had come the new creation in Jesus Christ had decidedly arrived.² This is most decidedly eschatological terminology common to the early faith.³ Ridderbos stresses, what makes this time extremely eschatological is that there is no earthly reason according to which one would be able to calculate or decide why it was the best time or in terms of what that time had “run full.” It was something God alone decided on.⁴ Obviously, but not contrary to Ridderbos, this remark is retrospective from the point of faith, but then, faith given by God in the fullness of time.

We conclude from the prescript that a new eschatological situation had arisen in the Christ event. The *present evil age* lost its power to the *age to come*. Although its consummation still lay ahead, the present evil age still being around, the *parousia* would see the fulfilment of the new and removal of the old age. The time of deliverance and redemption had arrived. It should be clear that the letter’s prescript abounds with apocalyptic allusion. Its function will be dealt with later.

4.2.2. Πνεῦμα

This is probably one of the most prominent terms in Galatians, occurring 17 times in various forms.⁵ It has already been determined that Israel understood the advent of God’s Spirit as a profound constitutive element and role player in the solution God would provide to their plight. Our interest in this section is merely in the occurrence of apocalyptic terminology in Galatians. In this regard πνεῦμα has a very defining role, especially enhanced by its interplay with its antithetical partner, σάρξ. The abundant use of σάρξ and its alignment with the promise (Gl. 3:14), faith (Gl. 3:2, 5, 14; 5:5) and especially with Christ and his advent (Gl. 4:6), and portraying Him as the One through whom the faith community came to life (Gl. 3:3; 3:5; 4:29) and became sons of God (Gl. 4:6-7), and according to whom it should live (Gl. 5:16-19; 22-23, 6:8), emphasise the presence of the new aeon.⁶

Of special importance is the fact that He is referred to as the Spirit of the (God’s) Son (Gl. 4:6-7) and that through Him the believers call to God: “Abba! Father!” Paul is also very pronounced in referring to the Galatians’ coming of faith in Christ as their “[h]aving begun in the Spirit” (Gl. 3:3). There is a very strong allusion to the idea of adoption as regeneration in Gl. 4:28-29. Paul refers to the two sons being

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 170, says: “That the coming of Christ was fixed in the purpose of God,” and that the formula was common in early Christianity.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 288.

³ Betz, 1979, 206; Dunn, 1993², 213-4.

⁴ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 154-5; Morris, 1996, 129.

⁵ Schmoller, 1989, 419. Probably only σάρξ (18) and νόμος (32) occur more often and εὐαγγέλιον(15) shortly behind it. Of course Χριστός in its different combinations (34) has the highest occurrence. Morgenthaler, 1958, cites 18 occurrences of Πνεῦμα (133) and 14 of εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίσειν (101).

⁶ Hays, 1989², 210.

born to Abraham, one according to the flesh and the other according to the Spirit. He says the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, and then meaningfully adds: "So it is now." In other words, all the other implications of ridicule set aside for the moment, Paul aligns those who are of faith today, and therefore sons of Abraham (Gl. 3:29), with him who was born according to the Spirit (Gl. 4:29) in Abraham's day. Staying out of the regeneration debate, one must surely see Paul's insistence that Christian life begins with the Spirit.¹

Now, it has already been determined that within Jewish apocalyptic there was an expectation that the new aeon would arrive with the resurrection of the dead. This was realised with Christ's resurrection to which Paul refers very expressly in Gl. 1:1. However, he now adds that the Spirit is part and parcel of the realisation of Christ's advent in the life of the believer. As certainly as the new aeon had arrived in the advent, death and resurrection of Christ, it was to be recognised in the working of the Spirit of God's Son.² It rings even clearer when the reference to the Spirit in Gl. 4:6 is read against the background of Gl. 4:4 ("when the time had fully come"), which we determined refers to Jewish apocalyptic's expected eschatological time.

4.2.3. *Slave to son*

The issue of the believer's transformation from slave to son and heir is closely connected to the above notion of the Spirit as apocalyptic allusion in Galatians. It should not be read apart from "heirship" (Gl. 3:29; 4:1, 6) and the notion of "inheritance" (Gl. 3:15-18; 4:30) and "promise" (Gl. 3:18, 29; 4:23, 28) deriving from the Abrahamic covenant (Gl. 3:15-18; 4:21-31). This terminology is eschatologically laden. Paul speaks of divine promises to Abraham and his offspring, of which Paul states it refers to Christ (Gl. 3:16). He adds: "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gl. 3:29). So, Christ having come when God's time had fully come (Gl. 4:4), inaugurated the promised fulfilment for those under slavery to become sons of God.

It must be added that a fuller inheritance still awaits the offspring. Paul refers to those doing works of law as people who will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21). It is probably formulaic and endemic to the early church, with heavy overtones of Christ's own teaching concerning the kingdom of God.³ Ridderbos proclaims the eschatological significance of this inheritance.⁴ Although it does not match Paul's references in Gl. 3-4 to the tee, there probably is a significant overlap. I suggest that the references in Gl. 3-4 are to the already realised inheritance of the promise, and the reference in Gl. 5:21 to that which will be realised at the *parousia*.

¹ Hull, 1978, 109.

² Dunn, 1993², 221, emphasises the experiential and existential element associated with the Spirit. Witherington, 1998¹, 290-1; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 173-4, with others, stress that one should not seek a soteriological or chronological order with regard to the one work of Christ and his Spirit. Also Lightfoot, 1890, 169; Mußner, 1974, 274-5; Schweizer, Kleinknecht, Baumgärtel, Bieder & Sjöberg, 1968, 420-8.

³ Dunn, 1993², 306-7

⁴ N.H. Ridderbos, 1962, 206; Witherington, 1998¹, 406-7.

4.2.4. *Two Jerusalems*

There is no question about Jewish apocalyptic having held the notion of two Jerusalems. Obviously, the earthly city was in the forefront and was regarded as the venue for Yahweh's eschatological victory. However, there was a development of the notion of a heavenly, pre-existent city that would descend to earth at the end of the age.¹ Alternatively another line of thought sees this Jerusalem remaining in its heavenly sphere and the righteous ascending to live in it. Whichever way it was looked at, it was there that God reigned supreme and his will was flawlessly done.² Paul adds to this by associating Hagar, the slave, and Sarah, the free woman, with the two Jerusalems (Gl. 4:24-26). Paul associates faith and freedom with the Jerusalem above in contrast to the earthly Jerusalem, irking him at the time. Paul definitely built on and alluded to Jewish apocalyptic thought.

For Paul it was also the place of freedom from the law. This "Jerusalem above" forms a sharp contrast to "present Jerusalem", the earthly city which, equally on the basis of an allegory, is called the mother of unbelievers (vs. 25).³

Since, therefore, "the Jerusalem that is above" is an eschatological term expressing a reality that will exist in the future, Paul's use of it here for the experience of the Galatian believers implies that, as Paul understood matters, the Galatian believers had come into the eschatological situation of already participating in that future reality, in that the promise that was made to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ (cf. 3:16; 5:1).⁴

4.2.5. *Apocalyptic vocabulary in the ethical section (Gl. 5:25-6:10)*

Although *Spirit* functions very strongly in the ethical section it has already been pointed out that it has strong Jewish apocalyptic overtones. It will therefore not be pursued again. The same applies to the reference to the inheritance of the kingdom of God. Therefore the references that will be dealt with here are restricted to Gl. 6:1-10. It is not necessary to explicate all the references that are to follow. Besides paying more attention to them in the last chapter of this thesis, the strong apocalyptic emphasis, which is what concerns us at this point, lies more in the combined effect than in the constitutive parts. Undoubtedly, these admonitions remind one of Jesus' eschatological sayings.

Firstly, there are references to the *bearing of burdens*, those of others (Gl. 6:2) and one's own (Gl. 6:5).⁵ Already in Jesus' eschatological sayings we read of trials and tribulations associated with the new eschatological era. We read of a wide range of woes. Mt. 24:3-31 mentions woes associated with faith in Christ (Mt. 24:9-13), but adds a much wider range, including wars, famines, earthquakes, betrayal, false prophets and wickedness (Mt. 24:6-8, 12). Jesus' prophecy that the untruthful would

¹ Fohrer & Lohse, 1971, 312-9, 326-7, provide sturdy information substantiating the restoration of Jerusalem as a radically new and God-sent entity that would be realised in the eschatological time. The notion of the perfect heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth was well-known in NT times (326-7).

² Schultz, 1976, 326, provides literary evidence to the effect. Also Witherington, 1998¹, 334-5.

³ Schultz, 1976, 329.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 216.

⁵ Kuck, 1994, 296, stresses the very heavy emphasis that the bearing of the individual's burden in Gl. 6:5 has on God's judgement, and man's ultimate accountability to Him.

fall away and that there would be betrayal of one another (Mt. 24:10) is in stark contrast to Gl. 6 where Paul insists that the Galatians were to support one another, even to restore sinners in their relationship with God and the community. In fact, this reminds one of Jesus' reference to the eschatological judgement where the ones to inherit the kingdom would be those who bore the burdens of others (Mt. 23:1-12). Equally, it would be about taking responsibility for one's own life (Gl. 6:3-5) just like the ten maidens in Jesus' eschatological parable in Mt. 25:1-13.¹ This is also reflected by Paul in Gl. 6:9 when he uses the subjunctive mood of ἐγκακέω ("grow weary") and the passive participle of ἐκλύω ("dishearten"), admonishing them not to grow weary in doing good, because they would reap eternal life if they did not loose heart or faith.

Secondly, the metaphor of *sowing and reaping* has a profound apocalyptic tone. Noteworthy is Jesus' very central parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-9, 18-23), and his appeal to the listeners to react to Him in faith (Mt 13:9). Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43 relates the parable of the weeds sown amongst the wheat by an enemy, and the very strong emphasis on reaping when the householder's reapers would distinguish between the weeds and the harvest – those intended for *corruption*, and those for *eternal life*. This task, Jesus says, will take place "at the close of the age"² (Mt. 13:40). Paul clearly alludes to this occasion in his metaphor in Gl. 6:7-9. In fact, by using the word καιρός (Gl. 6:9, 10) he actually enhances the notion. Although it probably also has a more general meaning, such as *appropriate time* (Gl. 6:9) or merely *opportunity* (Gl. 6:10), contextually it has an eschatological bearing.

Thirdly, the call *not to be deceived* introduces the warning that *God is not mocked* (Gl. 6:7). It is noteworthy that the NT uses the active form of the verb ἀποπλανᾶ almost exclusively in an apocalyptic sense.³ It is not surprising, given the rest of the context, that the very same is the case here, although the passive is used.⁴

Clearly, the ethically orientated Gl. 6:1-10 is laden with apocalyptic allusion.

4.2.6. Apocalyptic vocabulary concentrated in the postscript (Gl. 6:11-17)

4.2.6.1. End of the world and new creation.⁵

Once again, Paul does not harbour the notion of piecemeal change in the advent of Christ. He and the κόσμος had been crucified to each other (Gl. 6:14). There was no other way. Separation from this world or present evil age, did not involve gradual denunciation of different worldly assets. It could only be attained by death, and at that, the deaths of Jesus, the world, and Paul. This took place in the so-called triple cruci-

¹ Jeremias, 1972, 51, 171, stresses one should be careful of assuming that the parable is about the maidens. It is rather about the wedding and its suddenness. Aware of this debate and finding it unnecessary to enter into it, I do, however, accept that the parable is not only about the suddenness and unexpectedness of the parousia. The foregoing and following parables are heavily laden with the responsibility of believers to act according to the time they live in, i.e. pre-parousia. Schweizer, 1976, 303-6, emphasises the call to faithfulness.

² Jeremias, 1972, 226.

³ Günther, 1976, 459; Betz, 1979, 306.

⁴ See my Ch. 7.

⁵ New creation (καινή κτίσις) will be discussed in Ch. 5. Here we tend only to its enhancing of apocalyptic.

fixion. In Christ's death Paul died, and also the world and its enslaving power.¹ In the same vein, Paul's apocalyptic approach makes no provision for a piecemeal revivification of human life to come in step with God's will. A new creation – radically new – had to take place. God had to do it.² Only He is the Creator.

With his reference to there no longer being circumcision or non-circumcision, but a new creation, one is reminded of Martyn's earlier article³ in which he argues that antinomies or opposites were regarded as the building-blocks of the present world. Paul's negation of these opposites, especially those concerning circumcision and those of the baptismal formula in Gl. 3:28, in favour of a *new creation*, is a very profound statement that the old world has fallen to pieces. The old view that law was the antidote or remedial opposite of sin had also come to an end.⁴ The new creation in which God recreates through the faithfulness of Christ that led Him to the cross, and by the presence of the Spirit, provides man with freedom from the present evil age. The advent of Christ and his Spirit became the potent opposite of the present evil age, because it was from outside this realm, truly of divine origin.⁵

In both Jewish apocalyptic and OT prophecy there was a great expectation of a new creation. Sea and wilderness, as symbolic of the threat of chaos and the desolation that had been part and parcel of the present age, would be transformed.⁶ This would be accompanied by God's personal and immediate appearance to Israel.⁷ According to Is. 65-66 the wilderness would be transformed and Zion glorified by the triumphant return of the exiles; also Is. 35, 40-42.⁸ Ezk. 47 stresses Zion would give life and prosperity even to the Dead Sea. God would give life and life-giving power to Zion,⁹ so also Zch. 8, 9, 13 and Jl. 3:16-21. Enough! New creation was a typically Jewish idea.¹⁰ Paul reinterpreted it in terms of Jesus's cross and the advent of his Spirit inaugurating the new aeon.

4.2.6.2. *Israel of God*

Then, of course, the reference to the *Israel of God* is clearly apocalyptic. We cannot go into great detail here and will return to the subject later.¹¹ What most commentators accept is that it does not refer to Israel as historical people, because they do not feature as a group in the rest of the letter. The letter is also

¹ Martyn, 2000, 255. Although on a different subject, Kovacs, 1989, 222, attests to the same matter.

² Martyn, 2000, 255.

³ Martyn, 1985², 410-24.

⁴ Martyn, 2000, 256-7.

⁵ Martyn, 2000, 258-9.

⁶ Gowan, 1986, 109.

⁷ Gowan, 1986, 111.

⁸ Gowan, 1986, 113-4.

⁹ Gowan, 1986, 114-6. Refer to §4.2.2. of this chapter.

¹⁰ Hubbard, 2002, emphasises the need to interpret *καὶνὴ κτίσις* in terms of Paul's death – life symbolism to which we return in my Ch. 5. Importantly, he observes that in both the OT prophetic and the apocalyptic tradition of Second Temple Judaism the new creation motif is applied in the plight – solution dichotomy, which we will be discussing in Ch. 4. The prophets envisioned a new creation as God's answer to its pitiful plight.

¹¹ See my Ch. 5.

clearly not a nationalistic revivification. It also seems unlikely that Paul would be referring to either Jewish-Christians or non-Jewish Christians, because he had been refuting such distinctions all along in his letter. Therefore it seems to refer to all believers who align themselves with the gospel as understood by Paul.¹ Seen this way, they are at least the people of the new creation in Christ: those who have faith in the promise given to Abraham and fulfilled in the Christ event and the advent of his Spirit – a promise specifically including the Gentiles.² One is reminded of one of Moltmann's distinctions between eschatology and apocalyptic.³ In terms of Israel his argument runs as follows. The prophets were concerned with God's people. Eschatologically speaking, they largely limited themselves to prophesying with regard to God's promises and hope for Israel itself and its need for repentance and the changing of its ways. However, when it comes to apocalyptic, the scope broadens to include the cosmos. The focus moved from God and the nations being in opposition to Him, to God and the world under the power of sin. The prophet operated amidst the people of Israel and its history, but the apocalypticist amidst "the post-exilic congregation of the righteous of Yahweh."⁴

The prophetic revolution amongst the nations expands to become the cosmic revolution of all things. Not only the martyrs are included in the eschatological suffering of the Servant of God, but the whole creation is included in the suffering of the last days. The suffering becomes universal and includes the all-sufficiency of the cosmos, just as the eschatological joy will then resound in a 'new heaven and a new earth'.... Without apocalyptic a theological eschatology remains bogged down in the ethnic history of men or the existential history of the individual.⁵

In light of Paul's emphasis on apocalyptic in Galatians, and Moltmann's remarks with regard to the universalisation usually accompanying apocalyptic, as well as Paul's opponents' over-emphasising ethnicity, Paul probably alluded to apocalyptic in his use of "Israel of God".

5. CONCLUSION

i) *Pre- and postscript enveloping Galatians in apocalyptic frame*

The conventions of ancient letter writing ascribed specific purposes to the different subdivisions of letters. Although Paul had his own style, he followed the ancient conventions to the extent that they served his purpose.⁶ This implies that Paul, having a pre- and a postscript, would have had more or less the same purpose with them as accepted by conventional epistolography. It was the function of the *prescript* to introduce the author, identify the addressees and convey greetings. These elements could be expanded upon freely. The initial greeting would usually be followed by a word of thanksgiving as part of the prescript. The function of the

¹ Betz, 1979, 322-3; Witherington, 1998¹, 452-3.

² Dunn, 1993², 345.

³ Moltmann, 1967, 124-38. He offers fascinating reading on the broader subject, but which is not relevant to the current point. This distinction of Moltmann's is remarkably similar to that of P.D. Hanson, 1979, 11-2.

⁴ Moltmann, 1967, 134. Westermann, 1969, 423-9, also emphasises the universalism by which Yahweh includes the nations into his people in, amongst other references, Is. 66:18-24.

⁵ Moltmann, 1967, 137-8.

⁶ Du Toit, 1992¹, 280.

thanksgiving was to introduce the theme of the letter,¹ or at least to allude to the letter's purpose – a keynote, as it were, on the address which was to follow.

Writers of letters often deviated from convention. This must be accounted for. In this respect the letter to the Galatians makes for interesting reading. As we have already indicated,² Paul introduces his letter with a very apocalyptic keynote in Gl. 1:1-5. He uses terminology such as “present evil age,” “raised from the dead,” and “deliver.” He links it with God's action in Jesus Christ according to God's will and to his glory. What would have been expected to follow on the greeting was a thanksgiving (εὐχαριστῶ) of some kind. Paul deviates from convention and instead follows with a rebuke (θαυμάζω). It basically fulfils the same function as the thanksgiving in setting the tone of the letter.³ He has no word of thanks. He is astonished that they had deserted God and were turning to another gospel. He adds that there is no other gospel than (by implication) the gospel of his introduction: the gospel of God who delivers from the present evil age by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. This is none other than an apocalyptic gospel. Because of Paul's emphasis on revelation, apostleship and the resurrection of Christ in the prescript, Cook remarks:

Paul, the apostle, is an 'eschatological person', and the world in which he lives is an eschatological world. It is a world in which God has already raised Jesus Christ from the dead, in which the end of time (Gl. 4:4) has already come.⁴

In ancient epistolography the *postscript* (Gl. 6:11-18) had the function of summarising what had been said and once again appealing to the readers to heed what had been written.⁵ Russell calls attention to how pre- and postscript reflect the same topics, i.e. Paul's apostolic authority in the service of God and his Son (Gl. 1:1 and 6:17); the Fatherhood of God (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4; 6:16); and deliverance from the present evil age into the new creation (Gl. 1:4; 6:15).⁶ Weima rightfully adds Paul's profound emphasis on the cross⁷ – explicitly in the postscript (Gl. 6:12, 14) and implicitly in the prescript, the latter referring to Christ being raised from the dead (Gl. 1:1) after giving himself up (Gl. 1:4). Once again there is an apocalyptic emphasis. He refers to the triple crucifixion (Gl. 6:14). The cross of Christ not only resulted in the world being dead to him and he to the world, but especially in a new creation (καινή κτίσις - Gl. 6:15) having come about: one in which, once again, the opposites of the old world no longer count. Once again the eschatological theme of opposition between flesh and Spirit is alluded to when he makes mention of persecution for those who share in the cross of Christ in opposition to those who make a showing in the flesh.

From what has been said concerning the pre- and postscript of Galatians it is clear that together they envelope the whole content of the letter in apocalyptic terminol-

¹ D. Cook, 1992, 511.

² See above at §4.1.1. and, especially §4.2.1.

³ Hansen, 1989, 33.

⁴ D. Cook, 1992, 513-4.

⁵ Hansen, 1989, 52; Klauck, 1998, 237.

⁶ W.B. Russell, 1997, 20-1.

⁷ Weima, 1993, 90-107; Hansen, 1998, 213-4.

ogy. This “envelope” stresses that by God’s action in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, the eschatological new age had arrived. It stresses that what is written between pre- and postscript – both gospel and ethics, both indicative and imperative – involves a radically new situation in life. Life had to be reframed with a new symbolic universe.

ii) *The apocalyptic reframing of a symbolic universe*

The critical question with regard to the issue of reframing a symbolic universe is why Paul would have chosen to use apocalyptic to do the trick? He could have made use of a salvation-historical approach and stressed the continuity between the OT and the NT, especially since he makes abundant use of Abraham and the covenant and takes that approach in other instances (Rm. 11). My contention is that with regard to Galatians it was precisely the discontinuity between the old and the new situations Paul wished to stress.

This chapter emphasises the apocalyptic substructure of Galatians. Paul’s theology was undoubtedly motivated by the revealed knowledge that God, in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, had decisively brought about the advent of the eschatological time to which Judaism looked forward and in which all who believe in Him would share, former Jew and Gentile alike. It is probably safe to assume there were former Gentiles who were well read in the OT and Judaism amongst the believers in Galatia, or at least knowledgeable of the OT and Judaism. This is reflected in Paul’s use, and probably also his opponent’s use,¹ of the Abraham and Sinai traditions. There is also the possibility of a substantial group of *Theosebomenoi* (“God fearers”).²

The fact that they were “so quickly” (Gl. 1:6) misled to desert the gospel implies that they had previously accepted the gospel preached to them by Paul. Unfortunately, the Jewish symbolic universe that they had previously come to know was still lying beneath the surface and had not yet been effectively reinterpreted. The Judaizers could therefore easily make them believe that the law dominated symbolic universe of Judaism had not fundamentally changed. Christ had been added and it had been re-oriented towards Him, but, for instance, Jewish ethics remained intact. Or else, if they had not accepted Judaism’s symbolic universe, the Judaizers were intent on luring them to their symbolic universe.

In this regard Donaldson³ is very helpful in introducing Thomas Kuhn’s insight from the natural sciences.⁴ Kuhn’s thesis is that progress in the field of science is seldom a matter of “development-by-accumulation”. In other words, it does not necessarily build onto previously discovered premises. He is of the opinion that it is much

¹ Being reminded of the danger of mirror-reading. See Barclay, 1987, 73-93.

² They were Gentiles who largely accepted Judaism with its monotheistic belief in the God of Israel and even the Torah, but who were not keen to be circumcised. Christianity is known to have had a receptive audience amongst them. Obviously they were very knowledgeable of the OT and Judaism.

³ Donaldson, 1997¹, 43-7; 1989, 655-82.

⁴ T.S. Kuhn, 1962.

more revolutionary.¹ One set of premises by which the world is ordered and made sense of is, given the right impetus, replaced by another. It's about paradigm shifts from one worldview to another.² As soon as the existing paradigm cannot explain anomalies that arise and challenge the paradigm beyond its limits, a new set of tools is needed. Kuhn states:

The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgement leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature and with each other.³

Hans Küng, on reflecting on Kuhn's theory and its application to theology, writes that such a paradigm shift is usually preceded by anomalies arising from the reigning paradigm, as well as a period of pronounced insecurity,

[w]hich in the end leads to the destruction of the paradigm. In a word, *crisis* is the usual condition for the rejection of the hitherto accepted paradigm.⁴

He reflects on the theory in terms of theology and remarks that the term "revolutionary" is not very popular in this field of science, where emphasis is more often on continuity and identity.⁵ This would probably have been the same for the first Christians. Seen in this light, when Paul experienced the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he became aware that something radically different had come over his Jewish path. He could no longer explain everything in terms of his old paradigm and had to rethink his entire theology. Although the detailed implications were probably filled in on a continual basis, in the long run it would prove to be a radical switch. Although the switch took place with his Christophany, the articulation of the new paradigm took shape amidst the Gentiles he was serving. By the time of writing his letter to the Galatians he had already thought things through very well and was convinced that a new creation had come about. He wanted to convey this radical change.

If we accept that Paul wrote the letter on the eve of the Jerusalem council, his memory of the incident at Antioch still vivid, this was probably what he would have shared with the council. In that difficult time for Paul, a time of emotional, pastoral and theological turmoil and crisis, nothing less could solve the issue than a total re-framing of their symbolic universe. For this Paul employed the available and effective metaphor of apocalyptic to convince his peers of the radical change that had come about. That he was not altogether successful in his lifetime is understandable from Kuhn's perspective that attempts to falsification will always follow. In this regard Hans Küng aptly quotes Max Planck.

¹ T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 2-7.

² T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 150.

³ T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 77. Vorster, 1988, 31-48, although not directly applicable, is illuminating on NT scholarship's possible shift from the historical-critical to the post-critical paradigm. The point being, he does this in terms of Kuhn. Joubert, 1994, 23-40, applies Kuhn's approach in evaluating "the present state of affairs" with regard to study of the NT Umwelt.

⁴ Küng, 1980, 108.

⁵ Küng, 1980, 111.

A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.¹

Paul would not take such a resigned approach. This letter was his opportunity to re-frame their symbolic universe to realise that they were not a mere continuance of Israel. God had changed everything fundamentally through Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham. A new creation was brought about. This changed everything, even their ethical orientation.

iii) *Stressing a radically new era*

Martyn observes that the apocalyptically loaded *present evil age* is at the opening of the letter, while the equally apocalyptic opposite, *new creation* has a central function at the closing, illustrating the motif of “apocalyptic discontinuity” “central to Paul’s view of the gospel...”²

Paul probably wanted to emphasise that the advent of Christ and his Spirit had radically changed life itself and that a radically new approach would have to be taken with regard to viewing the time in which they lived, the community of faith, as well as their ethic. The change brought about by this revelation of God in the advent of Christ transformed everything irrevocably. It changed the position of the believer in terms of his allegiances,³ status,⁴ being⁵ and ethics.⁶ It was not a piecemeal change, but a radical and encompassing one in which the way things were perceived earlier was no longer valid – let alone the idea that it could merely be adapted.⁷ This is probably the most important function of Paul’s apocalyptic tone in the letter.

iv) *Stressing a radically new ethical stance*

Paul feared the Galatians would, under influence of the Judaisers, think of their new status after faith in Christ as merely being adopted into Judaism with its ethic of law-observance and exclusivism. Using apocalyptic metaphors and language he stresses that those in Christ have died to the world in all its forms and have been resurrected into a new creation inconceivably different from anything they knew formerly in or outside Judaism.

Although there is continuity between God’s dealings with the world through Israel, there is also radical discontinuity. This new creation is a deliverance from the “present evil age”. It is the time of God’s fulfilling of his promise to Abraham. Life itself

¹ Küng, 1980, 113.

² Martyn, 2000, 253.

³ No longer seeking the favour of men, but being a servant of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

⁴ From slavery in the present evil age (Gl. 1:4) to son of God (Gl. 4:7).

⁵ “Crucified with Christ” (Gl. 2:20).

⁶ “Walk by the Spirit” (Gl. 5:25).

⁷ “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (Gl. 3:28). Malan, 1992, 425-40, on reflecting on the allegory of the two women (Gl. 4:21-31), stresses that these women represent two contrasting symbolic universes mutually exclusive of each other (431). The one symbolic universe is about bondage and the other about freedom (435).

had changed from multi-faceted and overall bondage to radical freedom in Jesus Christ; from an ethic externally dominated by and under constant threat of law, to an ethic motivated from the heart newly created; from death to life; from being part and parcel of the evil age, to being part and parcel of the new creation. Galatians emphasises the discontinuity between the age from where believers (Gentile and Jew) come and the new creation of which they are now a part. This implies that what was certain and acceptable in the previous dispensation could no longer be taken for granted,¹ to put it extremely euphemistically.

According to Paul, the death and resurrection of Jesus was an apocalyptic event that signalled the end of the old age and portended the beginning of the new. Paul's moral vision is intelligible only when his apocalyptic perspective is kept clearly in mind: the church is to find its identity and vocation by recognizing its role within the cosmic drama of God's reconciliation of the world to himself.²

Paul's introduction of the Spirit, not only soteriologically (the Galatians' coming of faith in Christ), but also ethically, is profoundly important for our subject. The Spirit, the long awaited solution to the Jewish ethical plight, had arrived. The new ethic would be born from a life and walk in Him. No longer would ethics be determined by an exterior, enslaving law, and its quality by a human endeavour to hold true to law. The new ethical freedom would be determined from the heart set free and guided by the Spirit living in man.³

v) *Stressing a radically new community*

In the old dispensation membership of God's people was determined by the law's requirements. Those outside Israel could become part of it by allegiance to the law. Now, in the new dispensation it is determined by allegiance to Christ alone and no other requirements of whatever kind. Paul could not, in terms of this paradigm switch, tolerate anything in between. To expect someone to become Jewish in order to be fully Christian would be tantamount to severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4).

Not only had the constitution of God's new people changed. Allegiance to Christ was now the defining criterion, and not law, and there could no longer be any comparing of and boasting in observance of the law between fellow believers. All believers would have Christ in them and would be led by the Spirit endowed in equal measure. In fact, boasting would make way for supporting, serving and loving one another in exemplifying Christ crucified (Gl. 6:12-14).

vi) *Apocalyptic and freedom*

The change Christ brings in the status of God's children is neither a natural process, nor a piecemeal development through human insight – not even religious insight. It is a radically new situation brought about by God revealing Himself in Jesus Christ in the lives of people believing his revelation. It is something from out-

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 74.

² Hays, 1997, 19.

³ Hays, 1997, 24.

side man's symbolic universe that God reveals in it. Faith in Christ obviously makes a fundamental reinterpretation of man's symbolic universe absolutely necessary.

Paul's audience was familiar with such a rhetorical approach. The symbolic universe of the early Christians, having stemmed from Second Temple Judaism, had been strongly influenced by Jewish apocalyptic. They, whether Jews, Gentiles or *Theosebomanoi*, had to come to terms with this Jewish past and how it related to the Son of God.¹ An extremely effective vehicle for this paradigm switch was the re-interpretation of Jewish apocalyptic language and thought in terms of Christ's cross, resurrection and expected *parousia*. This seedbed of apocalyptic theological thought was the common ground from which Paul would operate in his proclamation and defence of the gospel in the Galatian crisis.

As we ponder upon the subject of freedom in Galatians, we must widen our scope to include much more than just freedom from law. We must think of freedom as something given to man encapsulated in a total symbolic universe holding him in bondage, slavery, tutelage and immaturity. We must think of freedom in terms of freedom from a previous age which was without Christ and his Spirit – so radically different and bent into itself that a new life and way of living had to be revealed into it by God's Son. It was something so impacting that the result was not a mutation of the old, but its replacement by a new creation. We must understand Paul's view of freedom as eschatological freedom – the freedom of the time inaugurated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit!

It is this apocalyptic vision, then, that has given Paul his perception of the nature of the human plight. God has invaded the world in order to bring it under his liberating control. From that deed of God a conclusion is to be drawn, and the conclusion is decidedly apocalyptic: God would not have to carry out an invasion in order merely to forgive erring human beings. The root trouble lies deeper than human guilt, and it is more sinister. The whole of humanity – indeed the whole of creation (3:22) – is, in fact, trapped, enslaved under the power of the present evil age. That is the background of God's invasive action in his sending of Christ, in his declaration of war, and in his striking the decisive and liberating blow against the power of the present evil age.²

The Galatians' mindsets had to be reframed to realise that their freedom was the result of God's gracious dealing through his Son when he replaced the old aeon with the new.³ They had to understand that they were living as eschatological people in eschatological times, and that they had to live equally eschatologically.

¹ Witherington, 1994, 88-9.

² Martyn, 1997, 105.

³ Malan, 1992, 436, is correct in stating that by using the allegory of the two women Paul wished to lead the Galatians from one covenant with its symbolic universe of bondage to the new covenant of freedom obtained by Christ for the children of the promise.

PART II

THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE BYGONE EVIL AGE

CHAPTER 3

THE OLD AGE OF SLAVERY TO FLESH

As early as in his prescript to the letter, stating that Christ “gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,” Paul very manifestly gives prominence to the so-called present evil age (Gl. 1:4). It is my contention that we can only really understand and appreciate the magnitude of the freedom brought about by Christ, as well as the far-reaching implications involved for Christian individuals and communities, after an appreciation of Paul’s view of the present evil age.¹ I will argue that it is a fallacy to think of freedom in Galatians almost exclusively in terms of freedom from law. Paul has a much larger picture in mind. For him it is about freedom from the present evil age in all its facets. I will indicate that Paul views the life in the present evil age – that is life before the advent of Christ, as well as without Him² – as a life of slavery. Man is born into this life as a slave. It is his fate. There is nothing that mankind can do of itself to liberate or deliver itself from this life of slavery. Paul is quite clear that God had to will it and Christ had to deliver mankind (Gl. 1:4-5). The point was strongly argued in the previous chapter with its heavy emphasis on apocalyptic, that God’s initiative and actions broke through the old frame of thinking and living and that a totally different frame of mind became possible through Jesus Christ and according to God’s will. The *modus* of this life of slavery can be described as life according to flesh. By nature man lives life according to man’s vision, man’s insight, man’s goals, man’s rules, etc. He gives sense to his life and orders it by living in accordance with set principles or gods of his own making (Gl. 4:8). In the process of orientating his life and life around himself to serve him and his society, he becomes the slave of his own making(s) and of the elements of the world (Gl. 4:9-10).

Theologically, Israel’s position before the advent of Christ was different from other nations. It was in a covenantal relationship with Yahweh who had graciously provided them with a set of rules (הֲלָוָה-“law”) according to which they had to live and combat evil(s) in their midst. Because of man’s sinful inclination and proneness to live according to flesh, law was not successful in combating evil. Although Yahweh had mercifully introduced mechanisms for restitution, in the long run man could not master sin and flesh. This resulted in a life of slavery, hopelessness and death. Aggravating the situation was the problem that law created division amongst men, because not all followed Yahweh and many

¹ It is not customary for Paul to use “sins” in the plural form. He prefers to speak of “sin”. It is therefore accepted by most scholars (e.g., Betz, 1979, 40; Conzelmann, 1969, 69-71) that Paul took over this formula from Christian tradition understanding Christ’s death as an expiatory self-sacrifice for individual transgressions of the Torah. Martyn, 1997, 89, observes that there was a liturgical formula probably known to the Galatian churches that confessed: “The Lord Jesus Christ gave his very life for our sins.” The emphasis would then be on sins as human misdeeds. Paul, however, adds to this: “so that he might snatch us out of the grasp of the present evil age” (Martyn’s translation). In this way he emphasises the reality of a deeper root cause for sin behind the individually identifiable sins, namely the enslaving present evil age. Also Martyn, 2000, 253.

² That is a life into which Christ was not revealed.

Gentiles who feared Him were not willing to receive the distinctive outward markings characteristic of Jewish people, namely circumcision and dietary and calendar requirements. It was also repressing in terms of gender rulings. Only divine intervention could bring about final deliverance from this life of slavery to flesh and its secondary jailors. God provided this deliverance in the apocalyptic event of Christ's advent. I will motivate that the *present evil age* is the overall description for life before and without Christ and his Spirit. It is characterised as a life of slavery to flesh and its secondary jailors. It is opposed to new creation, which is a life of freedom in the Spirit, and according to God's promise to those of faith in Christ.¹ Because the secondary jailors, flesh's secundi, the elements of the world and law, feature so prominently in Paul's arguments for freedom, they will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

As the major theme of the letter is *liberation – eleutheriōō* "to free" (e.g., 5:1); *exagorázō* "to liberate from slavery" (e.g., 3:13) – so the major sub-theme is *oppression – ὑπό τινα εἶναι*, "to be under the power of" (e.g., 4:5). In short *the human tragedy* is universal oppression, ubiquitous enslavement to the powers of the present evil age. And in Christ, God's deed is the cosmic act of liberation, deliverance from that slavery.²

1. THE PRESENT EVIL AGE AS SLAVERY TO FLESH

The word σάρξ occupies a very prominent position in the letter to the Galatians, occurring 18 times.³ Paul uses the term in a variety of ways of which all are not related to our subject in the same way or with the same intensity. There are examples where he uses it to refer to (fore)skin,⁴ or where it is used in combination with blood (σάρκι καὶ αἵματι) to refer ordinarily to human bodily existence⁵ in all its mortality and frailty.⁶ Then there are the definitely ethical references to σάρξ,⁷ which are all used in a morally negative sense. The latter are the instances that feature most prominently in the discussion on σάρξ, although it will hopefully become clear that all the references do have a connection with one another at different levels. The common denominator being that σάρξ without faith in the Son of God is aligned with the present evil age and against God and the cross of Christ.

1.1. A word with a history

Like all terms, especially those from antiquity, σάρξ has for many centuries been used in different ways and across a vast array of semantic fields. It is not neces-

¹ The reader is reminded that Chapters 3 and 4 are preparatory for Chapters 5 to 7 that deal with liberation and the liberated life after the demise of the present evil age in the advent of Christ and his Spirit.

² Martyn, 2000, 254.

³ Schmoller, 1989, 451, lists (Gl. 1:16), 2:16, 20; 3:3; 4:13, 14, 23, 29; 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; 6:8, 12, 13. Morgenthaler, 1958, 140.

⁴ Gl. 3:3; 6:12, 13.

⁵ Gl. 1:16. 2:16 has the same meaning, although it is not combined with "blood". The same is probably true of Gl. 2:20. Gl. 4:13, 14 most definitely refer to bodily existence.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 272.

⁷ Gl. 4:23, 29 in being contrasted with promise (23) and Spirit (29) are at the least indicative of the human mode of existence without Christ, but probably should be read in line with the morally negative references. The references in Gl. 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24 & 6:8 definitely have a morally negative meaning.

sary for our purpose to reflect the development of the term in any detail.¹ What is important for the current study though, is that attention be paid to both helpful and dangerous tendencies that have had a significant impact on the scholarly debate. Probably the most presented tendency is that of anthropological dualism in its vast array of forms and nuances, mostly dictated to by philosophical schools of thought from the stable of *idealism*. This tendency dominated the debate for the most part of the first eighteen centuries of Christianity. The next very influential train of thought was instigated by *existentialist philosophy*. In this regard Rudolf Bultmann was probably the single most influential scholar, endeavouring to break down the dualisms of the idealistic era and making the entire man responsible for his life of faith. The dilemma with both these approaches in all their nuances, although helpful in many respects, is that they often lack scriptural evidence and superimpose on the hermeneutical and exegetical processes.

There are various *social-scientific approaches* that have made a significant contribution to the understanding of flesh, very specifically in its Galatian application where circumcision is a matter of prominence. No conclusion on flesh in Galatians can be attempted without taking cognisance of these developments.

1.2. Σάρξ and anthropological dualism

Anthropological dualism presents itself in different nuances.² Roughly speaking this approach distinguishes between two entities in man: *spirit*,³ being of good quality and the real and lasting essence of man; and *flesh*, being in need of moral control, fleeting, and an earthly prison to the former. According to Plato the *soul* would be part of the world of *forms* (ἰδέαι). The latter were considered to be the higher order of originals or changeless archetypes of which every phenomenon was an imperfect copy striving to be typical of its archetype.⁴ Knowledge of life's different forms was the basis of life and ethics in practice. The *soul* was part of the *forms*, incorruptible and immortal, whilst the body was part of the lower order, transitory, and in the end, dispensable. Man's mission in life was to shake off the latter in order to experience freedom, and in that,

¹ Many studies have been done on the development of the term in both its usage and scholarly understanding. Worthy of special mention is Jewett, 1971. Also helpful, are amongst others: Sand, 1967; Brandenburger, 1968, 98-124; as well as Thiselton, 1975, 671-82.

² Plato was probably the most influential exponent of this train of thought, providing the tools for later generations of Christian scholars to contaminate their hermeneutical and exegetical endeavours with anthropological dualism. Durand, 1982, 29-30, reminds us that Plato was undoubtedly the most influential, but that he was not alone. He came from a tradition of idealism extending till long after his death.

³ Importantly, Plato does not refer to this human essence as *spirit* (πνεῦμα), but rather as *soul* (νοῦς or ψύχη). He equally does not refer to the *flesh*, but rather to the *body* (σῶμα). This being said, the terminology of *flesh/spirit* was superimposed upon by the use of Platonism's basic thought patterns. This contaminated the Christian scholarly activity with regard to the antithetical pair of *flesh/Spirit* in Galatians. See also Liddell & Scott, 1975, on these terms. Barclay, 1988, 185-6, quite rightly shows that Plato was in no way constitutive of Paul's thoughts on this antithetical pair. Not even Philo, a Jewish philosopher in the Platonic tradition and who is often incorrectly compared with Paul, a contemporary, but from the other side of the Mediterranean, could be brought in as a link. Also read Hagner, 1988, 509-10 and Dreyer, 1975, 102-4.

⁴ D.F. Wright, 1988, 518.

salvation.¹ Within this frame of reference the biblical notion of σάρξ was wrongly interpreted as a reference to the evil essence in man (Plato's *body*). This was opposed to the *spirit*, which was the inherently good part of man and his true essence. Coupled with this problem is the tendency to translate σάρξ with "physical nature" or "physicality"- in other words that which can be physically observed. This in itself makes it very difficult to include man's psyche and inner being from which his emotions and desires (ἐπιθυμίας) arise. It also touches on the problem that the body is seen as evil and the seedbed for everything detrimental to morality. It assumes that that which is morally pure resides naturally somewhere in every man and needs only to be released by means of ἐγκράτεια ("self-control"), to which Paul refers at the end of his list of virtues, which he names "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gl. 5:22-23).

This approach to Paul's use of σάρξ is not acceptable, mainly for two reasons. *Firstly*, it accepts as fact that Paul thought in terms of Hellenistic categories and was taken up by Plato's philosophical categories. Although Paul would have been sensitive to his Hellenistic audiences, there is not enough evidence that he built his theology on a Hellenistic view of the advent of Christ and the Spirit. There is more than enough evidence, as will be illustrated in due course, that Paul's theological reflection was thoroughly from the vantage point of the OT and Second Temple Judaism. *Secondly*, it is clear that Paul's antithetical categories (*flesh/spirit*) do not coincide with that of Plato (*body/soul*).² For Paul, man in his entirety (body and soul)³ lives in opposition to or in accordance with πνεῦμα. With πνεῦμα Paul refers to the divine Spirit as an entity entirely outside man's being. This Spirit is to determine man's actions as opposed to the flesh doing it. Paul does not distinguish between an imperishable soul and a perishable body. Man in his entire being is perishable and will, as believer in Christ, become imperishable (1 Cor. 15:35-57).⁴ He states that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in the believer (1 Cor. 6:19).

Russell states that most scholars since Luther opted to describe the flesh/spirit dualism as internal to man.⁵ This might be an overstatement. In any event, one must be careful when using the term "internal" in this regard. If it means "inherent to man's being" so that man has two natures in eternal battle, it has to be rejected as an anthropological dualism on the grounds mentioned earlier. It would then also be untrue that the mentioned scholars follow that route. If it means that man has an internal conflict because these forces from outside continually cause him to make difficult choices, the picture changes. Witherington remarks that despite all the problems with the abovementioned and rejected anthropological dualistic approach, there is something to be said for the suggestions by some scholars that the so-called *yetzer tov* and *yetzer hara* (good and

¹ Van Peursen, 1976, 36-49; Störig, 1972¹, 152-3.

² Landmann, 1971, 70-3.

³ This is with reference to Plato. This study rejects any notion of an ontological dichotomy inherent to man.

⁴ Bauckham, 1998¹, 276-8, provides evidence from the OT and Second Temple Judaism supporting this notion.

⁵ W.B. Russell, 1997, 7, cites a host of modern scholars.

bad inclinations of man within Jewish reflection) are at the basis of Paul's reflection.¹ According to this view every human being has these two inclinations. In the case of the morally negative inclinations to which *σάρξ* refers in Gl. 5:13, it is linked to desires (*ἐπιθυμία*) that Christians are also capable of having, even though they are in contrast to the guidance of the Spirit.² The proviso that Witherington adds is that one should not distinguish between the two in terms of the abovementioned anthropological dualism. In this respect he also refers to Rm. 7:21-25, of which he quite rightly warns that it should not be imposed on Galatians.

Paul is presenting a Christian view of a pre-Christian condition, here [Gl. 5] the apostle is clearly referring to what is the case with a Christian person. The tension in the Christian life is not between old person and new person (for the old person has been crucified and is dead and buried), but rather between Spirit and flesh.³

Paul states that scripture consigned all things to sin (Gl. 3:22). He clearly has in mind that all humans in their total being are under sin. Viewing this apocalyptically, as one probably should, it refers to the order of the present evil age, in which Jew and Gentile alike are under the power of and affected by sin.⁴ Paul definitely does not distinguish between two natures in man. However, he does regard man as having fallen in every aspect of his humanity. Witherington describes this corruption as affecting man's mind, heart, will, emotions, body, social relationships and institutions. He adds that the corruption is extensive, affecting the whole of humanity and every aspect of human existence, but not totally intensive. It does not deprive man of still bearing God's image.⁵ A useful suggestion by him is that one should not think of *σάρξ* in terms of "sinful nature", but rather as "sinful inclination". He says this on the grounds of *σάρξ* being associated with passions and desires and its being contrasted with love in

¹ Betz, 1979, 272. See W.D. Davies, 1970, 17-35.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 377; Betz, 1979, 272.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 377. Rm. 7 is not under discussion in this thesis and will not be reflected upon.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 260-1; Dunn, 1993², 194.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 377. In Reformation theology this has become known as "total depravity" (*corruptio totalis*). Colwell, 1988, 642, states: "This doctrine of total depravity is not intended to imply that fallen humanity is incapable of good works, but rather that there is no aspect of human being that is unaffected by sin: there is no 'relic or core of goodness which persists in man in spite of his sin' (Barth, CD IV.1, p.493)." Berkouwer, 1971, 485, indicates that, although there is agreement amongst Reformed theologians on the universal character of sin, disagreement is apparent with regard to sin's gravity and depth. This is not our concern. Enough said! Witherington has many to back him on his stance on total depravity in a long tradition of Biblical theology, including NT scholars: to mention only Ridderbos, 1975, 114-26 and Guthrie, 1981, 207 (referring to Rm. 8:7). What is questionable is his remark that the intensity of the depravity is not such that man is not redeemable. This gives the impression that man has the capacity at least to seek redemption. He does not argue the case, probably because it is not that relevant to the discussion on flesh. But, because he raises the matter, it should be mentioned that Paul's absolute antithesis between flesh and Spirit in Galatians; his association of sin and curse with flesh (and salvation and moral behaviour with the Spirit); his close association between living by and walking in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25); and his emphasis on man's plight (Israel included) in the present evil age, does not seem to harbour the notion of man being able to assist in his redemption in any way. These matters will be dealt with in due course. Fee, 1997, 166-83, is enlightening with regard to the Spirit's fundamental role in changing the believer's orientation.

vs. 13.¹ Not so useful, is his view that Paul seemingly had the notion of the body as “the weak link in the Christian’s armor,”² unconvincingly stating

it is the one aspect of human existence that has not yet experienced redemption, and will not do so until the resurrection. The mind is being renewed, the heart refilled with God’s love, the bent will straightened, fallen emotions being replaced by holy affections, but the fallen body which generates sinful inclinations is not; or at least one can say it is the portion of human personality least affected by redemption thus far. It is a mistake to assume that the term ‘flesh’ ever entirely loses its connection with the human body in Paul’s usage.³

The bothering factor with Witherington is that he comes very close to re-instating the very anthropological dualism he set out to question.⁴ Obviously, being crucified with Christ and being a new creation does not involve miraculous recreation of the body into an unblemished state. Equally, according to Paul (1 Cor. 15), the body (σῶμα) will be radically transformed at the general resurrection to be imperishable or immortal. However, it is doubtful that one can so easily separate the body from the rest of man’s nature and just as easily ascribe the sinful tendencies (σάρξ - *alá* Witherington) to the body as the main culprit. It comes close to accepting that σὰρξ resides in the human σῶμα - at least primarily.

In his discussion on בָּשָׂר (bāśār) in the OT, Wolff indicates numerous instances where it refers to human frailty (Ps. 56:4) and unreliability (Jb 10:4). It often indicates man’s insufficiency in comparison to God (Jr. 17:5, 7), and flesh’s need to be empowered by Him, or else to perish (Job 34:14f.).⁵ In the OT בָּשָׂר (bāśār)

does not only mean the powerlessness of the mortal creature but also the feebleness of his faithfulness and obedience to the will of God.⁶

Judaism in its various forms closely connected man’s carnality with his sin, but without interpreting the flesh as the actual cause of sin. It referred to OT statements which describe dependence on the flesh not merely as folly, but also as sin (Isa. 31:3). “All flesh” is mankind, and to strive after evil is inherent in man (Gen. 8:21). There must then be a relation between the flesh and dependence on the flesh.⁷

What is certain and very relevant to Galatians, is that flesh produces desires and passions in conflict to the Spirit.⁸ This is even true of the Christian who has crucified the

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 377-8.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 378.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 378.

⁴ Bruce, 1982¹, 240, comes very close to this position when he states that it “is used here not simply of weak human nature nor yet of life under bondage to the σαρκεία as opposed to life in the Spirit; it denotes...that self-regarding element in human nature which has been corrupted at the source, with its appetites and propensities, and which if unchecked produces the ‘works of the flesh’ listed in vv 19f.”

⁵ Wolff, 1974², 30.

⁶ Wolff, 1974², 31.

⁷ Thiselton, 1975, 673.

⁸ Wolff, 1974², 31, stresses that flesh as ethical frailty in Pauline theology, is not the creation of Qumran, as many would believe [Davies in Stendahl], but of OT (Ezk. 16:26; 23:20). Already in Is. 31:3 the two are contrasted. In Jl. 2:28 the Spirit is presented as the hope of the flesh. Longenecker, 1990, 240, correctly states that, although occurring in the OT, it was not used on a scale comparable to Paul’s use of σάρξ. He does, however, acknowledge Davies’ thesis that the “ethical use” of the term “was coming into vogue in Paul’s day.”

flesh with its passions and desires (Gl. 5:24). Despite the crucifixion of the flesh it still continues to battle with the Spirit.¹ The important factor for the Christian is that, although he has not yet been ridden of the temptations posed by the flesh,² he can, by the power of the Spirit, already overcome flesh in its different presentations. This is akin to the rabbinical notion that the body is a vessel that may from time to time be possessed by different spirits.³ Hellenistic Judaism did not have an essentially negative appraisal of flesh. According to the Apocalypse of Elias (35:7f.; 42:12f.) the spiritual flesh will replace the physical flesh.⁴ Apparently the dimension in which it partook would determine the quality of the flesh. The fact is that Hellenistic Judaism did not regard flesh as by nature inherently corrupt. One does not even find an anthropological dualism between *flesh* and *spirit* in the Qumran documents with their emphasis on dualisms. Meyer refers to a magnitude of relevant Qumran documents.⁵ With regard to righteousness before God he says of 1 QS 11:9: "Here the sinfulness of the flesh is simply the sinfulness of human life."⁶ With regard to Qumran Hübner finds that even the use of flesh and Spirit in reference to man and God, as in Galatians, does not of essence imply an antithesis between human flesh and the Spirit of God.⁷ Jörg Frey remarks that the meaning of *flesh* in Pauline thought is nearer to Palestinian than to Hellenistic Judaism, but that his antithetical use of *flesh* and *Spirit* is not to be found in either of the two.⁸ Together with this, in Paul the Spirit has the upper hand as the One who powerfully resurrected Jesus from the dead. He continues:

In der hier vorgeführten palästinisch-jüdischen Tradition ist die Rede vom >Fleisch< gerade nicht durch einen >ontologischen< Gegensatz zum Geistigen bestimmt, sondern durch den Ungehorsam gegen Gott, die Sünde. Zugleich ist der mensch als Ganzer >Fleisch<, nicht nur sein materieller Teil, und dies impliziert keine Abwertung seiner leiblich-geschöpflichen Natur, sondern ein Urteil über die Ausrichtung seiner Existenz. Dementsprechend kommt auch bei Paulus der Mensch stets als Ganzer ins Blickfeld: Er ist ganz Fleisch (Röm 7, 18) und von der Macht der Sünde beherrscht (Röm 7, 14.20.23), sofern er nicht im Glauben an Christus der Sünde abgestorben (Röm 6, 10f.) und vom Geist bestimmt ist (Röm 8, 9f.).⁹

Furthermore in soteriological terms Paul differs dramatically from both Palestinian and Qumran Judaism in terms of law. Where the spiritual man in Judaism seeks to observe the law, Paul regards this as part of the flesh. The spiritual man is the man who is in Christ.¹⁰ These differences taken into account, Barclay correctly observes that not too much must be made of comparisons between Paul and Qumran, or even Paul and Philo, although they were contemporaries.

¹ Betz, 1979, 272.

² In Gl. 2:20 Paul confirms that he still lives in the flesh, but with faith in the Son of God who now dominates his life. He is clear in Gl. 4:14 that his flesh experienced afflictions and bodily ailments. Longenecker, 1990, 241.

³ Thiselton, 1975, 673.

⁴ Thiselton, 1975, 674.

⁵ Schweizer, Baumgärtel & Meyer, 1971, 110-4.

⁶ Schweizer, Baumgärtel & Meyer, 1971, 113.

⁷ Hübner, 1970/1, 268-84.

⁸ Frey, 1998, 68-9.

⁹ Frey, 1998, 72-3.

¹⁰ Frey, 1998, 73-4.

Neither of the two main bodies of literature which may appear to be closest to Paul really matches his thought. And comparison with the use of בָּשָׂר (bāsār) in the Old Testament would also merely point up the distinctive aspects of Paul's terminology. Thus, while benefiting from the comparison and contrast with other writers, we are left with Paul himself and the need to find some explanation for his distinctive use of these terms.¹

However, it is important and helpful that there is enough evidence in variegated Judaism of man not being ontologically defined by a *flesh/spirit* dualism, neither within himself nor in relation to God.² It was more about man in his entirety being existentially oriented either towards or against God. As Thiselton states:

The flesh, i.e. man's existence apart from God, has therefore a drive that is opposed to God. It not only occasions sin but also becomes entangled in it... This is not the flesh of the anti-Epicurean polemic, but man himself, in so far as he gives himself up to his own aims in opposition to God's.³

Dunn stresses that flesh is not something sinful in man's nature, but a "propensity towards sin, or weakness before sin's power (Rm. 7:14-25)."⁴ Flesh is

the human condition in its belongingness to this world – that is, the weakness of the human being in contrast to the power of the divine, the dependency of the creature on the satisfaction of the bodily appetites, and the tendency of the physical body to decay and corruption.⁵

R.N. Longenecker adds that flesh itself is "the captive of sin" and not its origin.⁶

"Flesh" denotes not merely the bodily passions and lusts, nor even strictly speaking a "lower nature" contrasted with a "higher nature" in a person, but rather the human individual in his or her sin and depravity apart from the redeeming grace of God and the sanctifying work of the Spirit.⁷

Clearly there is enough reason to accept that Paul's opposition of flesh and Spirit is not about an anthropological dualism. Neither flesh nor Spirit is inherent to man's being. It is rather about man being existentially influenced from outside his being, either by God's Spirit, or by flesh towards which man has a predisposition, because of his fallen state and corruption. Soteriologically the Christian has been aligned to the sphere of the Spirit and should not allow himself to be influenced by or re-aligned with the sphere of flesh from which Christ delivered him.⁸

¹ Barclay, 1988, 191-2. In this regard Frey, 2003, 103-6, is vastly important. Frey indicates (105-6) that Qumran provides a much closer correlation to Paul's negative use of *flesh* than the OT does. One need therefore not seek assistance from Greek usage, which inevitably leads to imposition. Variegated Judaism provides enough scope on which Paul could theologise. Although he would probably not have made use of Qumran writings, Qumran is evidence of different strands of theology in Judaism. This would have provided Paul with a seedbed.

² Frey, 2003, 109.

³ Thiselton, 1975, 676. In this sense flesh weakens law, using it as an instrument to assert itself before God.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 287. Bauer, 1979, 744, explains σάρξ as "the willing instrument of sin... subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likew. present, and no good thing can live in the σάρξ."

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 287.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 240.

⁷ Fung, 1988, 244; Van Peursen, 1976, 91: "Het gaat dan immers niet om de lichamelijkheid maar om de aardse bestaanswijze van de mens. Deze is in zichzelf niet zondig maar wordt tot zonde, indien zij het volledige oriëntatiepunt voor het menselijke leven wordt. 'Naar het vlees wandelen' wordt dan geteld tegenover 'naar de geest wandelen' dwz. resp. de levensgang die eigen vergankelijkheid niet stelt tegen de achtergrond van God en de existentiële wijze die zichzelf wél vanuit God laat richten."

⁸ One is reminded of the apt words of Barth, 1949, 140: "The Holy Spirit is not identical with the human spirit, but He meets it... But that freedom of Christian living does not come from the human spirit. No human capacities

1.3. Σὰρξ and cosmological dualism

1.3.1. *The Tübingen School and Albrecht Ritschl*

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the so-called liberal consensus under F.C. Baur's initiative took it upon themselves to rid the debate of the platonically induced flesh – spirit anthropological dualism. Baur, influenced by Hegel's dialectical philosophy¹ refused to accept any form of anthropological dualism. He accepted that σὰρξ was man's material body and prone to sensuality. In man's νοῦς he would make up his mind to fulfil good intentions, but his σὰρξ would immobilise him. Although he acknowledged this much, he was clear that the dualism of πνεῦμα and σὰρξ was not in man himself, but in the cosmos. He cites Gl. 5:1f. as proof that according to Paul both πνεῦμα and σὰρξ are entities standing over and against man in the greater cosmos. In man himself, as part of the cosmos, σὰρξ presented itself in his σῶμα.²

Albrecht Ritschl reacted to the German Idealistic approach, rejecting both the earlier anthropological dualism, as well as his contemporaries' cosmological dualism. In line with their Hegelian view on history and development, the Tübingen School understood the development of theology in the NT as the result of a struggle between Petrine Jewish-Christians and Pauline Gentile Christians, leading to a theological synthesis in the second century.³ With regard to Pauline anthropology they understood it as having been greatly influenced by Hellenistic categories with Paul doing his best to find a balance between Hellenistic and Jewish anthropological categories.⁴ Ritschl's contention was that Paul took his cue from the OT idea that the whole man in his fleshiness stands over and against God who is Spirit.

The man of faith visualises flesh as evil when he looks back at his own situation before conversion and recognises that he was totally sinful in face of God's law. So flesh in itself is not the source of evil but rather describes man in a state of alienation.⁵

or possibilities or strivings of any kind can achieve this freedom....When it happens that man obtains that freedom of becoming a hearer, a responsible, grateful, hopeful person, this is not because of an act of the human spirit, but solely because of the act of the Holy Spirit. So, this is, in other words, a gift of God. It has to do with a new birth, with the Holy Spirit."

¹ Hegel's system was named Absolute Idealism, because he believed all reality to be brought together in an all-embracing, aloof Absolute Mind or Spirit, referred to as God. He held that the totality of life was in a pattern of movement, always starting with a thesis evoking an antithesis. These two are reintegrated onto a higher levelled synthesis. Further, individual man operates on the level of the *subjective Geist*. He becomes aware of himself, focuses on himself and lives for himself. This evokes the *objective Geist* where man features on a structural level including family, society, the state, other structural entities, and history. This is the level at which ethics features. This results in the *Absolute Geist*, which is a new self-awareness. So it perpetuates. Störig, 1972², 81-92; Heron, 1980, 38-42. Harris, 1988, 696-7, contends that Baur's influence on his students gave rise to a small group of NT scholars known as the Tübingen School in which "a non-supernatural theological and historical perspective determined all biblical interpretation."

² Jewett, 1971, 51.

³ Harris, 1988, 696.

⁴ Jewett, 1971, 51-6, reflects the variety in the school.

⁵ Jewett, 1971, 57.

Ritschl's contribution is valuable; especially in the sense that he recognises Paul's Jewish roots and does not allow for Paul's anthropology to be dissolved in Hellenism, not even for the latter to be the main influence on Paul. With him one also sees the beginning of the demise of Idealism as a hermeneutical tool to understanding Paul. Jewett is of the opinion that Ritschl could, however, not explain "some of Paul's more radical statements on σάρξ."¹ Also of great value is his emphasis on flesh as something less material and not an entity inherent to the human being, although typical of being human!

1.3.2. *Finding a cosmological evil element in σάρξ*²

One is reminded of Longenecker's earlier remark that flesh is not the origin of sin, but itself "the captive of sin", as well as Fung's remark that flesh refers not to a "lower nature" in man, but rather to the human individual in his sin and depravity.³ Importantly, one must distinguish between flesh, sin and flesh being captive to sin, implying that sin does not originate from flesh, but abuses flesh to dishonour God.

For Paul, therefore, sin is not in the first place an individual act or condition to be considered by itself, but rather the supra-individual mode of existence in which one shares through the single fact that one shares in the human life-context and from which one can only be redeemed by being taken up into the life-context revealed in Christ (Col. 2:13).⁴

Günther stresses sin as "almost a personal power acting in and through man" (Rm. 5:12, 21; 6:6, 17; 7:9f.).⁵ He speaks of the power of sin as disclosed to those knowing Christ, obviously implying it as an entity distinct from man. Spirit and flesh are in conflict on the battlefield called man and continually involve man in this struggle.⁶

What he terms in Galatians 1:4 "this present evil aeon," elsewhere as "the power of darkness," is set over against the royal dominion of Christ (Col. 1:13); and in Ephesians 2:2 he further qualifies walking according to "this world-aeon" as following the course of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience." The world is therefore in its unity and totality the domain of demonic powers, which he denotes as "angels," "principalities," "powers" (Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 2:14, *et al.*), "the world rulers of this darkness," "the evil spirits in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12), of which Satan, as the "god of this aeon" (2 Cor. 4:4), is the head (cf. Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5, *et al.*).⁷

Most importantly, the evil powers should not be understood as part of an original dualism – neither cosmologically, ontologically or theologically. There was no original dualism between God and the powers, and also not within God Him-

¹ Jewett, 1971, 57. It is not clear exactly what Jewett has in mind. From the context I gather that he has in view Paul's statements where σάρξ seemingly has a cosmological character, and that these cannot all be discounted in his definition. If this is the case, the matter will be dealt with in due course.

² This paragraph would probably make more sense if read after §1.4. of this chapter dealing with σάρξ as understood in existentialism. On the other hand, cosmological dualism provides a very logical point at which to deal with the evil element in σάρξ. For that reason it is included at this juncture.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 240; Fung, 1988, 244.

⁴ Ridderbos, 1975, 93. See also Grundmann, Quell, Bertram & Stählin, 1964, 308-13.

⁵ Günther, 1978, 581.

⁶ Günther, 1978, 581.

⁷ Ridderbos, 1975, 91.

self.¹ The evil powers belong to God's creation and were equally conquered by Him in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16; 2:15). Believers have been delivered from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4); the cosmos has been crucified to them and they to the cosmos (Gl. 6:14). With regard to evil powers Berkouwer quite correctly warns against making judgements from scripture too easily. He warns against the possibility of seeking an evil power on whom to blame man's iniquities and willingness to corroborate with sin.

Once we see the obviousness of guilt we can only observe how impossible it is to draw the relations between sin and the demonic realms in exclusive terms of "power" and "brute force." A *force majeure* or an inexorable fate is not the product of those power-aspects to which we have already referred. Indeed, the "power of darkness" can never be measured in the categories of causality, and we can never say that sin is determined by the "*prima causa peccati*".²

Therefore, when Scripture speaks of the *power* of the evil one we also hear (at the same time) of the "passions of the flesh", and following the "desires of body and mind," and being "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). No power of darkness causally "explains" our sin, and no inexorable force compels us to do evil. There is no *ex opera operato* "*in malam partem*." There is no relentless force, except that which is actualized in the *modus* of man's own culpability. Only in our guilt and capitulation to the evil one is the power of evil irrepressible.³

A resistance to this "superlative force" cannot be expected from the side of sinful, bound and weakened man. The freedom can only come from another power that seizes a man and reverses the course of his living. It must come from a "power" that is strong enough to cast out evil spirits by command (Mark. 9:25). Freedom must come from the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20).⁴

It is nigh impossible to fully explain the essence of the power of evil. The Bible, only dealing with it in connection with man's guilt or God's revelation of salvation and forgiveness, never presents it as an individual subject. Being "*only relationally defined*",⁵ one should not read too much into texts regarding *loci* on evil or demonology.

Hendrikus Berkhof works with the double notion of guilt and tragedy. Guilt is grounded in the notion that man in his fleshly being decides to sin or to be lured into sin. However, evil also operates at a supra-personal level. He argues that Paul de-personalised heavenly beings of Jewish apocalyptic who were thought to influence earthly life, referring to them as *powers* (ἐξουσίαι - Col. 1:16), *principalities* (ἀρχαί - Col. 1:16) and *elements of the world* (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου - Gl. 4:3), making them part of the impersonal, demonically distorted structures of the world. This way, evil, operating on a supra-human level, influences man to the extent of being overpowered.⁶ The point is that there is a power, however one defines it, outside and above man that influences him to sin. Flesh cannot be defined purely in terms of man's trusting in his merely being human. Even Barth with his reference to evil and the demonic as *das Nichtige*, and his conviction that it had to be regarded with the

¹ Ridderbos, 1975, 92; J.J.F. Durand, 1978, 93-4.

² Berkouwer, 1971, 112.

³ Berkouwer, 1971, 112.

⁴ Berkouwer, 1971, 113.

⁵ Berkouwer, 1971, 114-5.

⁶ H. Berkhof, 1979, 215-23. Sin as an overpowering force (216) and the gravitational force of man's heritage (219).

utmost disbelief by which it had to be theologically excoriated from our lives and thoughts, if only by implication, accepted the existence of these supra-human forces opposed to God. In this regard one is reminded of his enigmatic remark: “Das Nichtige ist nicht das Nichts.”¹

Man clearly has to contend with an evil force from beyond his individual and collective being.² It seems, unless one absolutely demythologises demons and evil powers, and, together with that, logically also demythologises God – leaving man deserted in his divided being – that one has to accept evil as operative in some form. Its domain of influence can be referred to as *flesh*. In this way *flesh* is a sphere exterior to man with which he is free to associate and, consequently to sin.

1.4. Σάρξ and existentialism

1.4.1. *Rudolf Bultmann on σάρξ*

Bultmann, without a doubt the most influential NT scholar in the field of existentialist interpretation,³ was greatly influenced by the existentialist philosopher, Martin Heidegger,⁴ who emphasised self-realisation and man’s need to ascribe meaning to (his) life. Man being uniquely himself is not an expression of a pre-given nature, but the result of creative historical acts of decision and choice.⁵

This is an intriguing subject,⁶ but under threat of being side-tracked, we return to Bultmann. Bultmann maintained that scripture contains *kerygma*, which is the message about human existence. This is reflected in mythological language, which is the linguistic effort to objectify the experience through which man has come to self-understanding.⁷ In order to understand the NT, or rather, to uncover the *kerygma* in the NT, it is the task of theology to *demythologise* the Christian proclamation reflected in scripture.⁸ This having been done, the function of this mythical language must be discovered. Behind the mythical description of God, lies the authentic reality of God who, from beyond our own existence, addresses us in our *facticity*.⁹ In the redemptive myth concerning Jesus, we hear the *kerygma* of God who is there for us. In this encounter we come to the self-understanding of faith. Only in this self-understanding of faith can God be encountered. The result is that Bultmann’s theological concentration is on faith as man’s attempt to come to self-understanding.

¹ Barth, 1950, 403.

² J.J.F. Durand, 1978, 89-90 motivates this stance and adds sufficient Pauline evidence.

³ Macquarrie, 1973, 271, correctly states: “It may be claimed that much of the most creative theological thinking in this century has sprung from the encounter with existentialism.”

⁴ Küng, 1980, 493. A very thorough reflection of Heidegger’s philosophical approach is provided in Heidegger, 1999. Interestingly enough, according to Macquarrie, 1973, 93, this Marburg colleague of Bultmann’s “has hardly anything to say about the body by which we have the possibility of being in a world.”

⁵ Webster, 1988, 115-6.

⁶ Brief orientations can be found in Heron, 1980, 106-8; Störig, 1972², 254-60; E.D. Cook, 1988, 243-4.

⁷ Webster, 1988, 115. One could probably describe it very much the same as symbolic universe today.

⁸ Bultmann, 1941, 3.

⁹ Macquarrie, 1973, 189-90, describes it as: “not an observed state of affairs but the inward, existential awareness of one’s own being as a fact that is to be accepted.” Heidegger uses the term “throwness” (Macquarrie, 1973, 191-2). Also Heidegger, 1999, 5, 11f.

Aptly Bultmann himself characterised his understanding of theology as anthropology.¹ In fact, one could argue that his theology was dissolved in his anthropology.² It is no surprise that Barclay describes Bultmann's view on Pauline anthropology as "characterised by an emphasis on man in relationship to himself."³

Against this backdrop the *flesh/spirit* antithetical pair, individually and in relation to each other, markedly has a typical Bultmannian interpretation. Whilst Baur's Tübingen School, holding onto idealism in dialectical dress, successfully dealt with anthropological dualism, replacing it with cosmological dualism, Bultmann would set it on an existentialist course. Besides *σάρξ* stressing man's material corporeality, weakness and transitoriness,⁴ Bultmann moreover stresses *σάρξ* as man's outward and visible sphere, that which by its nature has an external appearance.⁵ He then distinguishes between man's living *ἐν σαρκί* ("in the flesh") and *κατὰ σάρκα* ("according to the flesh"). The first phrase refers to man's normal earthly life as biological and social being – man as he is on the surface of things without viewing him from an ethical or a theological perspective.⁶ In other words, it is a given and according to God's creational intention. In the second mode of existence (*κατὰ σάρκα*) the ethical and theological neutrality is replaced by a negative assessment. This negative assessment is not because of a change having taken place in the flesh, but because flesh is redirected from God to itself as norm for living. In other words, living *in the flesh* is a divine given for man's existence this side of the grave. On the other hand, living *according to the flesh* is to live contrary to the Creator's intention, turning away from Him and trusting creation to provide life and fulfilment.

And to take flesh as one's norm is precisely what Bultmann has defined as sin, for it means to turn from the Creator to the creation, 'To trust in one's self as being able to procure life by the use of the earthly and through one's own strength and accomplishment'.⁷

This sphere becomes a power over us insofar as we make it the foundation of our lives by living "according to it," that is, by succumbing to the temptation to live out of what is visible and disposable instead of out of what is invisible and non-disposable – regardless of whether we give ourselves to the alluring possibilities of such a life imprudently and with desire or whether we live our lives reflectively and with calculation on the basis of our own accomplishments, "the works of the law."⁸

With regard to Galatians he maintains that the application of this definition implies that both a life lived in lawlessness, as well as a life lived in conscientious abiding by the law, can be lived *κατὰ σάρκα*. In the first instance one lives according to the flesh by seeking to gratify one's passions and desires characteristic of one's sensuality and being focussed on oneself, as well as relying on

¹ Heron, 1980, 104-5.

² J.J.F. Durand, 1982, 131; Ridderbos, 1975, 42.

³ Barclay, 1988, 192.

⁴ Bultmann, 1953, 230-2.

⁵ Bultmann, 1953, 230.

⁶ Bultmann, 1953, 231-4. P.E. Hughes, 1962, 348f., supports this position from 2 Cor. 10:3. Barrett, 1973, 250, is correct in pointing to Paul's being inconsistent with this distinction with regard to Rm. 8:9. I disagree with him however, that Paul's inconsistency includes Gl. 2:20. See also Grosheide, 1959, 276; and Pop, 1975, 287-8.

⁷ Barclay, 1988, 193; Bultmann, 1953, 239.

⁸ Bultmann, 1941, 16.

oneself. In the second instance the pursuit of a life under law is according to flesh if man relies on this observance for his righteousness before God.¹ This still leaves Bultmann with the problem that Paul sometimes (Gl. 5:16-17) gives the impression that flesh has a life of its own. He personifies flesh as if it is a cosmic entity outside man – even demonic – determining human behaviour. This Bultmann explains as figurative, rhetorical language illustrating man's powerlessness to secure life on his own. He has lost the capacity to be the subject of his own actions.² On the other hand, the Spirit brings into man's life the possibility of breaking through that slavery and powerlessness,³ to get a grip on life again, and to take decisions to live a life of obedience.⁴

Bultmann's interpretation of flesh had a marked influence on NT scholarship. Much can be learnt from him. On the other hand, Barclay is correct in much of his criticism.⁵ He stresses that Bultmann's distinction between living ἐν σαρκί and κατὰ σάρκα does not apply to all occurrences, as is the case in Rm. 7-8 where they are synonymous. He quite rightly stresses that the context should be decisive and that σάρξ does not always refer to that which is outwardly observable. In this sense many fleshly works, like jealousy, are not visible, while other non-fleshly activities, like baptism, are visible by nature and necessity. He correctly criticises Bultmann's assumption that Paul's concern was directed against self-righteousness and legalism within Christianity, while Paul's concern was that Christianity was being Judaised.⁶ Bultmann's heavy emphasis on the individual and his self-understanding (illustrated well in his understanding of Rm. 7)⁷ have caused him to ignore concepts such as πᾶσα σάρξ (Gl. 2:16) referring to mankind, and uses of κατὰ σάρκα with regard to man in his relationships (Gl. 4:23; Rm. 1:3; 4:1; 9:3, 5-9).⁸

The criticism is valid. On the other hand, with enough discretion, one could reinterpret Bultmann in terms of the criticism and still remain true to his basic concept. Whether this would have been acceptable to Bultmann is uncertain and best left at that. What remains a problem is Bultmann's thorough demythologising of historical events and their influence on history. Barclay remarks:

On the basis that 'every assertion about Christ is also an assertion about man and vice versa', Bultmann interprets the cross not as an apocalyptic event which changes the cosmos but as an event of revelation disclosing the grace of God which 'frees man from himself. Similarly the eschatological gift of the Spirit becomes the power of futurity', the new possibility of genuine, human life which opens up to him who has surrendered his old understanding of himself'. However much this may be valid reinterpretation of Paul for today, it remains very doubtful that the historical and apocalyptic dimensions of Paul's thought can be eradicated quite so completely in any attempt to represent Paul's own perspective.⁹

¹ Bultmann, 1953, 235-6.

² Bultmann, 1953, 240-1.

³ Bultmann, 1953, 327-30.

⁴ Bultmann, 1953, 310f.

⁵ Barclay, 1988, 196-8.

⁶ In this regard E.P. Sanders has done phenomenal work. We reflect on Sanders in my Ch. 4.

⁷ Bultmann, 1967, 198-209.

⁸ Barclay, 1988, 198.

⁹ Barclay, 1988, 198.

1.4.2. Ernst Käsemann on σάρξ

Ernst Käsemann, a former student of Bultmann's, was critical of his tutor's historical scepticism, as well as of his breaching of the relation between 'the preached Christ' and the 'historical Jesus'.¹ He was equally critical of Bultmann's anthropology, especially because of its dominance of Pauline theology, and the overemphasis on human individuality.² To his mind much more had to be made of man's being in relation to others and to the world in which he lives. In turn, this world in which man finds himself is the scene of apocalyptic and cosmological conflict that does not leave man untouched.³ Obviously, Käsemann's insistence that apocalyptic is the mother of Christian theology would have a marked influence on his anthropology. It is at this point that the value of his contribution is recognised.

His understanding of *body* (σῶμα) differs from Bultmann's, who viewed it as man's person in relation to himself.⁴ Käsemann stresses the body's physicality as "that piece of world which we ourselves are and for which we bear responsibility."⁵ Regarding the *flesh/Spirit* dualism, he stresses it has nothing to do with individual self-realisation and basic orientations. It is not a dualism of orientation in man. Rather, flesh and Spirit are powers influencing man from outside his being (and body) to align with either what is worldly or heavenly, and, subsequently being part of one of the two dualistically opposed spheres of the cosmos. The same is true of the *Spirit*:

[I]t was conceived by Paul as a power, a sort of material reality and an aeon or cosmic sphere.⁶

Thus the Spirit, as the earthly presence of the resurrected Lord, is that gift which at the same time claims us (and our bodies) for service to the appointed Lord of the cosmos. Conversely, 'the flesh' ...designates human 'worldliness', that is, being determined by the world.⁷

It is this being determined by the world and its mode of existence, and consequently serving it, that Paul describes as life according to flesh. What sets his view miles apart from Bultmann's is his emphasis on the world's rebelliousness against God, and his introduction of a demonic element. When man decides to live a worldly or fleshly life, he aligns himself with the demonic sphere in opposition to the Spirit, the resurrected Lord's earthly presence.⁸ Thus, the flesh/Spirit dualism is neither an anthropological nor a cosmological dualism. It is not by definition inherent to the being of either cosmos or man. Rather, it is about the Spirit of God being operative in the world, the latter having set itself up against God and his Spirit, and man as σῶμα (man in his physicality) aligning himself with one of them. Understood this way σάρξ is both a given human reality in

¹ Heron, 1980, 110.

² Käsemann, 1971, 65, 74; 1969, 14-5, 175-7.

³ Käsemann, 1969, 131-7.

⁴ Bultmann, 1953, 226-7.

⁵ Käsemann, 1969, 135.

⁶ Jewett, 1971, 71.

⁷ Barclay, 1988, 200.

⁸ Käsemann, 1971, 26.

Bultmann's understanding of living ἐν σαρκί, and a cosmological entity influencing man to set himself against the Spirit.¹

The apocalyptic element in Käsemann's reasoning regarding σάρξ is of great importance. The advent of Christ and the accompanying arrival of the Spirit as the eschatological sign *par excellence*, marks the arrival of the new age in which Christ reigns supreme. It has brought about a separation in time between "the present evil age" which is typical of this world in its opposition to God, and the "new creation" in which God newly lays claim on man and his service.² This new dispensation, although inaugurated by the advent of Christ, has not yet fully arrived. Until such time as it does, the conflict between Spirit and flesh will continue and man will equally be called upon to obediently align with the Spirit.³

Clearly, Käsemann's position, moving the emphasis from a dualism within to one outside man, but appealing to man to align with the one or the other, is a marked improvement on Bultmann. This being said, Käsemann is still guilty of describing man's reaction to flesh and Spirit individualistically. He fails to discuss humanity as a whole's reaction to the dualistic appeal. In this way it boils down to the individual's securing of a positive position before God. The will of the flesh then becomes an attempt to secure status for oneself before God by virtue of good works.⁴ Barclay correctly states:

Thus in describing the connection between law and flesh, Käsemann falls back on an individualistic interpretation which is not only questionable in itself but also difficult to correlate with the apocalyptic perspective which he elsewhere describes so effectively.⁵

At the end of this paragraph it should be emphasised to Bultmann's credit that he called attention to man's responsibility with regard to his identity and ethical choices in life. Man is not merely a pawn without any control over his life whatsoever and dictated to by exterior forces. Käsemann, again, should be credited for stressing the divine initiative in the advent of Christ dividing life into two opposing aeons. Man's choices are not merely towards self-realisation and they are not done in a moral void or on neutral ground. They are done in accordance with one's alignment with one of these aeons.

1.5. Σάρξ and the social-scientific approach

In recent decades historical criticism has been challenged by advances in anthropological, sociological and socio-psychological research, resulting not only in its "fine tuning", but also in a fundamental overhaul.⁶ Knowledge of literary and material deposits uncovered by archaeologists and historians could not provide enough knowledge of ancient Mediterranean worldviews, mindsets, so-

¹ Käsemann, 1971, 26-27.

² Käsemann, 1969, 191.

³ Käsemann, 1971, 26-27, 174-182.

⁴ Käsemann, 1971, 179.

⁵ Barclay, 1988, 202.

⁶ Esler, 1998, 2.

cial interactions and behaviour.¹ There is a socio-cultural chasm between the first-century Mediterranean and the modern (also post-modern) Western world.

If we do not face up to this distance we remain at risk of ethnocentrically imposing our own taken-for-granted notions of reality onto a people who may simply not share them, of assuming that our understanding is their understanding.²

Walter Russell is a typical exponent of this approach as applied to the *σάρξ/πνεῦμα* dualism in Galatians.³ He focuses on reading Galatians and the *flesh/Spirit* dualism mainly in terms of community. His central thesis links up with Käsemann's apocalyptic notion. He rejects any notion of an internal duality in the believer and perceives the two concepts as representative of "an external contrast between two eras or modes of existence with corresponding mind-sets (φρονήσετε in Gl. 5:10)."⁴ He acknowledges H.N. Ridderbos for taking up this view earlier on, describing it as a *redemptive-historical* rather than an *existential contrast*.⁵ Seen this way, Russell interprets the "flesh community" in Galatia as

a community identified and characterised by a person bodily in his or her frailty and transitoriness unaided by God's Spirit....This community is representative of a person *before or apart from* Jesus Christ's liberating death, burial, and resurrection. Thus, such persons can think and feel the right thing to do, but are unable to do it fully.⁶

These two identities represent eras in redemptive history. Flesh, in tandem with the era prior to the advent of Christ, is associated with νόμος (*law*) and τὰ στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου (Gl. 4:3, 9 – *elements of the world*).⁷ After Christ's advent the so-called Judaisers anachronistically argued that circumcision was necessary for believers in Christ as a sign of obedience to the law. According to Russell Paul's use of flesh refers to their particularistic and ethnocentric gospel, as opposed to Spirit referring to the universal and multi-ethnic gospel. Flesh and Spirit refer to two believing communities in Galatia, i.e. the Judaising and Pauline Christian communities with two respective identities and behavioural patterns ("deeds of the flesh" and "fruit of the Spirit").⁸ He stresses the Galatians' vulnerability to the Judaisers' non-gospel in terms of group identity, much rather than in terms of ideology. Being presumably mostly of Gentile origin, they would be susceptible to taking up the group identity of the Judaisers, because it would bring them into closer continuity with the historical people of God from which the Messiah originated according to God's election. Although this probably is part of the solution to the puzzle, he stretches it too far when he adds: "How else can one explain why so many adult males would even consider submitting to the trauma of adult circumcision?"⁹

¹ Esler, 1994 (esp. 1-18).

² Esler, 1998, 3.

³ W.B. Russell, 1997.

⁴ W.B. Russell, 1997, 2. It fits well with my point in Ch. 2 that Paul was reframing the Galatians' symbolic universe.

⁵ Ridderbos, 1975, 66.

⁶ W.B. Russell, 1997, 2.

⁷ These two subjects are dealt with in my Ch. 4.

⁸ W.B. Russell, 1997, 3.

⁹ W.B. Russell, 1997, 89.

A choice between ideological and sociological motivation for the acceptance of the non-gospel cannot be determined only on the basis of the “trauma of circumcision”. Was it indeed perceived as such?¹ Could ideological or theological fervour not have had as much an impact on their being, providing enough motivation to subject to such perceived trauma? He is nearer to the mark when he adds that the Judaisers could have stressed the need for law-observance, because they regarded it as a gift of God’s grace.² In the absence of an expanded Christian ethic and against former pagan behavioural patterns, they would be prone to accepting an ethical pattern given by the God of the OT to his elect.

The emphasis of the social-scientific approach is on group-identity. This approach stresses the very important fact that the first-century Mediterranean personality can be described as essentially dyadic. In short, it refers to a personality that is not viewed individualistically, but in terms of inter-relatedness. It is about a personality defining itself in terms of others and behaving in terms of the expectations of others. In this regard social position is of the utmost importance. One’s social position determined one’s horizontal behaviour towards social peers, but also vertically with regard to those of higher or lower ranking. The dominating values in such personalities and communities were honour and shame. One’s reputation was always at stake and behaviour focussed on community views and identity.³ This also involved stereotyping of individuals in terms of their group and its behaviour. Moral responsibility was that of the whole group, not only of the individual.⁴ Russell very effectively illustrates how these traits can be traced in Galatians.⁵

Without putting Russell’s view up for discussion, a few remarks are called for. A social-scientific approach to Galatians as part of a broader approach is essential. In this regard Russell is most valuable. Social context, group identity and group behaviour as strongly influenced by the Judaistic threat, should make one wary of too broad an understanding of flesh, and too easy an inclusion of the so-called libertinistic threat in the understanding of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ from Gl. 5:13 onwards, as if there were no connection with the Judaistically coloured use of the term in the earlier references. The specifically Judaistic threat must be seen to be included in the use of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ also in the latter part of the letter.

He is also correct that a redemptive-historical approach is necessary. Galatians was undoubtedly not written in a vacuum. It is about the believing community’s identity in Christ and their ethos since his advent and resurrection as promised in the OT. However, his criticism of Barclay’s position that $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ is an “umbrella term” with a broader meaning than just the Judaistic usage⁶ is not necessarily

¹ Does this view not possibly superimpose modern-day psychological terms and perceptions onto ancient religious experience; one of the dangers Russell sets out to avoid and in which he is otherwise very successful.

² W.B. Russell, 1997, 89.

³ Malina, 1993, 67.

⁴ Malina, 1993, 70-1.

⁵ W.B. Russell, 1997, 87-118. Esler, 1998, 29-57, does the same, but also adds the notion of “limited good” (47-8).

⁶ Thus, $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ refers to what is merely human, belonging to a life before and without Christ, including Torah.

correct.¹ It was obviously Paul's point of entry into the subject, but he did not necessarily use it exclusively in a Judaistic way. His audience was not the Judaistic party. In fact, his audience consisted of believers redeemed predominantly from a Gentile background. If *redemptive-historical* is expanded to reflect the position of the Gentile being grafted into the olive tree (Rm. 11:17-24), and therefore also taken as applicable to the Galatians; if we accept Paul's reference to the $\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ – law being one of them – in Gl. 4:3, 9 to mean that anyone without Christ (with or without law) is a slave; and if Paul's insistence that they were now sons of Abraham (Gl. 3:7,29), of the free woman (Gl. 4:23,31), and of God (Gl. 4:4-7), without ever having needed to become part of the historical Israel, it seems most plausible that *redemptive-historical* has a broader meaning. It is, therefore, quite acceptable that $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ in Galatians refers to that which is merely human, and inclusive of the Judaistically tainted view. In this regard Russell might be too restrictive when he narrows it down to "what is merely human *and* distinctively Jewish".² He comes too near to equating the merely human and the distinctively Jewish element.

It is debatable whether the dyadic personality should be regarded as altogether exclusive of individuality.³ Obviously individualism would be anachronistic to the first-century Mediterranean personality, but should the individual and his relationship to God be seen as exclusively corporate? The OT has ample evidence of individual relationships with God (e.g., the Psalms, Job). True, the OT reflects an earlier period, but very much the same type of thinking regarding personality and the community. There are also enough occasions where Jesus decidedly has the individual in mind, such as the Sermon on the Mount. Sure, it has a corporate element as well. The point is that dyadic is not exclusive of individuality.

Enough said! Despite this criticism, a final conclusion should take cognisance of the results of social-scientific research. Obviously, the latter should equally consider literary-critical results.⁴ An author could well intend to say much more than what can be sociologically defined. In this regard Esler aptly observes:

Moreover, as we seek to determine how the communications of the New Testament were understood by their initial audiences it is inevitable that we will find some meanings which did not occur to the first readers or listeners. We can only aim for approximations of ancient meanings. Nor can we avoid the fact that all interpretation of an ancient document is a dialogue between the past and the present; the point is that using communication theory depends on accepting that there is a past with which we may enter into dialogue.⁵

¹ W.B. Russell, 1997, 212-3.

² W.B. Russell, 1997, 213.

³ Esler, 1998, 13, stresses the point that different societies have different emphases on individuality, but that social-scientific research should never neglect the individual.

⁴ Robbins, 1995, 274-89; 1996, 6-17. One is also reminded of the observation by Harrill, 1995, 2, that "scholars investigating early Christianity from a purely sociological hermeneutic often do not aim to provide better readings of specific texts, but rather produce broad theoretical models, complete with grids and graphs that require their own exegetical decipherment."

⁵ Esler, 1998, 21.

2. WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

We now have to come to a workable conclusion as to what Paul meant by *σάρξ* that will have to be tested against the textual evidence in Galatians. From the above selection of scholarly reflection a single sentence definition seems impossible. Barclay is correct that Paul uses the term in a broader sense and that the term's multi-dimensionality clearly comes into play. The specific context to the text itself is therefore decisive.¹ It is equally important to keep the historical occasion as overarching context in mind, so as not to exploit the multi-dimensionality in an irresponsible way.² Paul's use of the term has a central meaning throughout the letter. He does not use it disparately from section to section. On the other hand, I am not in agreement with Russell that the golden thread is consistently the Judaizing threat. I will illustrate how Paul expands the initial threat to include the totality of human life without Christ and his Spirit, and in opposition to the Spirit.

2.1. That which is merely human as the main thrust of *σάρξ* in Galatians

It is about being human with all its frailty, transitoriness, limitations, social and structural capacities and corruptibility, and indeed about having been corrupted (Gl. 3:22). It is in line with Bultmann's understanding of man's living *ἐν σαρκί*. Gl. 1:16; 2:16, 20 and 4:13, 14 use *σάρξ* primarily in this fashion. There is no ethical weight in the term. It is morally neutral. On the face of things it also seems neutral in terms of religious identity, but there could be more to it than meets the eye.

- In *Gl. 1:16* *σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι* ("flesh and blood") most definitely refers to man as human being in his frailty, limitations and transitoriness, but he is distinctly contrasted with God (15) who revealed his Son to Paul. What Paul knew did not come to him by conferring with others equally dependant on God. It came by gracious divine revelation. Paul already places *σάρξ* in an apocalyptic frame by introducing the element of revelation (*ἀποκαλύψαι*). In terms of his personal redemption history, although the advent of Christ was the actual apocalyptic turning point of history, this divine revelation of Christ was Paul's personal turning point – the advent of Christ in his life. In this respect the contrast of God and flesh on the fulcrum of Christ's revelation alludes to flesh's inability to know God of its own accord. God had to break into the sphere of flesh for man to come to knowledge of Him.
- In *Gl. 2:16* it is quite clear that *ἄνθρωπος* is used in tandem with *πᾶσα σάρξ*, the former referring to the generic man and the latter to the whole of mankind. This once again gives *σάρξ* the meaning of man in his dependence and frailty, but a new dimension is added, namely that *σάρξ* is in need of justification. Man in his transitoriness has also sinned and the only way to be justified, is not by works of law, but through faith in Christ (*οὐ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*). Still *σάρξ* in itself is not reflected as an evil force, but man himself in his dependence and needs, and also his need to be justified. It does not im-

¹ Barclay, 1988, 203-4.

² W.B. Russell, 1997, 137-8.

ply that σάρξ is by definition unjustifiable and inherently evil as in Hellenistic thought.¹ It indicates that it is in need of justification by faith in Christ as opposed to works of law. Jewett draws attention to the fact that Paul probably cited Ps. 143:2 from the LXX, but that he replaced ζῶν (“living thing”) with σάρξ. His intention was probably “to counter the Judaisers’ claim that circumcised flesh was acceptable as righteous by God.”² There does, therefore, seem to be an anti-Judaising tone to Paul’s use of σάρξ in Gl. 2:16.

- When he reaches *Gl. 2:20* he places this life lived ἐν σαρκί in an apocalyptic frame.³ He still lives in the flesh, but since the advent of Christ in his own life, he lives life in all its transitoriness and frailty through faith in Christ and no longer merely in human or Jewish fashion. He now partakes in a new existence in relation with the Son of God.
- *Gl. 4:13-14* is Paul’s last reference to σάρξ as that which is seemingly merely human. The phrase δι’ ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς should probably be translated with “ailment of the body.” He is referring to an illness that could have been a trial for them, but which they overlooked. Has Paul replaced the more appropriate σῶμα (“body”) with σάρξ for rhetorical reasons? Does ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, which refers to this ailment, enhance this supposed rhetorical effect?⁴ Obviously, in this context σάρξ underlines man’s transitoriness and physical corruptibility, as well as his incapacity to help himself. But, seen in the context of the Galatian situation of believers in Christ having become sons of God through the Spirit (*Gl. 4:6-7*) and now reverting to works of law, is Paul not stressing their spiritual retraction? In terms of law, Paul with his illness would have been unclean arriving in Galatia. Despite this they were willing to assist him.⁵ In fact, they received him as if he were Christ Jesus himself. Even more, because of this ailment they received the gospel and became sons of God. If his flesh and the laws associated with a condition such as his, were not a problem then, why are they now? It seems a real possibility that Paul’s use of σάρξ in this context is not as “innocent” as meets the eye, but a way of aligning law and flesh against Spirit and loving service. Law and flesh have a way of subduing the Spirit and loving service.

One must bear in mind that, regarding the Galatians, the Spirit as apocalyptic gift to God’s people is implicitly used in the same way as the revelation of Christ was used with regard to Paul in *Gl. 1:16*. For them the redemptive change had come. Apocalyptically they no longer belonged to the time before their reception of the Spirit.

It is also fundamentally important to underline the Spirit’s entry into this life. God sent Him (*Gl. 4:6*). Flesh is not said to have come over man like some

¹ Jewett, 1971, 98.

² Jewett, 1971, 98.

³ W.B. Russell, 1997, 121.

⁴ W.B. Russell, 1997, 140, maintains that the only possible theological significance of *Gl. 4:13-14* is that Paul stresses the irrelevance of bodily conditions and the Galatians’ departure from that standpoint.

⁵ The θεοσεβόμενοι amongst them would have assisted despite their knowledge of Jewish law in this regard. The Gentiles would probably have helped oblivious of these laws. Fact is, knowledgeable at the time or not, they were previously caring and even received him as though he were Christ Jesus.

cosmological force from outside. Man is flesh (Bultmann's ἐν σαρκί). The Spirit, on the other hand, comes from God and enters man's life in the flesh in order to help man cry out to God: "ἄββὰ ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). The Spirit enters man's existence by divine initiative. Flesh, on the other hand, is part of his existence in the present evil age.

2.2. Evil as underlying σάρξ

Flesh needed justification. Not only was man transitory and corruptible, he had been corrupted. In Gl. 3:22 Paul is quite clear about the matter. The present age is described as evil (Gl. 1:4) with evil powers reigning in it. Man's natural inclination since Adam's fall is to allow himself to be influenced by, even to follow, this evil mode of existence. Flesh, as mere bodily existence (Bultmann's living "in the flesh"), was not the problem, but man's choice to live according to the dictates of the sphere of the corrupted world in opposition to God.¹

Sin as a cosmological entity, so impacted and impacts on man, that it brings those outside Christ into submission. So, in terms of its origin, flesh is not an anthropological entity. Neither is it cosmological. The cosmological entity is the evil power of sin and opposition to God operative in the present age. Flesh is more an existential term, not in the sense of Bultmann's anthropological existentialism, but in the sense of aligning one's existence with the present evil age's mode of existence. It is about a supra-human power impacting on man in the flesh and influencing him to act according to its ways in opposition to God.

2.3. Flesh, law and circumcision are purposefully aligned in the letter

In Galatians Paul does not speak of flesh in a vacuum. It is part of his arguments against circumcision and law, and his promotion of freedom. One should therefore, as the social-scientific perspective prompts, tend to Paul's alignment of flesh with law and circumcision.

- *Gl* 3:3 is the first instance in Galatians where Spirit and flesh are contrasted. Prior to this contrast Paul refers to the Galatians' reception of the Spirit by means of hearing with faith and not by works of law (*Gl*. 3:2). He asks them whether they, having begun with the Spirit, intend to end with the flesh. He regards their reversion to law as reversion to flesh. Law and flesh are thus aligned. To trust in law is at least a form of trusting in flesh. To seek to complete (ἐπιτελεῖσθε) Christian life by way of law rather than through the Spirit, is tantamount to living according to the flesh, which is how they lived before their acceptance of the Spirit. This is an apocalyptic element. Their receiving of the Spirit introduced them to a new identity and mode of living.
- Both *Gl*. 4:23 and 29 are located in the so-called "Allegory of Sarah and Hagar" (*Gl*. 4:21-31). Being born according to flesh is equated with being born in slavery and is juxtaposed with being born free and according to the prom-

¹ Ridderbos, 1975, 66; Küng, 1968, 151-3; Sasse, 1965, 891.

ise (Gl. 4:23). In Gl. 4:29 being born according to flesh is juxtaposed to being born according to the Spirit. In these cases σάρξ without a doubt has a deeper theological bearing. It is set over and against God's promise and his Spirit and deeply rooted in the covenantal history of which Abraham and Isaac are the most prominent characters. These references to σάρξ definitely imply that freedom cannot be obtained by σάρξ without God's intervention by promise and Spirit. A life rooted in and seeking fulfilment in flesh leads to slavery. Redemptive-historically speaking it is quite clear from the context that Paul strongly associates the Judaisers and other Jewish people with living κατὰ σάρκα. People who seek to be circumcised and to adhere to other Jewish laws are opposed to the promise and the Spirit. This does not necessarily imply a promiscuous life. In fact, whilst aimed at the Judaisers, it does not have that bearing at all. It is about finding one's identity and living it within the almost psychotically enclosed parameters of law. It is about living a life cut off from the promise God gave in Christ. In this sense he values the Judaisers' religion as being a merely human religion.¹

Once again, the Spirit used in conjunction with the promise gives the redemptive-historical perspective an apocalyptic ring. The Spirit was part of the promise. The advent of Christ and his Spirit introduced the new promised era. Believers had been rescued from the present evil age so that a life lived κατὰ σάρκα was now anachronistic, belonging to the previous era of which those living according to the Spirit could not partake with integrity. Paul also sets a life κατὰ σάρκα equal to a life of slavery and in contrast to a life according to promise and freedom. Once more, σάρξ is not an entity either outside or inherent to man. It is man himself in his frailty, corruptibility and need of divine injunction. The Spirit is from God and acts on man. However, in this case σάρξ actively opposes the Spirit and those living according to the Spirit. This could be the first instance in Galatians where Paul introduces σάρξ as man trusting in himself and rejecting God's promise and Spirit. In other words, flesh refers here not only to man's corruptibility, but also to his having been corrupted.²

Dunn makes reference to Gl. 2:15, where Paul refers to the life he still lived in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί), stating that it could "include an allusion to ethnic origin...and particularly to Jewish trust 'in the flesh'."³ In Gl. 3:20 Paul contrasts the beginnings of their eschatological life in Christ having started in the Spirit with a life of reversion to flesh, when he clearly refers to a life inclusive of at least circumcision, but probably also of other laws such as dietary and Sabbath laws.⁴ It is also clear that flesh in Gl. 6:13 refers to the rite of circumcision as ethnic marking of the Jews.⁵ In this respect there might be an OT basis in the

¹ Barclay, 1988, 207.

² Dunn, 1998, 65.

³ Dunn, 1993², 146.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 156.

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 339. Thiselton, 1975, 675, refers to Gl. 6:12, 13 and the circumcision as their wanting to make themselves agreeable to the church by human means, so that they could glory by human means in the act of the Galatians' circumcision. Seeking confidence before God in anything other than God Himself, would be seeking it in the flesh.

use of בשר (*bāsār*) in Gn. 17:11, referring to the foreskin of the penis, and in Lv. 15:2-7, probably referring to the male organ itself. In Ezk. 16:26 it definitely refers to male genitals.¹ Thus, there is an obvious alignment of circumcision and law with the flesh. The tripartite alliance was seen by Paul as part of the present evil age. It was impossible to introduce one of these elements into the new aeon without implicating the others.

2.4. Flesh has ethical implications

Russell rightly warns against losing sight of the Judaizers in Galatia when moving to the hortatory section.² However, one must acknowledge that Paul introduces a new dimension to σάρξ, supplementary to the Judaizing threat.³

To say that the Judaizers are in view is to beg the question somewhat...Therefore we must conclude that Paul's straightforward statement in 5:21b means what it appears to say: the description of those who do the deeds of the flesh in 5:19-21 is a description of pagans or non-Christians.... The simultaneous description of the *Christian* Judaizers and the *non-Christian* sarkic practitioners in Gl. 5:19-21 is easily understood from Paul's previous identity of the community of the σάρξ in Gl. 4:21-31. Especially in 4:23-25 Paul identifies the σάρξ community as the Jewish community still under the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant (4:25).⁴

There are scholars who argue that in Gl. 5 Paul turns away from the so-called threat of freedom from the right, in order to focus on the threat from the left, namely libertinism. In the absence of law there would always be the threat of licentiousness.⁵ If this were the case it would almost seem as if Paul was advocating Christian behaviour as finding a balance between law and freedom. This would be very shaky ethics and once again dependent on the believer's fleshly judgement. It would also not be in keeping with Paul's intentions in Galatians. As we shall see, Paul was not trying to find a balance between freedom and law. He was more concerned about preserving freedom against the threat of law. We will be looking into these matters in more detail in the following chapters. In the meantime we accept that Paul is not addressing a new situation.

- When Paul warns against the Galatians' abuse of their freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί) in *Gl. 5:13* it is difficult not to accept a new dimension to his reasoning. It is reasonable to accept that his rejection of law is anachronistic and belongs to an era before the advent of Christ would have raised the question as to how man's sinfulness and proneness to a life according to the flesh would be dealt with without law. Would his stand on the matter not cause man to fall prey to flesh-

¹ Wolff, 1974², 29.

² W.B. Russell, 1997, 156.

³ W.B. Russell, 1993, 180, argues that the physical sense of σάρξ in Gl. 1-4 is not replaced by an ethical sense in Gl. 5-6. He rejects E.D. Burton's idea that the physical sense in Gl. 5 should be understood figuratively as a "metonymy of container" in which case: "The evil impulse is focused upon by referring to the bodily tissues that contain it." He much rather opts for a broadening of the bodily sense to include the ethical.

⁴ W.B. Russell, 1997, 160.

⁵ R.N Longenecker, 1990, 238.

liness? They were to do the opposite to what flesh wanted. They were to serve one another through love (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις). The latter is not man in his sinful being's basic inclination (Gl. 5:16-17). When left to himself man lives for himself. His desires are opposed to the Spirit's. This is obviously another way of stating that man has been morally corrupted. It does not mean that sin resides primarily in the body, but that man in his being merely human has oriented his life against the Spirit, toward sin.

This should not be understood exclusively in individualistic terms. It most probably has a bearing on the necessity for the Galatian churches to be more inclusive than exclusive in terms of law abiding. In this regard Fee notes:

Quite in contrast to how this material is read by most...the concern from beginning to end is with *Christian life in community, not with the interior life of the individual*. Apart from 5:17c, which is usually completely decontextualized and thus misread (see below), there is not a hint that Paul is here dealing with a "tension" between flesh and Spirit that rages within the human breast...To the contrary, the issue from the beginning (vv. 13-15) and throughout (vv. 19-21, 26; 6:1-4, 7, 10) has to do with Spirit life within the believing community. The individual is not thereby brushed aside; after all, one both enters and lives within the Christian community at the individual level, which is where the individual believer fits into the argument.¹

- This is especially obvious in the list of the works of the flesh (τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός) in *Gl. 5:19-20*. To explain these works exclusively, or even predominantly, in terms of the typical actions of the Judaisers as a group, in opposition to the Pauline understanding and associated actions referred to as the fruit of the Spirit, would be dishonest of Paul and straining matters, however one regards his rhetorical use. Taking the Hellenistic world in which Paul was speaking into consideration, these actions described as works of the flesh would undoubtedly have a broader meaning, even if only by association.² After all, these lists were of Hellenistic origin.³ This notion is enhanced by the use of παθήματα ("passions"- *Gl. 5:24*) and ἐπιθυμίαι ("desires"- *Gl. 5:16, 17, 24*).
- Paul emphatically stresses the flesh/Spirit dualism in this hortatory section. One either chooses to live according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. In *Gl. 5:24* he reintroduces the notion of the crucifixion that he previously applied to his own life (*Gl. 2:20*). Once again it is the apocalyptic event of Christ's crucifixion that makes the difference, as well as the Spirit through whom this life is lived. Having crucified the flesh does not mean the believer is no longer fleshly or does not sin. That he still is, but fundamentally the Spirit determines his behaviour. His behaviour is no longer the merely human life in the sphere of influence of evil as is all human life belonging to the present evil age (*Gl. 1:4*), but behaviour that belongs to the new era or the new creation (*Gl. 6:15*).

¹ Fee, 1994¹, 205.

² Barclay, 1988, 203.

³ Betz, 1979, 281-2.

- This notion is very effectively highlighted in *Gl. 6:8* where Paul stresses the eschatological result of one's basic orientation in life as either according to flesh or according to the Spirit. With references like ἐν παραπτώματι ("any trespass"- *Gl. 6:1*) and ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("law of Christ"- *Gl. 6:2*) in the same pericope one does not get the idea that works of law are the only fleshly actions in Paul's mind. However, in *Gl. 6:12-13*, when he rounds up the initial argumentative situation, he returns to the Jewish identity markers – specifically circumcision and the resulting boasting in the flesh.

3. CONCLUSION

It should be clear that Galatians does not provide for the possibility of an anthropological dualism. There are no anthropological higher or lower orders in perpetual conflict with each other. We contend that πνεῦμα and σάρξ are not two entities in man's nature. Πνεῦμα refers to the Spirit and his sphere of influence and σάρξ primarily to the mode of living akin to the present evil age – that being a life of human submission and slavery to the influences of demonic powers acting against God's will.

It must be acknowledged that Paul also uses σάρξ in a more neutral sense, referring to man's being as transitory, frail, dependent and corruptible. In this respect Bultmann's notion of "living in the flesh" is most helpful. On the other hand, in Galatians it seems clear that Paul, even with his seemingly more neutral references, employs the latter to build up to the more negative use – that to which Bultmann refers as life "according to the flesh". The latter is the life defined by man's living for his own benefit and within his enclosed sphere of life, characterised by sin and corruption.

Having said this, and denouncing anthropological dualism, one should be wary of viewing the flesh/Spirit dichotomy as an original cosmological, ontological or theological dualism. If flesh is not only indicative of man in his transitoriness, frailty and self-reliance, but also of his having been corrupted, the latter must have come from somewhere. There seems to be evidence enough that one cannot merely "demythologise". One has to ascribe evil to a supra-human entity or power opposed to God who is the Origin of creation and, in the Christ event, Subjector of this evil entity.¹

Although we should seek the origin of sin and its fleshly influence on man outside man, it does not render man blameless with regard to his having sinned. When man lives according to the prerequisites of the flesh, he acts under the dominion of powers and ideas that are not from God's Spirit. In other words, Paul employs this dichotomy to emphasise the status of the believer as one who is aligned with the Spirit and makes his ethical choices within that sphere as opposed to the sphere of the flesh, which is the sphere in which those without Christ operate –

¹ I do not elaborate on this, nor do I use weighty terminology, simply because it is too vast to deal with here.

including Paul's opponents! That is the sphere of enslaving evil powers against which man has no defence in his frail and corrupted human make-up.

He strongly aligns circumcision and other "works of the law" with life according to flesh. It does not mean Paul has only the so-called Jewish identity markers in view, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, the whole of Jewish law which he sees as a divinely given form of the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου for Jewish believers in the previous dispensation. Because they belong to the previous aeon, by practicing them one runs the risk of aligning with the present evil age and its fleshly existence.¹

It seems flesh should be viewed from different angles, i.e. anthropologically, cosmologically and redemptive-historically. Our conclusion on flesh from an *anthropological angle* is that it refers to man himself in his being merely human, i.e. frail, transitory, corruptible, and indeed corrupted by sin. When man finds his identity in this disposition of his and his ethical behaviour is determined by and in terms of it, and thus, in opposition to God's dealings with him in Jesus Christ and his Spirit, he acts according to flesh. From a *cosmological angle* flesh refers to man's aligning of himself – individually or as humanity – on the side of the evil forces of the present evil age in their opposition to God as he operates through his Spirit. From a *redemptive-historical angle* it represents one of two aeons separated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit. The one aeon is without Christ and is referred to as the *present evil age*, characterised by a life of divisive slavery to flesh, law and elements of this world. The other is referred to as *new creation* and represents life in Christ and according to his Spirit, bearing the fruit of love and sacrificial service.

Σάρξ in Galatians predominantly underlines man's plight before God since time forgotten. It was due to man's need, whilst living in the flesh in a sinful world, not to succumb to living according to flesh, that Yahweh provided law. It was to guide man in service to Yahweh and his fellowmen. Ironically and tragically, law failed to do this precisely because of sin and man's propensity to turn anything good, even divine, against God. Law could not break this power, in fact, it would enhance it (Rm. 5:20; Gl. 3:22),² itself becoming slave to flesh.

¹ Adams, 2000, 231-2.

² Ridderbos, 1975, 144-9; Schlier, 1971, 91-2.

CHAPTER 4

ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD AND LAW: ENSLAVING SECUNDI IN THE HANDS OF FLESH

We have determined that the present evil age is characterised by opposition to God under influence of an evil supra-human power presenting itself in man's transitoriness, corruptibility and corruption. This domain is referred to as flesh. It was not originally part of creation – neither cosmologically nor anthropologically – but became thus. Galatians profoundly emphasises enslavement to law (νόμος) and, in passing, the elements of the world (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου - Gl. 4:3). To such an extent do νόμος and στοιχεῖα collectively dominate the theme of slavery, one could wrongly get the impression that there are three major operative enslavers, i.e. σάρξ, νόμος and στοιχεῖα. So seemingly dominant is νόμος compared to σάρξ, one could be forgiven for initially thinking Paul regarded νόμος as primary enslaver and tormentor from the rigorist right. In opposition to this, σάρξ would then be regarded as secondary threat from the libertinistic left – an amoral seducer at loggerheads with νόμος.

We have determined that σάρξ is the primary enslaver of man, endeavouring to position man independent from and in opposition to God, from shortly after creation. Law arrived on the scene at a much later stage. Paul states it was 430 years after Abraham (Gl. 3:17). It was given to Israel, God's elect, to help curb its vulnerability to flesh and sin, but law itself became slave to flesh (Gl. 3:22). Law was so incapable of performing this task that it largely underlined Israel's enslavement to flesh. In fact, it inadvertently encouraged sin (Gl. 3:10-11, 21-22). It became an objective in itself, leading to believers comparing themselves with others and boasting about legalistic achievements. It underlined Israel's spiritual plight and hopelessness as much as that of the nations. It will be argued that Paul assigned only a limited function to law and only for the limited period till Christ's advent. Since the triple crucifixion in which Christ was crucified and Paul with Him, in order that Paul would be crucified to the world and the world to him (Gl. 2:20; 6:14), the law had reached its zenith and was totally denigrated to nothing more than one of the *elements of the world*.

I will argue that the nations lived in slavery to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, negatively speaking, referring to various elements in which they trusted, other than in Yahweh, and, since the advent of Christ, anything other than having faith in Him. There is a possibility of these elements, by God's common grace, having a limited positive role, in the same way as law initially had. However, the main bearing of the chapter is on νόμος and στοιχεῖα as slaves of σάρξ. Flesh being the primary enslaver of the present evil age, law and the elements are its secundi emphasising man's plight and hopelessness seen from the Christ event in which it met its demise.

1. SLAVERY UNDER THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

Paul's references to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gl. 4:3) and στοιχεῖα (Gl. 4:9), together with the reference to τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς (Gl. 4:8) that could very well be an implied reference to στοιχεῖα, are problematic. Apart from Galatians στοιχεῖα occurs only in Col. 2:8, 20; Hb. 5:12 and 2 Pt. 3:10, 12.¹ Στοιχεῖν occurs in Gl. 5:25 and 6:16, but is not currently of interest to us. Although the reference to Col. 2:8, 20 could be helpful, we must be wary of allowing the study of "elements" in Colossians to determine its meaning in Galatians.² Although we cannot exhaust the theme currently, we will endeavour to fathom it to a point where we have something feasible with which to expound Galatians.

1.1. Interpretations

A lexicographical analysis is an apt starting point. Bauer presents the following information with regard to meanings attached to the word in different contexts:³

- a) *Elements of learning or fundamental principles.*⁴ This would be the meaning in Hb. 5:12,⁵ but not necessarily in Galatians.⁶ Defenders of this option argue for development in religion from more elementary forms, like Judaism or the different Gentile forms, to Christianity as ultimate form and revelation.
- b) *Elemental or basic substances from which everything in nature is made, referring to the traditional: earth, water, air and fire.*⁷ Martyn remarks that, unless for decided reasons, one should accept this meaning on lexicographical grounds.⁸
- c) *Elementary spirits associated by syncretistic religious tendencies of later antiquity with the physical elements.* Bauer is inclined to this interpretation.⁹ Martyn mentions that supporting sources are mostly post-Pauline.¹⁰ Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that Paul could have meant exactly this.¹¹

¹ Schmoller, 1989, 463; Morgenthaler, 1958, 143.

² Martyn, 1995, 18.

³ Bauer, 1979, 768-9.

⁴ Also Matera, 1992, 149-50; Moore-Crispin, 1989, 203-23; Belleville, 1986, 64-9; Delling, 1971, 685.

⁵ Nida & Louw 1, 1988, 588.

⁶ Martyn, 1995, 19. Although Nida & Louw 1w 1988, 475, do not explicitly denote this meaning to στοιχεῖα in Gl. 4:3 & 9, they do hint in this direction with the translation "rudimentary knowledge." Interestingly, they denote a meaning to στοιχεῖα in all 5 occurrences, but they are slightly vague regarding its meaning in Gl. 4.

⁷ Nida and Louw 1, 1988, 19, denote this meaning to 2 Peter 3:10.

⁸ Bauer, 1958, 768; Martyn, 1995, 19.

⁹ Nida & Louw 1, 1988, 147, denote this meaning in Col. 2:20. According to Betz, 1979, 205, Greco-Roman, and even Jewish syncretistic movements, held a negative view of the world (κόσμος). The elements constituting the world were not neutral substances, but "demonic entities of cosmic proportions and astral powers which were hostile towards man. In Judaism these forces were integrated in the world of 'angelic beings'." The resulting impact of these forces is that man is enslaved. Others inclined to this position are: Hong, 1993, 81, 165; Barrett, 1985, 39; Cousar, 1982, 92-3; Bruce, 1982¹, 204; Schlier, 1971, 190-1.

¹⁰ Martyn, 1995, 19.

¹¹ Schweizer, 1988, 468, regards it as possible, but not probable. Bruce, 1982¹, 204, feels strongly that the scant evidence for this usage before the second century CE is no argument against its having been used in

d) *Heavenly bodies*. This meaning is closely linked to the previous one.

Although very helpful, lexicography alone cannot satisfactorily expound the meaning of such a complex word.¹ One is overwhelmed by the different interpretations of *στοιχεῖα*. Even with regard to so-called facts on which theories are constructed there is much conflicting evidence,² making it almost impossible to come to any conclusion. There is also the danger that some could try to revive demonological interpretations in reaction to others who have tried to demythologise personalised cosmological terminology, and vice versa.³

Bundrick has been very helpful in evaluating all the possibilities.⁴ He determines the immediate context of Gl. 4:3 as reflecting on the inferior status of certain people in a time prior to the advent of Christ when they were confined under law; kept under restraint/imprisoned (Gl. 3:23); under a custodian/tutor (Gl. 3:25); children and no better than a slave (Gl. 4:1); under guardians and trustees (Gl. 4:2); slaves to the elements of the world (Gl. 4:3); and under law (Gl. 4:5). He then poses the dilemma of to whom Paul refers in Gl. 3:23-4:7 when he speaks in the first person plural (*ἡμεῖς*), and to whom in the second person plural (*ὕμεῖς*).⁵ He is in agreement with Reicke and most scholars⁶ that the use of the first person plural in Gl. 3:23-25 refers to the position of the faithful under the law in association with the Jewish Christians. The switch to the second person plural in Gl. 3:26-29 “indicates an extension in the point of view from Israel to the Gentile world.”⁷ The use of the first person plural in Gl. 4:3 thus includes all Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origin. Of great importance is that, whatever the *στοιχεῖα* are, the term has to apply in some way or another to both Jew and Gentile. He then delineates the interpretations in terms of terminology introduced by both Bandstra and Kurapati,⁸ as follows:

1.1.1. *Principle interpretation: στοιχεῖα as rudimentary principles*

This includes those interpretations mentioned under Bauer’s first category. Luther and Calvin interpreted it as OT law, more precisely, ceremonial law. Hugo Grotius regarded *στοιχεῖα* as elements of piety common to Jewish and pagan religion, namely: temples, altars, libations, calendars, festivals, etc.⁹

this way by Paul. The context, and not the history of the word’s usage, must be conclusive. He is of the opinion that the context in Galatians calls for such an understanding.

¹ Martyn, 1995, 20.

² E.g., Arnold, 1996, 55-76 goes against the trend, presenting “evidence” that *στοιχεῖα* was used in the sense of demonic or spiritual powers. He refers to the *Greek Magical Papyri, The Testament of Solomon and 2 Enoch 16:7*, identifying traditions that could be traced back to much earlier times – even up to three centuries BCE (57-9). Wink, 1978, 244, who wrote on the subject prior to Arnold, contends that no such evidence occurs prior to the third century CE. Although Arnold refers to him in his article, he does not specifically refute Wink’s position. He merely mentions that his own position is at least a probability (59). Bundrick, 1991, 359.

³ Arnold, 1996, 68; Bundrick, 1991, 363.

⁴ Bundrick, 1991, 353-64.

⁵ Bundrick, 1991, 355.

⁶ Bundrick, 1991, 361.

⁷ Bundrick, 1991, 355-6.

⁸ Bandstra, 1964, 171. Kurapati, 1976, 42-55.

⁹ Bundrick, 1991, 357.

In Col. 2, then, Paul can use the same expression as in Gl. 4, for the reference is again to religion before and outside Christ, and the same judgement falls on this. At best it is only a shadow of the fulfilment (Gl. 2:17), and in fact it proves to be a deception when the one who believes in Christ thinks his existence can be supported by its ordinances (Gl. 2:8) even though the fullness of God's power is at work in Christ alone, Gl. 2:9.¹

Cramer translates: "The elements of the religious-moral habit of the old man."² Bandstra argues that it refers to law and flesh as the fundamental forces impacting on each other within human existence before and outside Christ.³ Esser thinks similarly, referring to the elements of this world as:

All the things in which man places his trust apart from the living God revealed in Christ; they become his gods and he becomes their slave.⁴

Longenecker also thinks in these terms, taking Gl. 4:3 to refer to the Mosaic Law as the basic principle by which Israel had to live in preparation for the coming Christ. In the same way Gl. 4:9 refers to the Gentiles' basic principles of religion, namely nature and cultic rituals.⁵ Dunn finds this interpretation "lexically very possible and contextually the most likely in Gl. 4:3."⁶ In Gl. 4:9 it becomes clear: "elemental principles of religion, whether pagan or Jewish, involved the observance of certain sacred days times and rites."⁷

1.1.2. *Cosmological interpretation: στοιχεῖα as material components*

This interpretation is in line with Bauer's second category and is supported by Schweizer⁸ and Rusam.⁹ Schweizer works with the hypothesis that στοιχεῖα in both Colossians and Galatians refers to that which it refers to in all the literature of the first century CE, namely the four (or five) elements of the universe (earth, water, air, fire, and sometimes, ether).¹⁰ He examines quotations of Greek authors from the sixth century BCE until the end of the second century CE and finds that there was the conviction that the four elements were originally in harmony, but later began to strive against one another, resulting in disharmony.¹¹ Wolter emphasises that

¹ Delling, 1971, 686.

² Cramer, 1961, 175.

³ Bandstra, 1964, 173.

⁴ Esser, 1976, 453. This is basically also the position of Ridderbos, 1976¹, 153-4. Ridderbos, 1960, 176, adds that both in Colossians and Galatians the same meaning is intended, namely that στοιχεῖα must be equated with κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ("according to human tradition") in Col. 2:8. Ridderbos, 1975, 149, refers to it as "legalistic prescriptions to which heathen religion subjects its adherents and which he sees returning in the form of all kinds of ceremonial, ascetic, and other regulations of Judaistic and syncretistic heresy."

⁵ Longenecker, 1990, 165-6.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 286.

⁷ Dunn, 1993², 299.

⁸ Schweizer, 1988, 455-68.

⁹ Rusam, 1992, 119-25. This is, broadly-speaking, also the line of thought in Van Kooten, 2001, 49-68.

¹⁰ Schweizer, 1988, 456.

¹¹ Martyn, 1995, 29-32, continues to think in terms of the Jewish Apocalyptic antinomies of which mention was made in my Ch. 2. He regards the elements as the pairs of opposites of this world. He relates the baptismal tradition (Gl. 3:28) to it, describing it as elements of religious distinction. However, it would probably be better to think of the elements as causing the distinctions, than of the distinctions as the elements themselves.

man not only lived in such a sphere, but was equally, as part of the *cosmos*, made up of these elements and subjected to their imbalance and strife.¹ This made the earthly sphere unhealthy, mortal and even painful. The soul, wanting to escape this fate, is continually pulled down by the elements. In order to break these chains man has to live an ascetic and regulated life. The concept of *στοιχεῖα* carries the notion of dependence on the make-up of this world.² Man is not free, but subjected to the material and inner workings of this world. This dependence and need to be free, causes man to seek refuge in cultic activities, religions of different sorts, and philosophies.³ In this way, the principle elements and cosmic material elements are closely related. Schweizer contends that as early as the second century BCE Judaism, leaning towards Greek ideas, assimilated it via Pythagorism. In the first century CE even Philo took up Pythagorean ideas.⁴ He observes a difference between Colossians and Galatians in the sense that Colossians is more concerned with asceticism: the soul having to be freed from impurity to pierce through the elements to heaven. Galatians is concerned with legalism. He relates the two positions in Galatians mentioning the possibility that Jewish law could have been seen – at least by Paul's opposition – as an aid to freedom from slavery of earthly elements. This way, law is a return to their pre-Christian paganism.⁵

In 4:3 Paul can even identify his own life under the law with that of the pre-Christian Galatians. The “ones that are by nature no gods” (4:8) could mean heathen gods like Hephaestus, or angels that rule over nature's course, but they could also designate the “saviour-heroes” helping the soul to its ascent. Paul might even suggest that the “demons” they revered were “by nature” not even pagan gods, but merely ascending souls.⁶

1.1.3. Personalised-cosmological interpretation: *στοιχεῖα* as personalised powers or spiritual beings

This interpretation includes Bauer's third and fourth positions. The idea arose from ancients associating the element of fire with the stars. Astrology in turn named the stars after gods, making them inclined to regard heavenly bodies as influencers of earthly events.⁷ This interpretation was popular throughout the patristic period and significantly endorsed by scholars of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Bo Reicke regards *ὑπὸ νόμον* and *τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* as synonyms. He argues that *νόμος* and *στοιχεῖα* are related in the same way as Judaism and paganism in the sense that the elemental spirits of paganism can be associated with the angelic powers of Gl. 3:19 who are believed to have given law.⁸

¹ Wolter, 1993, 122.

² Wolter, 1993, 124.

³ Wolter, 1993, 124-5.

⁴ Van Kooten, 2001, 50-68, also goes to a lot of trouble to illustrate that Philo took up these ideas via Plutarch, and that there were thus philosophers and Jewish intellectuals contemporary to Paul who held these ideas.

The question is, how widely were these ideas held in Jewish thought?

⁵ Schweizer, 1988, 464-6.

⁶ Schweizer, 1988, 466.

⁷ Bundrick, 1991, 358.

⁸ Reicke, 1951, 259-3.

Bruce finds this too inadequate to link law and the angels in Galatians.¹ The reference to the observation of days, months, seasons and years (Gl. 4:10) opens a possibility for Jewish observance of, e.g., new moon festivals,² as well as heathen practices, but does not necessitate a connection with the elements.

While the other two traditions of interpretation are mostly careful not to equate τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Galatians too easily with that in Col. 2:8 and 20,³ this tradition seems to find it less problematic. It even, in cases, almost too easily equates τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου with the ἀρχαὶ and ἐξουσίαι (*principalities and powers*) in Col. 1:16; 2:15; probably because many of these studies were conducted from a Colossian point of view. One must be careful of simply equating the meaning of στοιχεῖα in Colossians with that in Galatians. The specific contexts must be taken into account in order to pick up nuances.⁴ One has to take into consideration that the letter to the Colossians was written at least ten to fifteen years after the one to the Galatians⁵ and that the context was probably different. Schweizer is probably correct in his view that the Galatians, like the Colossians, had a pre-Christian syncretistic background. Whether this background was identical in both cases, or only partly similar, is not clear. Jewish influence was probably greater in Galatia.⁶ Consequently, Paul could have had another meaning or nuance in mind in Galatians.

According to Bundrick⁷ Caird justifiably states that the concept of world powers in some way or another reaches into every aspect of Pauline theology. He reacts against discarding the idea as a residue from primitive superstition. He understands στοιχεῖα as elemental spirits holding both Jew and Gentile in bondage, with links to both law and astrology. He argues, when law is isolated from its God-given context and made into an individual religious system “it becomes demonic.” In this sense, both Jewish and Gentile legalisms are demonic and can be called principalities and powers or elemental spirits of the world.⁸ Schlier thinks similarly, regarding στοιχεῖα in Galatians and Colossians as interchangeable with principalities and powers, dominions, thrones, gods, angels, demons and evil spirits. He contends that these elements “are probably the stars under whose influence the Galatians had felt bound to observe certain sidereal festivals.”⁹ Bruce argues, στοιχεῖα in both Gl. 4:3 and 9 refers to

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 203.

² Thornton, 1989, 97-100.

³ Martyn, 1995, 16, warns that στοιχεῖα in Galatians should be read in its own right before comparisons are made with other references. Bundrick, 1991, 362. Bruce, 1982¹, 203.

⁴ Schweizer, 1982, 127. Despite these differences, Ridderbos, 1975, 149, maintains that it is very easy to conclude that all the references refer to principle elements. Ladd, 1975, 399, 402-3.

⁵ Most scholars, among them Schweizer, 1982, 24-6; Bruce, 1957, 163-5; 1977, 408-12; Guthrie, 1970, 557; Ridderbos, 1960, 107-9, are comfortable with a date shortly after the Letter to Philemon, in the latter half of Paul's Roman imprisonment (± 62 CE). In Ch. 1 we dated Galatians prior to the Council (49/50 CE).

⁶ Schweizer, 1982, 128. Also the point of Schweizer above that Galatians is characterised by a legalistic background and Colossians by an ascetic one.

⁷ Bundrick, 1991, 360.

⁸ Caird, 1956, viii, 41, 51.

⁹ Schlier, 1961, 11, 14, 23.

“beings that are by nature not gods” (ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς) in Gl. 4:8. They had become “demythologised” and “non-entities” in Paul’s mind and at that of the believers having been liberated by the Spirit. For people who had not put these entities out of their minds they still had a sinister and demonic influence, albeit only an indirect or distant influence. Their lives as pagans were regulated by these entities just as law previously regulated Jewish Christians.¹

To be enslaved to such counterfeit deities was to be enslaved to the στοιχεῖα, and the Galatians would be enslaved to the στοιχεῖα all over again if they ‘reverted’ not to their former paganism but to Jewish religious practices...For all the basic differences between Judaism and paganism, both involved subjection to the same elemental forces. This is an astonishing statement for a former Pharisee to make; yet Paul makes it – not as an exaggeration in the heat of argument but as the deliberate expression of a carefully thought out position.²

1.2. Conclusion

It seems most likely that Paul had something in line with *rudimentary principles of some kind* in mind. Whatever the specific meaning, in some way it must be connected to both paganism and Judaism. The reason being that ἡμεῖς in Gl. 4:3 cannot otherwise but be identified with both Jewish and Gentile Christians. It is difficult to know to what extent Jewish Christians could previously have regarded themselves to have been subjected to the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. There is not enough conclusive evidence to prove that Jewish Christians of the time, in their pre-Christian days, were on a significant scale and at grassroots level inclined to the teachings of Philo, let alone Pythagoras. What is possible, even probable, is that the Galatians were well aware of and even influenced by such pagan philosophies.³ So different was it regarded to be from Judaism that it seems Paul actually tried to shock them into understanding that they could be reverting to the στοιχεῖα by observing Jewish law (Gl. 1:6; 3:1; 4:19-21; 5:2), and that Jewish and other religions were not all that unrelated. Never in their wildest dreams had they seen such a connection. But, from a Jewish point of view, Paul would have had to do more explaining. It would be even more essential if the Galatians were to explain Paul’s position in their defence against the opponents.

It is equally difficult to see how Jewish Christians would equate the στοιχεῖα with astral spirits and even demons. The argument that the pagan astral spirits and Jewish mediating angels (Gl. 3:19) can be connected, is unconvincing.⁴ Evidence from pre-Pauline and Pauline times to substantiate a personalised-

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 202, 204.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 202-3.

³ J. North, 1992, 177-8 indicates that during the early phases of Christianity paganism was not as organised or institutionalised into different religions as it would be at a later stage. Every community, city-state or tribal group had an own form of religious life. “[I]n some sense all groups in the pagan world were religious, since they all involved some degree of cultic and ritual activity, some orientation towards the gods” (177). They might also belong to, or join, a philosophical sect that held particular views about gods and their activities” (178).

⁴ Bruce, 1984, 66-7.

cosmological interpretation on philological grounds is inconclusive. Not even Kurapati's arguments in favour of such evidence¹ are convincing.²

One must be very wary of too easily drawing parallels between "elements" and "principalities and powers" in Colossians. One must bear in mind that Galatians cannot be explained in terms of Colossians and that "in no such listing (of principalities and powers) in the NT is στοιχεῖα included (cf. Rm. 8:38-39; 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 1 Pt. 3:22)."³

Although the weight of information points to a meaning in terms of principle elements, it is very possible that στοιχεῖα does not have an inherent meaning in NT usage, and that its meaning has to be deduced solely from its context. It is equally the same in the English language.⁴ In this sense, considering that it has to be applicable to both Jewish and pagan contexts, it seems safe to assume that Paul had rudimentary principles, observances, customs and rites pertaining to all religions, in mind. These elements were intended to give meaning to life, order their lives, regulate their behaviour, and even in cases, assist them in obtaining salvation of some kind. Thus in Gl. 4:3 Paul uses the word ἡμεῖς ("us/we") relating to the common position of Jews and Gentiles without Christ. In Gl. 4:9 he uses the second person plural, because in the context of Gl. 4:8-11 he brings their specific pagan background with its own στοιχεῖα in relation to that of Jewish legalism in Gl. 4:3.

If we accept this explanation, the Jewish Christian reader would probably have thought in terms of former Jewish religious principles, observances and rites, largely exclusive of entities such as demons and spirits. A Gentile Christian reader would have thought primarily in terms of his pre-Christian religious principles, observances and rites, probably inclusive of his previously revered gods, spirits, etc., and most probably also different pagan superstitions.⁵ That Paul largely demythologises the beings that are by nature not gods does not mean that he demythologises the totality of principalities and powers. It does not mean Paul did not believe in the existence of angels and demons – a subject in its own right. Suffice it to say, as a child of his time, versed in the previously discussed symbolic universe of Jewish apocalyptic, it would be very strange indeed, if Paul had it in mind to totally demythologise the world of spirits, demons and angels in Gl. 4:8.⁶

Everything apart from Christ – Torah-religion included – is to be considered part of the "plight" from which Christ offered deliverance.⁷

Since the Christ event Christians have been presented with and partake in a new world-order. Having been crucified to the world in Christ, and the world to

¹ Kurapati, 1976, 69-75.

² Bundryck, 1991, 362.

³ Bundryck, 1991, 362. Also Bruce, 1984, 66.

⁴ Wink, 1978, 227.

⁵ Bruce, 1984, 64.

⁶ Forbes, 2001, 86.

⁷ Donaldson, 1997², 73.

him (Gl. 6:14), they had been set free from a world of adverse spiritual influences.¹ One should think in terms of

first principles, the ABC's primitive teaching (cf. Hb. 5:12). Paul gathers up under them in a somewhat denigrating manner...the legalistic prescriptions to which heathen religion subjects its adherents and which he sees returning in the form of all kinds of ceremonial, ascetic, and other regulations of Judaistic and syncretistic heresy in the churches of Galatia and Colossae. These principles of the world, too, brought men under their jurisdiction, could give them no deliverance, but rather carried them ever more deeply into spiritual bondage. For this reason Paul equates them in their effect with the rule and slavery in which the man finds himself who wishes to be justified by the works of the law.²

Life without Christ was equal to life under the slavery of any element. It was *according to the flesh*. It belonged to the present evil age and was opposed to the Spirit. It was one of man's own makings with which to serve his own ends individually and corporately. In Christ God provided a completely new reality (*Wirklichkeit*) in terms of which man could live. In the Christ event, God's salvational reality (*Gottes Heilswirklichkeit*) had replaced the reality of the world of the elements (*Weltwirklichkeit der Elemente*).³ Thus, one could assume that, in our context, Paul's reference to the *elements of the world* is the reality of life without Christ and the salvation he provided. To depend on any entity other than the Person of Christ for salvation or meaning to life, is equal to being enslaved to the *elements of the world*.⁴

A qualification might be needed when viewing this matter dogmatically. Some strands of Reformed theology provide for God's so-called common providence, common revelation and common grace. These are interrelated matters concerning God's dealings with man in general, outside the so-called redemptive-historical pattern in the Jewish-Christian tradition.⁵ It is about God not allowing man in his fleshliness, outside the redemptive-historical pattern, to sin unrestrained and to render life impossible to live. In this regard, it is interesting that Paul's lists of vices and virtues in Gl. 5:19-23 are taken from such lists in Hellenistic culture and philosophy.⁶ With the exception of love, these virtues were all sought after in Hellenism. Granted, Christianity gave new meaning to the different elements. In God's common grace, even the pagans had an insight into proper behaviour. The fact is that they would seek to live up to these virtues in their own fallibility, neither in dependence on God nor in his honour, but to improve their standing.

¹ Guthrie, 1981, 144-5.

² Ridderbos, 1975, 149.

³ Wolter, 1993, 126.

⁴ Buckel, 1993, 180.

⁵ Much can be said about these subjects. For our purpose clear enough orientations on the subject can be found in L. Berkhof, 1958, 432-46; Kearsley, 1988, 280-1. H. Berkhof, 1979, 50, makes mention of this in terms of there being more to truth than only that which is redemptive-historically available in the Bible and in line with Christ and his teaching. He states that revelation in Christ is not exclusive, but definitely normative. I am convinced that Paul's views on conscience in Rom. 2 are in line with this position.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 281-2.

This also accounted for religious aspiration, decent behaviour, social brotherliness and the achievements of art and science.¹

The question arose, How can we explain the comparatively orderly life in the world, seeing that the whole world lies under the curse of sin?... How can we account for it that sinful man still “retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and shows some regard for virtue and for good outward behaviour?”²

In his grace God provided these rudimentary principles for life in general. He specifically provided Israel with the law. The fact remains that man, in placing his trust in these principles, and excluding God from influencing his life on his terms and according to his promise, trusted himself and that which he regarded as his own making. Negatively, one must stress that the *elements of the world* would have included such elements that were not provided by God in his common grace, but thoroughly humanly devised elements such as idols and other gods (Gl. 4:8) and the vices of Gl. 5:19-20. Whichever way, these elements are either opposed to God or lead away from Him, because of the corrupting influence of *flesh*. The only way around this dilemma, is faith in Jesus Christ in whom God has provided salvation.

2. BE NOT TOO QUICK TO JUDGE WHAT ΝΟΜΟΣ MEANS

Our intention in this section is not to discuss the Christian’s position with regard to law. Although it surfaces at times, it will concern us only in the following chapters. What is important now is to determine Paul’s estimation of law before the advent of Christ. What did he include in the term νόμος (“law”)? What was a life *under law* like in the *present evil age* of which he speaks in Gl. 1:4 and from which Christ has delivered Christians? Is his estimation of law and its function before Christ negative, neutral or positive? Does law itself work against the evil of the *present evil age*, or does it enhance evil? If the latter were true, would it be because of an inherent problem with law, or because of the situation in which law operates, rendering it inoperative and even counterproductive? This in itself is a massive subject with which we cannot deal extensively, but on which we must have a motivated stance, especially in view of Paul’s seemingly negative judgement on law in Galatians and opposite stance in the letters to Rome and Corinth.³

According to the Nestle-Aland text Paul uses νόμος 118 times in four of his undisputed letters – Romans (74), Galatians (32), I Corinthians (9) and Phillipians (3).⁴ Our concern is with its use in Galatians, but we shall have to take cognisance, where necessary, of Paul’s use of the term in his other letters, especially

¹ Kearsley, 1988, 280.

² L. Berkhof, 1958, 432.

³ See my Ch. 6.

⁴ Schmoller, 1989, 349-50. Also refer to Winger, 1992, 33, in connection with occurrences of νόμος in the *Textus Receptus* (Rm. 9:32 and 1 Cor. 7:39) that are not accepted today. Morgenthaler, 1958, 123, cites only 72 references in Romans.

in Romans, for the abovementioned reason. The high occurrence of the word in Galatians is indicative of its importance regarding Paul's message to the Galatians. How he uses it in terms of word combinations and contexts is equally important in determining its specific meaning and impact on the message. Undoubtedly, Paul's conception of law is fundamentally important in the study of Galatians, especially regarding *freedom*. However, there are obscuring factors making it difficult to clarify the subject matter.

- There is the difficulty of revisiting the original context in which Paul reacted.
- Added to this is the fact that Paul does not use the Semitism *torah* (תורה), but the Greek word νόμος, raising the question whether νόμος is equivalent to *torah*.
- Scholars are not unanimous with regard to how inclusive Paul regards νόμος in terms of the distinction between ceremonial, cultic and moral law.¹
- Paul himself compounds the problem by speaking both negatively and positively of law. In Galatians he is predominantly negative, whilst in Romans and 1 Corinthians the opposite is seemingly true.
- Lastly, there is the difficulty that Paul's letter to the Galatians is very polemical, making it necessary to keep an open mind with regard to stereotyping, labelling, exaggeration and other rhetorical mechanisms.

Once again, the concern in this section is to determine how law functioned in the *present evil age*. How was it a curse (Gl. 3:13)? Was it a yoke of slavery (Gl. 5:1)? If it was, in what respect was it thus? What are the dangers of which one should be wary when determining Paul's position on νόμος?

Firstly, there is the danger of regarding Second Temple Judaism's view on law as homogeneous. On the contrary, there were different views. For a start, there was a difference of opinion on the source from which to deduce moral and ceremonial law.² There were the problems involving the intensity or vigour of its application, the width of the field of application, and whether it also applied to Gentiles.³ Some were more narrow-minded than others, thinking about ethics

¹ Many scholars argue that νόμος refers only to ceremonial law as distinctive laws setting boundaries between ethnic Israel (Jewishness) and other religions and cultures. However, I will argue that Paul most probably had the totality of law in mind.

² J.A. Du Rand, 1997, 269-70, attests to the fact that the Sadducees regarded only the Pentateuch as norm in legal, cultic and moral matters. In opposition, the Pharisees had a widely worked out standard making use of the oral tradition reflected in the *halakah* and *haggadah* and the different *Targumim*. The Essenes had an even more stringent and expanded standard incorporating their wisdom literature. Lührmann, 1989, 75-9, draws attention to the fact that the Pharisees accepted a much wider and stringent set of laws including both written and oral traditions, while the Sadducees rejected these. The Essenes also rejected the Pharisaic interpretation, regarding it as people-pleasing (39). They had their own interpretation, which they strictly followed. Meeks, 1986, 96, stresses that law ranged between two poles. On the one end was God's Torah as the meaningful structure of all reality. On the other end were the lists of stipulations Jews performed to indicate their belonging to the covenant. Although different groups had different sets of stipulations, they were unanimous that law had to be done.

³ The Sadducees obviously were more concerned with those laws akin to the Priestly Code and found in the Pentateuch. The Pharisees were much more concerned with detailed law observance than the former and,

and salvation legalistically.¹ This is in tandem with a *second difficulty*, namely development in *Torah* and its meaning. It is especially important with regard to Paul's remarks in Gl. 3:15-29 on law's later arrival. We must be careful of judging Paul's view on law in the *present evil age* from a position after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. We must be equally aware of the possibility posed by scholars that the Gospels reflect a picture of the Jews – especially the Pharisees – that is more legalistic and casuistic than it probably was.² They create the impression that legalism and casuistry was the overall norm in all Phariseism, and for that matter, all Judaism.³ A *third difficulty* is that, because of Galatians' strong emphasis on faith as opposed to works of law, it has often been misread as dealing *exclusively* with justification by faith: that is, exclusive of human achievement.⁴ In other words, it deals with how to enter into a right relationship with God *per se*, i.e. through faith in Christ as the only requirement and not through meritorious works. Although this is true of the gospel, and also in Paul's view, one would be mistaken to interpret Galatians against this limited backdrop. Galatians was not written to people of the Jewish faith, but to Christians considering the inclusion of Jewish law requirements as part of their ethos.

In order to determine Paul's position on νόμος both before and after the advent of Christ, but in this chapter with regard to the former, one must orientate oneself to the development and subsequent crystallisation of different positions on law up to Paul's time. Although this is a most intriguing subject, because of the danger of sidetracking from the aim of this study, it will be dealt with only briefly. Our main aim at this point is to determine at what point in the development of Torah Paul found himself. Although we will seek light from other Pauline letters where "gaps" have to be filled, we will stick as closely as possible to Galatians. Context plays a crucial role in this matter and therefore Galatians should speak for itself.⁵

Therefore, rather than letting Romans dictate to us what Galatians can and cannot mean (a luxury the Galatians surely did not have), we must allow Galatians to speak to us with its own integrity.⁶

especially with drawing boundaries between them and the Gentiles by way of detailed legislation and stringent application. It was also within these quarters that the idea of the universality of law took root and grew.

¹ We shall be returning to these problems shortly.

² Lührmann, 1989, 76-7, also cautions in this regard. Many others, such as Meyer & Weiss, 1974, 11-35, caution that one should not impose the Pharisaism of post 70 CE onto that prior to the fall of Jerusalem.

³ Lührmann, 1989, 40, refers to O'Dell, 1961, 241-57, emphasising that the entire Jewish community was not accommodated in one political or religious party. "There were without a doubt a number of deeply spiritual and eschatologically orientated men who belonged neither to the Pharisees, Sadducees nor to the priestly minded Qumran Essenes, but were nonetheless religious Jews."

⁴ Luther is often associated with this position. Reformation Theology has been guilty of this misunderstanding.

⁵ Donaldson, 1986, 95. Braswell, 1991, 84, refers to *occasionalism* in Paul's letters, which would be in line with Beker's reference to Paul's *contingency* as opposed to his *coherency*, to which we referred in Ch. 2. If the occasion is not taken into account seriously, it could, on the one hand, lead to perceived contradictions, and, on the other hand, to unnecessary harmonising.

⁶ Braswell, 1991, 85.

2.1. Law as divinely embedded in covenantal grace

From its inception, law in Israel was embedded in the covenant and regarded as Israel's obligation in response to God's gracious dealings. It was not the foundation of the covenant. In fact, it was the other way around.¹

The laws are not regarded, then, as a fair adjustment of human interests which is then divinely sanctioned. Nor is their observance the achievement which Israel presents to its God in gratitude for the covenant and election. In particular, it is not the achievement which establishes the divine relationship. The laws are in the strictest sense the requirements of the God to whom Israel belongs because He has revealed Himself in the exodus from Egypt and because in all future wars He will show Himself to be the God of this people. Thus the motive for keeping this law is simply that of obedience in so far as there is any conscious reflection on the question of motivation.²

Paul is clear that law came 430 years after the promise (Gl. 4:17). Grace preceded law. Importantly, it does not mean obedience to the God of grace was not implied from the start. Grace and promise awakened obedience. They were as inseparable as the two sides of a coin, but with grace taking initiative and, in that sense, precedence. The fact is that law as external moral code was a later development.³ Von Rad makes vital remarks regarding the Decalogue:

The proclamation of the divine will for justice is like a net thrown over Israel: it is the completion of her conveyance to *Jahweh*.⁴

Israel certainly did not understand the Decalogue as an absolute moral law prescribing ethics: she rather recognised it as a revelation vouchsafed to her at a particular moment in her history, through which she was offered the saving gift of life.... With the hearing of the commandments *Jahweh* has offered to his people life; with the hearing of the commandments Israel was placed in the position of decision for life or for death. Certainly *Jahweh* looked for this decision from Israel; but in no case were these commandments prefixed to the covenant in a conditional sense, as if the covenant would only come into effect once obedience had been rendered. The situation is rather the reverse. The covenant is made, and with it Israel receives the revelation of the commandments.⁵

Since Wellhausen's revolutionary hypothesis that the law did not come before the prophets, but was introduced at a later stage,⁶ there has been much debate of which the details do not concern us now.⁷ Suffice it to say that today there is broad agreement that the law was not only earlier than the prophets, but that God's will as

¹ Eichrodt, 1978, 44; Bright, 1972, 150. Loader, 2001, 70-85 stresses that *law* and *gospel* (or *promise*) in the Pentateuch were never intended to oppose each other. The former is incorporated in the latter via the narrative in which it is clothed. In this sense: "A law-incorporating gospel is a torah," and the Pentateuch has the function to reflect (God's) "statement of grace and the requirements of responding love grafted upon it" (83).

² Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1036. This is also the opinion of Von Rad, 1975¹, 391, stating: "Israel was elected by *Yahweh* before she was given the commandments. As a result of this election she became *Yahweh*'s chosen people, and this, in fact, happened before she had had any opportunity of proving her obedience, as Deut. XXVII. 9f, which seems to have derived from some ancient ritual, clearly shows."

³ Von Rad, 1975¹, 191.

⁴ Von Rad, 1975¹, 192.

⁵ Von Rad, 1975¹, 194.

⁶ Wellhausen, 1927.

⁷ Deist, 1976, 50-8. See Smend, 1983, for a critique of Wellhausen.

expressed in the law was revealed to Israel within the earliest stages of Jahwism.¹ This is the primary point of departure to which Israel had to be re-orientated throughout its history. It is also the primary measure against which the development of Torah should be evaluated. Von Rad points to interpretation of tradition as a very important factor in the OT. OT tradition was always open to the future.² As history unfolded it was interpreted by tradition and tradition was enriched and reinterpreted by historical events, especially God's saving events and promises. The different OT traditions (Jahwist, Elohist, Priestly tradition, Deuteronomist and Chronicler) are testimony to this. This obviously implied more than one view on law. Despite the best intentions and soundest interpretations "not every presentation of history could stand up to such repeated reinterpretation without suffering harm in the process."³ This should also be remembered of the interpretation of the law. There was development and difference of interpretation, which calls for wariness and discernment when trying to probe Paul's view on the law.

It should be clear at this point that obedience to God and obedience to law were not synonymous. Obedience was something God demanded from the human species from the very beginning. Although it was probably not altogether news to Israel when it was given to them, law as an external code formulating God's will at certain instances in Israel's history was a later and contextualised addition. The fact of the matter is that God required obedience before handing down law. However, it must be stressed that these two semantic fields, obedience and law, increasingly overlapped in Israel's perception during the time of the development of law. This is especially true of the Second Temple Period. It would probably be safe to suggest that at the time of Paul's writing to the Galatians the two semantic fields had almost completely overlapped in the minds of most Jews; especially in the minds of the Pharisees, the party from which Paul was called as an apostle to the Gentiles.⁴

2.1.1. Torah: historical development and the variegated view on law

Although Torah (תורה) as ethical standard had become a rather developed and formalised system in NT times, originally, it referred to a divine instruction/ruling/verdict for concrete situations.⁵ Besides the more personal revelations of God to individuals in which He gave direction with regard to decisions, encouragement in trying times

¹ Von Rad, 1975², 390. Zimmerli, 1965, 46-60, criticizes Von Rad for making a too sharp distinction between law and prophets and rightly stresses that there was a dialectical structure within law from the start. It promised life and salvation as divine grace, but always implied obedience as response. The prophets stressed the latter and the judgement accompanying disobedience.

² Childs, 1992, 174-5, very soundly reasons that although law was earlier than the prophets it does not imply that the prophets simply commented on law from a canonically subordinate position. "There is a radical newness to the prophets' message, a deeper plunge into the reality of God, a freedom of prophetic function...which cannot be contained within the category of mere commentary" (175).

³ Von Rad, 1975², 361.

⁴ The importance of this deduction will become clearer in Ch.5.

⁵ Brown, Driver & Briggs, 1953, 435-6; Du Toit, 1997¹, 437; Vriezen, 1977, 124; Brueggemann, 2002, 217. De Vaux, 1975, 142, explains *torah* as "in the first place a teaching, a doctrine, a decision given for a particular case. Collectively, the word means the whole body of rules governing men's relations with God and with each other...the prescriptions which his people had to observe in their moral, social and religious life."

and consolation in times of distress, there was the more official revelation of God's instructions regarding human conduct. When an individual was uncertain about day-to-day ethical, cultic or juridical issues, he could receive an "instruction" (torah) from God¹ via the priest² or prophet.³ This also applied to the nation as a whole.⁴ Typical of torah was the belief in its divine origin and the fact that it did not operate mechanically, but in a covenantal relationship with the living God, who elected his people, loved and cherished them, and cared about their well-being.⁵ The operative words are *covenantal relationship* and *revelation*. In later times, it would also be read in the light of prophecy.⁶ The priests were in touch with the community and their needs. Further, they were the mediators between God and his people. Unfortunately, the OT priestly institution had the inherent tendency to institutionalise life, especially religious life. This was also true of Torah. This was when prophets were called to duty. They had to challenge the institutionalisation and formalisation of faith by the temple officials.⁷ They even had to challenge the complacency of the priestly order from time to time. On the other hand, the prophets could be called to book by the priestly office. Prophets had to be tested, as it were, by the tradition instituted in Israel.⁸ These instructions gradually became encoded in oral traditions. In time, it obtained a degree of standardisation, later becoming written bodies of instruction.⁹ Because of the development of form-critical and tradition-historical investigations in the past two centuries,¹⁰ greater insight into the development of OT law has been acquired.

Von Rad makes it very clear that Israel did not initially understand the Decalogue, which is probably the mother of all Judeo-Christian ethics, "as an absolute moral law prescribing ethics." Not even Ezekiel, whom he describes as "the father of a rigorous 'legalism'," went that far.¹¹ Although the Decalogue could have been understood as burdensome, Israel only experienced its judging and cursing edge in the time of the prophets.¹² Even though the demands had to be accepted unconditionally and a curse followed for those who refused to follow them, there was a very real flexibility and adaptability with regard to religious, political and economic change.¹³ In this sense, it really served life for Yahweh's

¹ It was probably much like modern day counselling, or confessional practice in Roman Catholicism.

² 1 Sm. 23:9, even though the word torah is not used. Hg. 2:12-14 is another example.

³ Is. 1:10; 8:16, 20; 30:9. Vriezen, 1977, 243, mentions that Pr. 13:14 points to the fact that torah could also refer to the teaching or counselling of a wisdom teacher.

⁴ Vriezen, 1977, 242-3.

⁵ Vriezen, 1977, 243-4; Craigie, 1976, 37.

⁶ Vriezen, 1977, 244, 246.

⁷ Vriezen, 1977, 258. Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1040.

⁸ Vriezen, 1977, 259.

⁹ Brueggemann, 2002, 218.

¹⁰ Deist, 1976, 38-135, provides a very good orientation, summary and evaluation of these developments. He also adds a section (136-45) on some insights from South African theologians. The flip side of these investigations is that there is no overall consensus on how this development took place. Matthews, 1998/9, 7-15, provides insight into the impact of social developments on the development of law in Israel.

¹¹ Von Rad, 1975¹, 193.

¹² Von Rad, 1975¹, 194, 196.

¹³ Von Rad, 1975¹, 196-9. Craigie, 1976, 39-40, stresses the immediacy and contingency of law and covenant in history.

people and was essentially experienced as life giving. With regard to Deuteronomy, which is profoundly drenched in covenantal theology,

[t]here is certainly no wish for Deuteronomy to be a timeless, unalterable 'law'. On the contrary, it is an appeal to Israel at a quite definite moment in its history, an appeal of such a nature that all the actual happenings, problems and dangers of this one moment are visualised and taken seriously.¹

One must add to this the very gracious sacrificial system with which Yahweh provided them and by way of which expiation could be done and atonement made. We will not enter into this subject other than stressing the greatness of Yahweh's mercy enfolding the demand to obedience and providing mechanisms to make amends and to heal relationships.

Leaving the ossification of the post-exilic period out of the picture, Jahweh's will for justice positively never stood absolutely above time for Israel, for every generation was summoned anew to hearken to it as valid for itself and to make it out for itself.²

The profoundly crucial point at which NT scholarship picks up with the development in Torah is in this period of fossilisation, the so-called post-exilic period, also known as Second Temple Judaism, to which we will attend shortly.

2.1.2. Law to be regarded holistically

It has been motivated that law was never regarded in isolation. It was given within the covenantal relationship as an exterior regulator of the obedience Yahweh as covenantal benefactor expected from his covenantal beneficiary. It should never be regarded or studied apart from the covenantal frame of reference. In this sense, a holistic approach to law as integral part of Israel's covenantal relationship is necessary and obvious.

There is another sense in which law should be regarded holistically, namely with regard to its integrity. Traditionally scholarship divided OT law roughly into ceremonial, cultic, civil and moral law.³ Too easily, these types of law were separated into unrelated categories. Add to this the distinction between oral law and written tradition and these two categories' influence on the interpretation of law and one is left with the problem of not knowing what Israel really understood under law.⁴ What does seem sure, is that Israel

was in a position to understand the large body of totally unconnected commandments promulgated here and there by Yahweh as a single entity, "the Torah of Yahweh," it could regard them as a theological unity.⁵

Eichrodt supports this position. If one follows the history of Israel and the law it becomes clear that at different developmental stages different features came

¹ Von Rad, 1966, 29. Brueggemann, 2002, 218-9, mentions the development of law as a dynamic process.

² Von Rad, 1975¹, 199.

³ Von Rad, 1975², 390.

⁴ Von Rad, 1975¹, 201.

⁵ Von Rad, 1975¹, 199.

into play and found their positions within law, but every aspect was part of one inseparable entity.¹ He adds that in the time of the Deuteronomist the whole legal system was unified on the basis of the requirement to love God.² This position should be supported. It will be revisited when we discuss Paul's view on law as a single integrated entity (§3.3).

2.1.3. *Torah in Second Temple Judaism*

When we view law in NT times we are dealing with post-exilic or Second Temple Judaism. This was the time after Israel's disillusionment with their own unwillingness to listen to the prophets. They had sinned and did not want to come under God's judgement again. Although they knew law did not establish the relationship with God, they regarded it as a mechanism for keeping the relationship intact (2 Chr. 33:8). This in itself was dangerous, because it is actually God in his grace who keeps the relationship intact. The intention, however, was that obedience was not optional, but integral to the relationship. Unfortunately, as time went by, the emphasis fell more strongly on obedience through law, and law began to obtain an independent significance apart from God and his grace.³ In many cases law began to regulate the relationship. The community became increasingly law oriented. Law became the badge of membership of the Jewish people. It even became a universal law applicable to all people.⁴ The cult, together with all the accompanying worship, was according to law. This resulted in the scribes, as the authorities devoted to law, in the end taking over the leadership.⁵

Gutbrodt stresses that law need not always have lead to casuistry, evasion of inner obedience or seeking of security before God, and indeed, it was not always like that. But, there was an inner logic to this approach, easily taking hold of people.⁶ Martin Noth also stresses that Israel's acceptance of the total legal heritage, without it having had to lead to legalism, was bound to lead to the legislating of human obedience.⁷ It is thus correct that law need not necessarily have led to casuistry and externalism, and equally one should not take all NT references reflective of Pharisaism at face value. On the other hand, it would also be dangerous, and in instances incorrect, to assume simply on a rhetorical basis that these NT references to Pharisaic extremes were necessarily untrue. If it were altogether mere rhetoric, it would jeopardise the integrity of the gospel itself and probably have been inexplicable to its

¹ Eichrodt, 1978, 74. Moore, 1946, 6-9. Bruce, 1982², 28, also stresses that for Paul law referred to "the entire corpus of pentateuchal law." See also Moo, 1983, 241.

² Eichrodt, 1979, 335.

³ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1043.

⁴ Esser, 1976, 442; Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1049.

⁵ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1044; Du Rand, 1997, 280-1.

⁶ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1044. Vriezen, 1977, 435-6, stresses the NT's portrayal of Pharisaic ethics as an observance of external rules, especially in their negative form, as an externalising of ethics and casuistry. Räisänen, 1986, 29-32, sites a host of scholars, himself included, who support E.P. Sanders, 1977, 425-6, on his position that Judaism did not necessarily tend to petty legalism. There were those such as the caricature of the Pharisee in Luke 18, but they are not reflected in extant Jewish literature of the time.

⁷ Noth, 1957, 112-41.

first hearers. It is probably safer to accept degrees of legalism and casuistry, fitting well with Gutbrodt's so-called "inner logic".

In Rabbinic Judaism Torah was mostly equivalent to NT νόμος, consisting primarily of Mosaic Law, and not only of the Decalogue. Sometimes it referred to the entire Pentateuch.¹ It could also refer merely to the teaching of law. Most importantly, in Rabbinic Judaism it was accepted that God had revealed Himself finally in Torah and man could have a relationship with Him only through Torah.² It was given absolute authority in the sense that everything was created for the sake of Torah. Even God studied Torah. Not even the Messiah would bring another Torah. It is obvious that the Jewish frame of reference from the rabbinical point of view and influence was drenched in Law. Although it was not initially meant to be the cornerstone of Judaism in the OT, it gradually received a mediating position for many in Israel.

In the Judaism of the time of Christ, the study and fulfilment of the Torah were considered to be the way to righteousness and the way to life (cf. Lk. 10:28).³

Gutbrodt concludes that this mediating position, developmentally ascribed to law in Judaism, was the cause for "the hopelessness and despair to which the law gave rise in, e.g., 4 Esr. and 5 Bar."⁴ In this situation, Jesus had a twofold approach. On the one hand, he repudiated law, removing it from the mediating and almost omnipotent position where man had placed it.⁵ On the other hand, He re-affirmed its original purpose to help man to obedience (Mt. 5:17, 20).

Jesus affirms the law because it demands obedient action and is not content merely with a disposition subject to no controls. He rejects confession of Himself as Lord when it is combined with the doing of ἀνομία (Mt. 7:23). The goal of the law is action; mere knowledge of the good will of God is not enough (Lk. 10:28).⁶

Although this matter will receive more attention in the following chapters, a remark or two is called for at present. On the one hand, one should not be under the impression that Jesus' repudiation of legalism and casuistry implied a libertine morality. Equally, on the other hand, Jesus' ethos did not call for a new law – at least not in the sense in which Judaism understood Torah, i.e. as an external tutor, policeman and judge all in one, keeping the faithful in line. We will see that Paul's view on law's demise as part of that of the present evil age, did not involve the rejection of a God-honouring morality. God's will was and remains paramount in the life of the believing community, but determining his will in every new situation would not be via an external set of laws or requirements – neither old nor new. It would be born from an inner knowledge and orientation founded on a new relationship with God in Jesus Christ. It would be realised by the illumination and guidance of the Spirit in the inner being, and in and through the believing community.

¹ De Vaux, 1973, 143, states: "In later times Pentateuch was referred to as *Torah*." This is also the opinion of Kaiser, 1993, 300, 329-53.

² Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1055.

³ Esser, 1976, 442. Scroggs, 1989, 128.

⁴ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1050.

⁵ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1061.

⁶ Gutbrodt & Kleinknecht, 1967, 1063.

Jesus already set this new ethos in motion by orientating men to Himself as opposed to law. One is reminded of passages such as Jn. 7:37; 8:36; 10:7, 11, 17-18, 27-28; 14:6. However, to state the obvious, one must bear in mind that Jesus' ministry was prior to his crucifixion and resurrection, which would inaugurate the new aeon with its new ethic. Only after the advent of the Spirit would the new ethic take full effect. Keeping that in mind, it would take time to dawn on believers that their ethical stance had completely changed. Paul's position more than a decade later would obviously be one of greater fruition.

It is fundamentally important that twenty-first century readers of both the OT and the NT understand that Yahweh never intended that legalism in any form should be the foundation of Judaism. This would reduce Yahweh to being like any other god, self-serving, able to be manipulated and manmade. This was not the divine intention with Torah. It was about obedience to the God of Israel who had founded a relationship with them and sealed it with the covenant of grace.¹ E.P. Sanders has been active in this regard and should rightfully be credited for reminding NT scholarship of the pivotal position of grace in OT theology and Judaism.² He coined the obligatory element of life in response to God's gracious dealings with man in Judaism as *covenantal nomism*. We shall return to his description of covenantal nomism in a more critical fashion in § 3.1.1. What cannot be denied is that, although many were faithful to God's intentions with law, it inevitably led to widespread legalism. It could be viewed as essential for salvation, even though subordinate to grace, at least in the sense of a synergistic form of salvation.

Whatever may be said of the Jewish tendency towards legalism it must be said that the true Jew never forgot that his relationship with God was rooted in the covenant relationship...The pious Jew knew that the steps of the man who has the law of God in his heart do not falter (Ps. xxxvii. 31) and he readily made his own the expressions of Torah piety which are found in Pss. I, xi and cxix and which show the extraordinary love, which Jews had for the law, and the delight and comfort they took in observing it.³

However, this being said, the legalistic approach to salvation was wide-spread and extended into the accompanying ethics, leading to a casuistic approach to Torah-obedience. This occurred as human reflection, logical deduction, and inevitable authoritative expansions became a bigger objective than the covenantal love at its ethical basis. Israel, individuals, and parties were more than often guilty of this. Salvation and ethics are inseparable. This is why Paul is so hefty regarding the subject in Galatians.

Enough said! The point is, we cannot judge the OT's or Judaism's stance on law and salvation in terms of misconceptions within their own ranks; neither can we view Second Temple Judaism's stance on law as monolithic.⁴ We can least of all ap-

¹ W.D. Davies, 1982, 5.

² E.P. Sanders has written extensively on the subject, amongst others in: *Paul and Palistinian Judaism*, 1977; *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* 1983; *Jesus and Judaism* 1985.

³ Maher, 1976, 99.

⁴ Rajak, 1992, 9-21, is but one of many emphasising the variegated character of Judaism. Although she illustrates the point from a time well beyond Paul's, she does include adequate evidence relating to the time of his ministry.

proach Galatians as if Paul were debating against the Roman Catholic stance on justification in defence of Luther. It is fundamentally important to understand that Paul was not in any way opposing Judaism in any form¹ in his letter to the Galatians; be it Pharisaic Judaism or any of the other theological strands within Judaism. He was not concerned with defending the Christian position on salvation or ethics against Judaism.² He was writing to mainly Gentile Christians concerning what requirements (if any) Gentiles were to fulfil for full entry into and participation in the Christian community. What were they to do besides having faith in Jesus Christ in order to become children of Abraham (Gl. 3:38-29)? Was more expected of them than of Jewish Christians who were naturally born of Abraham?

3. PAUL'S VIEW ON LAW LOOKING BACK FROM THE CHRIST EVENT

Against this backdrop, we can try to determine Paul's view on νόμος before the advent of Christ, mindful of the fact that our main objective is Galatians. Not only this, but Galatians also deals with law more comprehensively and dedicatedly than any other Pauline letter. If our dating of Galatians is correct, this was probably Paul's first letter or treatise on the subject of law in Christian society, after having had at least 14 years of reflection on and experience of the matter in Gentile mission fields. It would have been on the eve of the Jerusalem council, at a time when Paul would have wanted to be as clear as possible in a situation of contingency, making use of the medium next best to a personal visit.

In view of the above, it is accepted that Paul, although his rhetoric involves emotion and subjectivity, would have done his utmost to argue according to principle. In fact, in Gl. 3:1-4:31, the section dealing with his arguments concerning the position of the law before and since the advent of Christ, Paul's theological arguments are systematic and well reasoned. With the exception of Gl. 3:1 and Gl. 4:1-20 where he expresses perplexity, he refrains from referring to how law, correctly or incorrectly, is regarded in practice. The *probatio* is the section in which Paul boils down the problem to get to the principle of the matter. We now turn to Paul's main arguments concerning law.

3.1. Paul's view on law underlines the human plight

3.1.1. *A subject with an elaborate history*

The debate on Paul's view of law and his seemingly imprecise, or even inconsistent, reference to its ongoing validity or retraction from salvation history has been a contentious matter since time immemorial. The pivotal matters in this regard relate to how Judaism itself viewed law and how Paul viewed it in hind-

¹ At this point it must be noted that for our purpose it is not necessary to go into the debate of whether one should speak of "different Judaisms" or of a "common Judaism". Neusner, 1993, 300-1, strongly champions for the view of different Judaisms. So also P.R. Davies, 1995, 145-82; Grabbe, 1992, 527. Craffert, 2000, in a thought-provoking article, makes the profound observation that the notion of a "common Judaism" is being threatened at archaeological ground level. For our purpose, it would suffice to speak of at least a pluralistic Judaism.

² Stendahl, 1976, 1-7.

sight since the advent of Christ. Thielman provides a very concise and accurate overview of Pauline scholarship's recent debate in this regard, starting with Montefiore at the end of the nineteenth century and ending with the industrious Dunn almost a century later.¹

What does Paul mean when he says that a person is justified apart from works of law? Has he pinpointed the Achilles heel of the entire Jewish religion? Has he reacted against a cold and unforgiving sector of Judaism? Has he sought to universalize his own religious experience? Or has he, in the heat of the argument, inaccurately accused the Jews of holding a teaching which they did not in fact hold?²

Thielman groups the different proponents on Paul and his view on works of law into four strands of thought.³ The *first* line of thought works on the premise that the central doctrine of Jewish soteriology was righteousness through works. Paul vehemently attacked this notion, emphasising man's inability to fulfil the law. Grundmann is prominent in these circles, arguing that the average person in the Rabbinical Judaism of Paul's day was not too concerned about transgression in a lesser form bringing his righteousness into jeopardy. His concern was with the bigger picture. In this way law became more a revealer of sin and bearer of a curse than being sin's antidote.⁴ This emphasised the human plight, even of the Jewish people, in the aeon before the advent of Christ. The *second* line of thought, which was initiated by Montefiore, claimed that Paul's attack on works of law, if aimed at the Rabbinical Judaism of his time, was unintelligible. Therefore, it was probably aimed at another of the many strands of Judaism operative in his time. His guess was Diaspora Judaism drenched in Hellenistic thought.⁵ Importantly, he acknowledges the multi-dimensionality of the Judaism of Paul's day. The *third* line of thought is quite close to the previous one. Albert Schweitzer features prominently in this quarter of the field, laying heavy emphasis on Paul's religion as heavily coloured by apocalyptic Judaism. He maintains, however, that Paul does this, not because of pessimism, but because he shares the view of apocalyptic literature that law would have no role to play in the Messianic era.⁶ These first three lines of reasoning are each aligned with a Jewish view on law of some kind, and in varying degrees, emphasise the human plight in the old aeon. A *fourth* train of thought was introduced by Ulrich Wilckens who contended that, although the Jewish background, especially Jewish apocalyptic, was extremely important for an understanding of Paul and law, it was not enough. Christology had to be introduced into the equation.⁷ Law had not simply come to an end because it was expected by Jewish apocalyptic to come to an

¹ Thielman, 1989, 2-27.

² Thielman, 1989, 1.

³ Thielman, 1989, 25.

⁴ Grundmann, 1933, 57-60.

⁵ Montefiore made three important contributions to the debate. In his first article: "First Impressions of Paul," *JQR* 6, 1894, 429, he found Paul unintelligible against the rabbinical Judaism of his time and noted that Paul's self-contradiction was because of the different scenarios in which he had to deal with law and salvation (432-5). In his second article: "Rabbinical Judaism and the Epistles of St. Paul," *JQR* 13, 1901, 167-8, he acknowledged that there were various strands of Judaism and that Paul would be more intelligible against this variegated Judaism. In the third contribution: 1914, 92, he even acknowledged the influence of Jewish apocalyptic.

⁶ Schweitzer, 1931, 205-26.

⁷ Wilckens, 1959, 284-5.

end in the Messianic era. It had come to an end because salvation was now available only in Christ. Since Paul's conversion Christ became for him what law had been for him in his pre-Christian days, namely soteriological in nature. E.P. Sanders took this more christological interpretation¹ to its logical climax.²

Sanders' point of departure was the refutation of the notion that Second Temple Judaism was characterised by an absence of grace and founded on a meritorious soteriology of works, which led to legalism being rife in Israel.³ As we have seen, he is correct in refuting this notion. He develops the notion of *covenantal nomism*. In terms of this concept salvation in Judaism was founded on God's gracious election of Israel and his resulting covenant with them. Salvation was assumed until the human beneficiary intently abandoned this position in order to live outside this divinely initiated relationship. The obligation on the beneficiary to live in accordance with the moral requirements of Yahweh was in no way meritorious. It was merely the covenantal way of confirming his/her "being in" and willingly "staying in" the covenantal relationship. Thus grace, election and covenant, and not law, constituted the relationship. Within this relationship, Yahweh mercifully provided for forgiveness and restoration via atoning sacrifices, and not by way of good deeds. Sanders describes this view on law and salvation as *covenantal nomism*.⁴ From this point of view Sanders rejects any attempt to understand Paul's theology as an analysis of Jewish legalism. Paul was, according to Sanders, less concerned about the roots of Judaism than about the fact that Christ was now revealed as the Saviour of the world. Sanders, therefore rejects the possibility that Paul had a critique of justification by law as baseline to his theology in any form. He was much rather concerned about participation in Christ, which was a new soteriological position free from the notion of legal justification.⁵ He argues from Phlp. 3:4-12 that there were actually two ways to obtaining righteousness, namely the one based on election and the works of law, and the other – which was the correct one – based on participation in Christ through faith in his atoning death and resurrection.⁶ It was not as though the Jew could not attain righteousness based on works⁷ and therefore needed Christ's atonement. In other words, that they had a plight and that Christ had become the long awaited solution. Paul himself claimed to have achieved the legal terms. It was rather about a new sote-

¹ Thielman, 1989, 25.

² A detailed critique of Sanders' position cannot be done here for the mere fact that the scope of this study does not allow for it. The brevity with which Sanders is treated here should, however, not be understood as a reflection either of the importance or the diligence of his labour, neither of the respect for his labours.

³ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 419-22. Other scholars, like Von der Osten-Sacken, 1987, have been writing on the incorrect understanding of Torah-spirituality for many years.

⁴ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 75, 236, 422-3; 1985, 335-40.

⁵ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 502f.

⁶ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 442-7, 497-502; Allison, 1987, 57-78, is a most read worthy article. See his strong emphasis on only Christ being the entrance into God's kingdom (73-4).

⁷ E.P. Sanders, 1983, 29-43, accepts that this position goes against the grain of the common understanding of Gl. 3:10; 5:3; and 6:13. His conviction is that the common understanding is based on the incorrect assumption that Judaism was based on meritorious works. He motivates his position by referring to Phlp. 3:6; 1 Th. 3:13; 5:23; and 1 Cor. 1:8, according to which he sees Paul as being convinced that the law could be sufficiently kept.

riological paradigm having been introduced, namely of participation in Christ, because it was inclusive also of the Gentiles.¹ Arguing this way, Paul's view on law was not from plight to solution, but from solution to plight.

In short, this is what is wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity.²

It is the Gentile question and the exclusivism of Paul's soteriology which dethrone the law, not a misunderstanding of it or a view predetermined by his background.³

Paul's seemingly conflicting remarks about law should be seen against the backdrop of his motivation for acceptance of the new paradigm and not as a refutation of, to Sanders' mind, a non-existent legalistic approach to salvation. In Galatians, for instance, Paul was not opposed to doing of the law (therefore Gl. 6:15). He was not arguing against a Jewish notion that the whole law had to be kept to obtain salvation, but against Jewish Christians wanting to reinstate the requirements by which one became Jewish, as entrance requirements into Christianity.⁴ It is an understatement that Sanders' work had a profound influence on Pauline scholarship. It was both highly acclaimed⁵ and respectfully criticised.⁶ We now reflect on the main points of criticism of Sanders' position.

Firstly, despite being willing to accept that Judaism was not devoid of mercy and not founded on the principle of merit, scholars criticised his view of Second Temple Judaism as *too one-dimensional*. Jacob Neusner, despite his admiration for Sanders' attempt to rectify the position of grace in Judaism and his intention to help NT scholarship rid itself of earlier anti-Judaistic prejudices,⁷ finds Sanders' methodology flawed. He accuses Sanders of imposing his view of Paul's religion onto Judaism; of searching for supporting evidence in documents not necessarily dealing with the issues from Pauline themes, such as covenantal nomism, election, atonement, etc;⁸ and of not distinguishing between documents and using them merely to provide him with decontextualised extractions supporting his position on Paul and law.⁹ He also touches on the criticism of many that Sanders did not distinguish between different Rabbinic views.¹⁰

¹ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 497.

² E.P. Sanders, 1977, 552.

³ E.P. Sanders, 1977, 497.

⁴ E.P. Sanders, 1983, 18-20.

⁵ Dahl, 1978, 153; Caird, 1978, 543; Horbury, 1978/9, 118. It should be acknowledged that these scholars were also critical of aspects of Sanders' position, as will become clear.

⁶ Naming but Neusner, 1978; Schreiner, 1984, 151-60; and 1985, 245-78; Hooker, 1982, 47-56; Allison, 1987, 57-78; Du Toit, 1988, 71-80; Thielman, 1989, 16-20 (actually his whole book); Seifrid, 1994, 73-95; Das, 2001, especially 1-11.

⁷ Neusner, 1978, 177, 180, 190.

⁸ Neusner, 1978, 180-1, stresses that the Judaism onto which Sanders imposes Paul is also limited to the Tannaic literature of Rabbinic Judaism. This literature itself should be understood against a wider backdrop of Mishnaic literature, because it is limited in its ability to reflect theological argumentation. See also Vorster, 1997, 426-34, for a very concise overview of this literature.

⁹ Neusner, 1978, 182.

¹⁰ Allison, 1987, 62, is but one of many to emphasise the point that the Qumran community for one, although covenantalists, believed in a new covenant of which they were the only true members. They also looked forward to the time of Israel's ultimate salvation. Du Toit, 1988, 78-9, also illustrates Qumran's different view from Sanders. Du

In this setting it is gratuitous to ask for an explanation of Sanders' constant reference to "the Rabbis," as though the century and a half which he claims to discuss produced no evidence of individuals and ideas having distinct histories.¹

In line with a growing sense, that Sanders' position is an overstatement a most needed project has been launched to reach a clearer understanding of Second Temple Judaism's notion of justification.² This project is a reaction to Sanders' and the so-called *New Perspective's* use of Second Temple literature. A magnitude of writings from different trends in Judaism are thoroughly examined by specialists in the field. Carson summarises and concludes as follows:

Several of the scholars found that at least parts of their respective corpora could be usefully described as reflecting covenantal nomism. One conclusion to be drawn, then, is not that Sanders³ is wrong everywhere, but he is wrong when he tries to establish that his category is right everywhere.³

Clearly, in view of more available information,⁴ covenantal nomism is reductionist and misleading. It is misleading for the fact that its application is too un-discerning over too broad a range of literature. The term is also applied as if covenantal nomism and merit theology are theological opposites. It might have been nearer the truth to regard merit and grace theology as opposites.⁵

Secondly, did Judaism really think humankind could fulfil all the requirements of law? The effect of Sanders' thesis is that it minimises, even almost erases, the plight of the Jew and all humankind in the old aeon. It begs the question why Paul would refer to the old aeon as evil (Gl. 1:4)? Why would salvation in Christ be at all necessary if entrance into Judaistic covenantal nomism could provide salvation? Without much ado, I refer to Das' very appropriate conclusion.

Those under the Mosaic law are subject to its curse for any infraction of its strict requirements... The situation for the law-observant Jew is no different than for "Gentile sinners." "For if a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the law" (Gl. 3:21). The curse of the law demonstrates that those under the law are entrapped with the Gentiles in "the present evil age" (Gl. 1:4). The answer to humanity's plight in this dire cosmic situation is Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for our sins" (1:4). What Christ did would have been meaningless if it were possible for people to find a right relationship with God through the law (2:21).⁶

Lastly, does Sanders not, in his effort to emphasise the discontinuity between the Judaistic religious pattern of covenantal nomism and the Pauline religious pattern of "participation theology", in actual fact dislocate Christianity from its Jewish roots? Should one not acknowledge some form of overlap between the

Toit, 1996, 76, stresses that with regard to Qumran both the emphases on grace and obedience as necessary for salvation are upheld, and concludes: "a strong case here for a synergistic soteriology cannot be denied."

¹ Neusner, 1978, 183,

² I refer to the monumental research by an eminent group of concerned scholars reflected in Carson, O'Brien & Seifrid (eds.), 2001. Unfortunately, the second volume dealing with the specifically Pauline bearing has not yet appeared.

³ Carson, 2001, 543.

⁴ In a review of the above volume J.A. Sanders, 2002¹, 154, reminds scholarship of the fact that more scrolls are available today than when Sanders formulated his point of view.

⁵ Carson, 2001, 543-4.

⁶ Das, 2001, 169-70.

two positions?¹ If Sanders is correct in his assertion, Horbury is justified in saying that, from Sanders' position, Paul and Judaism "pass like ships in the night."² There is no connection. Obviously, this would also imply the dislocation of the Old and New Testaments: truly impossible!

Sanders should, however, be credited for correcting a widely held misconception in NT scholarship that Judaism was primarily a religion of legalism and devoid of grace. However, he has gone too far down this alley by dissolving Israel's plight before its God and making salvation as participation in Christ spring up almost from out of the blue.

In the next paragraph we will attempt to illustrate from the OT and from literature of the Second Temple Period, the divine move from the one aeon to the next as a move from the Jewish (and, indeed humankind's) plight to the christological solution. Hopefully it will become clear that Judaism, throughout the OT and the period of the second temple, logically and theologically called for a solution to their plight.

3.1.2. From plight to solution in the Old Testament and Judaism³

3.1.2.1. *The Old Testament emphasises humanity's plight*

Undoubtedly, the OT depicts humanity's plight right from the primeval period reflected in Gn. 1-11. Harrison says of this prologue to the Pentateuch that:

The reader is furnished with an account of the creation of the world and of man, the incidence of sin as a universal concept, and the corollary that by definition it must always stand under divine judgement.⁴

Von Rad emphasises that the stories of the fall, Cain and Noah illustrate the ever-widening gap sin brings between God and man. He observes that each story ends with God being merciful, except for the last story of man's iniquity, i.e. of Babel. God disperses man into different nations and away from his sight. However, this story involving the entire humanity dovetails with the *Heilsgeschichte*⁵ of God's gracious calling of Abraham in whom He would bless all nations.

[The Yahwist] gives the aetiology of all aetiologies in the Old Testament and becomes at this point a true prophet, for he proclaims the distant goal of the sacred history effected by God in Israel to be the bridging of the cleft between God and all mankind; and he announces it neither as being rationally grounded nor as being already comprehensible in its details.⁶

¹ Hooker, 1982, 48. It is widely accepted that the first Christians identified very strongly with the Jewish people, despite obvious differences. P.G.R. De Villiers, 1987, 26; Minear, 1960, 70-104; Breytenbach, 1997, 381-3.

² Horbury, 1978/9, 118.

³ For the discussion of this subject I am indebted to Thielman, 1989, 28-45, for the very simple, but handy layout with which he deals with the subject. While making use of his scheme it will hopefully become clear that I have not simply imitated him.

⁴ Harrison, 1977, 565.

⁵ The term that was strongly advocated by Oscar Cullmann after World War II, although initially introduced by J.C.K. von Hofmann and Adolf Schlatter. See Marshall, 1988, 612-3.

⁶ Von Rad, 1972¹, 24, 152-4. Brueggemann, 1982, 104, comments that Gn. 1-11 "ends with a scattering." The earth is populated, but none of the population is listening. God remains gracious by calling Abraham and the

But, man's plight is not only about separation from God. It is also about deception (Gn. 3:6,12), fear (Gn. 3:10), suffering, sorrow and pain (Gn. 3:15-16), domination (Gn. 3:16), burdensome toil (Gn. 3:17), and disarray in nature (Gn. 3:18). Kidner refers to the human plight as "paradise lost".¹ Despite God's gracious dealings with the patriarchs (Gn. 12-50), we find them being bold before God (16), cunning (25, 27, 30) and resentful of one another (34, 37, 38). This even continues after the divine intervention when Israel was liberated from Egyptian slavery as Exodus and Numbers abundantly attest.² In fact, it is axiomatic that the wilderness period in Israel's exodus was marred by the motif of murmuring.³ Throughout Leviticus and Numbers, emphasising ritual, purity, sanctification, sacrificial offerings and a fatal curse on sinners leading to death, the plight is indirectly underlined.⁴ With regard to the Day of Atonement, central to Israel's religion, Wenham writes:

The need for the nation as a whole to be purged of sin is portrayed vividly here. The rites in the holy of holies were unseen by the general public. The scapegoat ceremony was seen by all and could **be understood by all**. *It was a powerful visual aid that demonstrated the reality of sin and the need to eliminate it.*⁵

Moving on to the time from the entrance into Canaan to the deportations and exiles to Assyria and Babylon, disobedience becomes very prominent. Despite God's grace and patience, this section of Israel's history ends in God's curse being executed. The prophets rose to the occasion, but not the people of God. Amos preaches judgement over God's people (Am. 4:6-12).⁶ Hosea frequently describes the iniquitous Israel with the imagery of "whoredom".⁷ Referring to sayings with which Hosea describes Israel's iniquities, Wolff follows with:

The context in which these sayings in each case appear indicates how Hosea's God, in profound sorrow, laments the apostasy of his people; how he himself suffers under the distress their estrangement prepares for them....Yahweh, having declared his judgement, laments over the impending disaster.⁸

barren Sarah in the time of identifiable history (105). The whole creation is in expectancy to see if Abraham will listen. He emphasises humanity's plight that will only be answered to at Pentecost (Ac. 2) (104).

¹ Kidner, 1967, 68-72. Although the plight and lament concerning sin is very prominent in the OT, the plight involves much more. It includes the difficulties man in general and especially man as Yahweh's covenantal partner faces.

² Zimmerli, 1972, 147-56.

³ Childs, 1974, 254-64, provides interesting reading on this motif. He warns that it was not all negative. There were times of legitimate need in which petitioning and God's gracious provision were highlighted. However, Fensham, 1977, 91, emphasises the dominance of murmuring representing Israel's forgetfulness of God's kindness.

⁴ G.J. Wenham, 1979, 25-32. One should be remindful of the fact that the animals brought as sacrifices substituted the sinner who was being atoned. See G.J. Wenham, 1981, 29-34.

⁵ G.J. Wenham, 1979, 237. Maarsingh, 1974, 131, 140, stresses that the Day of Atonement emphasised both death as judgement on the sinner who was not atoned for, and Yahweh's provision of a new beginning for his people. In retrospect from a NT position, this illustrates the movement from plight in the OT to God's permanent solution in Christ.

⁶ Mays, 1969, 7-8,12, describes the prophet's message as God's final "no" to his people. The prophet's message entailed the end of salvation-history. Zimmerli, 1990, 75-6, draws attention to the fact that, while the rest of the prophets emphasise "the Day of Yahweh" as part of the salvation tradition, Am. 5:18-20 portrays it as a day of judgement.

⁷ Wolff, 1974, xxvii.

⁸ Wolff, 1974, xxviii.

This divine lament becomes heart rendering in Is. 5:1-7. God is devastated by his people's unfaithfulness. It is not his impotence that caused their ultimate exile, but their guilt.¹ Von Rad emphasises the conscientious and caring labour that the owner of the vineyard put into his vineyard, but that it had proved fruitless and disappointing.² Jeremiah describes Judah's plight as having gone completely beyond human capability to restoration. He says it is as impossible as for an Ethiopian to change his skin or a leopard his spots (Jr. 13:23). Sin is engraved into Judah's heart [of stone]³ with a pen of iron and a diamond point (Jr. 17:1).

[D]eep-seated wickedness caused by centuries of schooling and repeated excursions into idolatry had made evil virtually a fixed feature of her life and behavior.⁴

Equally, Ezk. 16, 20 and 23 portrays the inability of God's people to do his will. No matter what He did for them, they reacted with rebellion and idolatry.⁵

Wisdom literature underlines the plight of man, especially of the believer, in a variety of ways. In Ecclesiastes we find a profound disillusionment with life. Loader emphasises that Koheleth describes life viewed from the human stance as essentially meaningless.⁶ He describes life as abundant in toil and meagre in reward (Ec. 1:3; 2:22f.). Justice is overshadowed by injustice (Ec. 3:16) and men are placed in positions of power over one another (Ec. 5:7; 8:9). The downtrodden have no one to comfort them (Ec. 4:1), and the future holds no promise, because nobody knows what lies ahead (Ec. 8:7; 9:1; 10:14).

Behind the problem of the future, there lies for Koheleth the still more difficult question of death which casts its shadow over every meaningful interpretation of life.⁷

Of course, the Psalms particularly illustrate the plight of both the individual and the community.⁸ Man's wickedness from birth is attested to at instances such as Ps. 51:7 and 58:4, although the latter does not refer to all individuals, but to the wicked whom the poet has in mind. However, the reference in Ps. 58:2-3, 6

¹ Kaiser, 1983, 93-4.

² Von Rad, 1975², 151.

³ Van Selms, 1972, 228, like most commentaries, notes that the "tables of the heart" is used here in two senses. It alludes to the Decalogue that was written on tables of stone, but more precisely to the fact that their hearts had grown to be cold and hard as stone.

⁴ Thompson, 1980, 374.

⁵ Von Rad, 1975², 226.

⁶ Loader, 1984, 20-1.

⁷ Von Rad, 1972², 228.

⁸ Sabourin, 1974, 215-8 and 295-7, provides ample examples of both the individual and communal laments in the Psalms. Brueggemann wrote two very interesting articles: *CBQ* 47, 1985¹, 28-46; and *CBQ* 47, 1985², 395-415. Especially the second article stresses the integral part pain plays in the unfolding of Israel's walk with God. It is not about avoiding pain at all cost, but about accepting its being endemic to the relationship with Yahweh and embracing that pain (1985², 398/9). This embrace, however, is not a submissive acceptance of one's (unalterable) fate, but rather a making known to God of one's plight, being sure that He has heard, and hopefully waiting on Him to resolve the situation. Gerstenberger, 1963, 393-408, stresses that the laments are acts of relentless hope that the current plight is not outside the reach of Yahweh's gracious dealings with his people. This is obviously important for our current subject, the plight – solution model in the OT. Brueggemann, 1985¹, 43, stresses very profoundly: "I suggest that this question of pain experienced as personal hurt and expressed in the lament psalms and in the public outcry that leads to liberation (cf. Exod. 2:23-25), is the main question of Old Testament faith."

to beings who charm the wicked into their wrongdoing alludes to the idea of a supra-human origin of sin with which man struggles to deal successfully.¹ In Ps. 143:2 the individual pronounces his being unjust in the presence of God. Ps. 51:9 confirms the poet's notion that only divine intervention could cleanse him from sin. Even the so-called Psalms of innocence, e.g., Ps. 26, do not attest to absolute innocence and self-righteousness.² In fact, Ps. 26:11 implies sin on the part of the poet because he pleads for mercy in God's judgements, and earlier on (vs. 6) refers to a context of ritual cleansing. One must assume that a very specific context, to which the reader does not have access, is applicable. He is quite sure of his innocence regarding a specific situation.³

Nevertheless, Eichrodt is very convincing with regard to the role of law in intensifying the plight of sinful man. He argues that semantically guilt was often not distinguished from sin. In many cases, the same root (אָוֶן) is used for both terms, despite the existence of a word for guilt, אָשָׁם, which is used predominantly with regard to restitution.⁴ Equally important, the root רָשָׁע, which has a forensic purport, is often used to refer to religious guilt. Israel's conviction, according to Eichrodt, moved from an objective view on sin and guilt as demonic involvement, to a more subjective view where man, as individual and as clan, was personally responsible for his deeds. This called for law as a protection of the individual from damages,⁵ as well as a system of placing blame, retribution and reparations. Because it was Yahweh who implemented law to protect his people, any infringement of the law made one guilty before God. In this way, law played a primary role in enforcing guilt upon God's people.⁶ The introduction of punishments for certain misdeeds enhanced the notion of law emphasising man's plight, and indeed exacerbating it. It also had the effect of discolouring the religious condition of a personal relationship with Yahweh with juristic and indeed legalistic thinking of balancing shortfalls with good deeds.⁷

But the attempt to ease the burden of guilt-feelings in these ways could bring no real relief. Instead it revenged itself by the uncertainty which attaches to all human arithmetic. Side by side with the proud sense of being able to ward off guilt by strict obedience to the Law there inevitably arises the doubt whether what has been done is really enough in face of God's incorruptible holiness. Thus those who seek protection from God's wrath under wholly inadequate coverings find themselves all the more the slaves of the sense of guilt; and the Law becomes a taskmas-

¹ Weiser, 1962, 431.

² Sabourin, 1974, 232.

³ Weiser, 1962, 242-4; N.H. Ridderbos, 1962, 270-1. One is slightly uncomfortable with the assessment of Eichrodt, 1979, 392, that Ps. 26 reflects a weakening of the sense of sin, which the prophets tried to restore, although one must acknowledge that there was such a tendency.

⁴ Eichrodt, 1979, 413, cites Gn. 43:9; 44:32; 20:9. Brown, Driver & Briggs, 1953, 307 provides more examples.

⁵ Brueggemann, 1992¹, 78, stresses: "We completely misunderstand if we imagine that the laws of the Pentateuch are rules for order. They are, rather, acts of passionate protest and vision whereby Israel explores in detail how the gifts and vision of the exodus rescue can be practiced in Israel on an ongoing basis as the foundation for society. As God acted in response to a cry of hurt, the law is an attempt to devise institutional power arrangements in which those in authority, those who have legitimate power, those who 'know good and evil,' are responsive to hurt and attentive to the dangers of exploitation."

⁶ Eichrodt, 1979, 414-6.

⁷ Eichrodt, 1979, 422.

ter from whose tyranny men can be freed *only by the One who discloses the full depth of their guilt, but also took the curse of the Law upon himself.*¹

God's gracious intervention in providing man with the law so that the iniquities could be averted was not successful. The history of Israel's plight illustrates the point sufficiently. Man's plight of sinfulness is not always described in terms of specifics. There is ample evidence of sin being equal to violation of law.

In the Septuagint text of the prophets, the text which Paul apparently used, Israel and Judah are reprimanded twenty-one times for forgetting, dealing impiously with, rejecting, not desiring to obey, and not keeping God's law.²

The fall of the city and the exile of many of its citizens marked a watershed in Judean history and have left *fissure marks radiating* throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. The 'day of judgment' heralded in prophetic pronouncements had not just dawned, it had burst on Judah with immense ferocity.³

Thus, the predicament of the people of God, and indeed of all nations, of the inability to live in obedience to Yahweh, and therefore living under his righteous judgement, should be clear from this bird's eye-view of the OT. Man's inability to live a righteous life is in tandem with God's gracious interventions. The OT confirms that only divine intervention can save man from his plight in the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Man is not possibly capable of this, neither with, nor without the help of law.

This ruthless diagnosis of the sinful constitution of Man, however, makes his situation hopeless. Of all the evils which oppress him, sin is now recognized as the most serious, and the breaking of its spell *becomes the most important question in life*. Such an assessment of the situation, moreover, disposes of the attempt of the Law to create a world of righteousness and holiness. Indeed the whole history of the nation showed how little the Law could prevent rebellion against God's will, but instead inevitably exposed the real depth of hostility to God. *The only course now left open was to turn one's eyes to the eschatological new creation of God's people, which would be able to heal the irremediable rift between Man and God.*⁴

3.1.2.2. OT eschatology looking forward to Yahweh's solution to the plight

Now that we have emphasised the plight of God's people in OT times, it is necessary to reflect the hope for a solution made possible by Yahweh in his grace. Despite the plight and times of rampant pessimism, the OT as a whole never succumbed to a perpetuating spiral of pessimism. As Von Rad illustrated in our previous section, the primeval history reflected in Gn. 1-11 presents us with a gracious God who overcomes his disappointments in man's recurring iniquity with repeated shows of mercy; to such an extent, that Gn. 1-11 should be seen as introductory to the rest of God's salvation-history as reflected throughout the remainder of scripture.⁵

Although the theme of hope is recurrent throughout the OT,⁶ the pattern of plight to solution is nowhere more profoundly illustrated than among the proph-

¹ Eichrodt, 1979, 422-3.

² Thielman, 1989, 33. He cites these instances that are not all repeated here.

³ Miller & Hayes, 1986, 416.

⁴ Eichrodt, 1979, 390. Also Pretorius, 1981, 136, 139, who remarks that even with regard to kingship there was a growing feeling that human initiative and ability was not enough to restore Israel. Westerholm, 1997, 154-7.

⁵ Brueggemann, 1992, 78-81, correctly suggests that the themes of hurt and hope are found throughout Torah.

⁶ Walke, 1988, 123-39, in a riveting article on Yahweh's covenants with Israel, investigates the notions of unconditionality and conditionality; that of promise and obligation; of theological certainty and moral quality; etc. He stresses that Yah-

ets. We limit ourselves to only some of the main prophetic and apocalyptic themes, bearing in mind Moltmann's distinction mentioned earlier.¹

Amos exhorts the people of Israel as God's people to mend their ways (Am. 5:14-15). He expresses the hope, because Yahweh is no national god who dutifully bows to the whims of his people, that He will show mercy to a *remnant* with whom, by implication, He will make a new beginning. Amos seems to express the notion that Yahweh, despite Israel's sin, still has the will to be their God, and this offers a foundation for hope.² It must be added, though, that although the concept of a remnant was widely used, both pessimistically and optimistically, it only obtained a fixed theological content of hope, divine preservation and salvation in the exile period (Is. 46:3f.). In Is. 45:20 it is broadened to include even individuals from the nations who turn away from idolatry to serve Yahweh.³ Ezra and Nehemia (Ezr. 9:8,15; Neh.1:2f.), at the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE,⁴ apply the remnant to the returning exiles.⁵ Whilst the date of Zechariah is debatable, it is widely accepted that at least Zch. 9-14 reflects the Greek period at the end of the fourth and more to the beginning of the third century BCE.⁶ If we accept this, this apocalyptic section also reflects the hope of a remnant associated with the Day of the Lord (Zch. 13:8-14:2).

The *Day of the Lord* is a very prominent eschatological theme of hope for the expected future salvation⁷. Walters and Milne summarise it well:

Israel's experience of God as saviour in the past projected her faith forward in anticipation of his full and final salvation in the future. Precisely because Yahweh has shown himself to be the Lord of all, creator and ruler of the whole earth, and because he is a righteous and faithful God, he will one day effect his total victory over his foes and save his people from all their ills (Is. 43:11-21; Dt. 9:4-6; Ezk. 36:22-23). In the earlier period this hope of salvation centres more upon immediate historic intervention for the vindication of Israel (cf. Gn. 49; Dt. 33; Nu. 23f.). In the prophetic period it finds expression in terms of a 'Day of Yahweh' in which judgement would combine with deliverance (Is. 24:19f.; 25:6-8; Joel 2:1f., 28-32; Am. 5:18f.; 9:11f.). The experience of the Exile

weh's gracious interventions and providential acts, despite Israel's iniquity, "allowed man to live confidently and to follow God in hope (127). Equally, he adds, Israel recurrently disqualified itself from full participation in the blessings of the covenant. This placed the nation under a curse instead of a blessing. He continues: "The prophets of the exile foresaw an escape from this dilemma. In the name of Yahweh, they announced that Yahweh would grant Israel a new covenant in place of the old treaty. This covenant would contain the substance of the treaty – the eternal law of Yahweh – but not its form. Instead of having the form of a unilateral treaty depending on Israel's obedience, it would take the form of a grant, like the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Yahweh would put his law in Israel's heart" (136). See also McCready, 1988, 225. Certainly this underlines the plight-solution pattern. Brueggemann, 1992², 81, emphasises the prominence of the theme of hurt and hope in the prophets. Although we will not discuss the Psalms in this regard, Childs, 1979, 517-23, refers to the Psalms as a corpus of eschatological literature.

¹ See my Ch. 2 at §4.2.6.2

² Mays, 1969, 102. Günther & Krienke, 1978, 249, make mention of the vagueness of this hope in Amos. Bright, 1953, 71-97, writes extensively on this subject with regard to Isaiah, and remarks: "The reader of Isaiah senses at once that denunciation and doom are balanced there by a glorious hope (83)." See also Brueggemann, 1992², 192-7.

³ Günther & Krienke, 1978, 249-50. See also Zph. 2:7-9 and Van Der Woude, 1978, 117-20. Ackroyd, 1968, 115-7, also stresses this point with regard to Ezekiel.

⁴ Fensham, 1982, 9-16.

⁵ Fensham, 1982, 151.

⁶ Baldwin, 1972, 62-6. Harrison, 1977, 950-7, also provides an overview of the debate.

⁷ Bright, 1953, 164-70. With regard to the Sion tradition as eschatological theme of hope, refer to my Ch. 2.

gave concrete imagery and a concrete setting for the expression of this hope as a new exodus (Is.43:14-16; 48:20f.; 51:9f.; cf. Je. 31:31-34; Ezk. 37:21-28; Zch 8:7-13); but the disappointing and limited results of the restoration projected the hope forward again and transmuted it into what has been termed the transcendental-eschatological (Is. 64:1f.; 65:17f.; 66:22), the hope of the 'olam habba', the new world at the end of the present age in which God's sovereign rule and righteous character would be manifested among all the nations.¹

The hoped for future restoration of Israel is very impressively presented in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel as the *renewal of man's inner being*. It is even presented in terms creating the allusion of a new Exodus (Ezk. 20:32-44).² Jr. 31:31-34, after reflecting on man's rebelliousness, his inability to change his sinful inner being, and the resultant inevitable, looming doom (Jr. 2:22; 3:10; 13:23; 17:1), envisions the intention of Yahweh to re-equip Israel to do his will.³

I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest... For I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more. (31:33-34).

In Ezekiel it is elaborated with Yahweh's promise of a new heart and spirit (Ezk. 36:24-32), the heart referring to man's will and personality. Spirit (רוּחַ) in Ezk. 36:26 takes the meaning of a new sense of ethical purpose in man's inner being.⁴ The heart being the most important organ and the seat of man's reason, will and feelings – the centre of his decisions⁵ – had to be divinely recreated in order to be positively disposed to Yahweh's wishes and encouragement.⁶ The spirit in this case seems very closely connected with the Spirit of Yahweh Himself, so that it is not merely about man receiving a renewed urgency of purpose, but really being endowed with Yahweh's Spirit.⁷ In short, Ezekiel envisions a day when Yahweh will intervene in man's world of rebellion in which he has separated himself from God, so as to renew man's inner being to such an extent that he will be both able, willing and enthusiastic about seeking and serving Yahweh's purposes for his life. This idea is advanced even further in Jl. 2:28-29. Of this Gowan writes:

Joel promises that the democratization of prophecy which Moses once hoped for will in fact one day occur: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29). This is what Joel now promises. No longer will one have to depend on someone else to learn the will of God, for all will have the same access to revelation. Joel's choices of subjects make sure that no one will be left out. Young and old, male and female, free and slave – all are to be included, and once the slave is mentioned one cannot say that Gentiles are excluded, even though they are not specifically mentioned.⁸

¹ Walters & Milne, 1980, 1371-2. Also J.S. Wright, 1980, 369. Mason, 1977, 413-21, and 1982, 142-9, emphasises that the editorial framework of Haggai and Zechariah indicates that the first instalment of the restoration would be the temple rebuilding.

² Ackroyd, 1968, 110.

³ Bright, 1953, 123-5, notes that this obviously heightened their hope for restoration in the future.

⁴ Eichrodt, 1970, 499.

⁵ Wolff, 1974², 40-55.

⁶ Eichrodt, 1970, 500.

⁷ Wolff, 1974, 38; Eichrodt, 1970, 500-2.

⁸ Gowan, 1986, 75. Allen, 1976, 97-9, is in complete agreement and adds that Paul, acknowledging this expansion, very expressly includes the Gentiles in Gl. 3:28.

In conclusion, it should be clear that together with the very strong emphasis on the plight of Israel in the OT, and its record of continually living contrary to God's will as expressed in the law, Israel had a very real eschatological hope of restoration. This hope, in juxtaposition to its plight, emphasised Israel's plight and its need for divine intervention of which the prophets continually reminded them that it would be realised in the Day of Yahweh.

3.1.2.3. *Second Temple Judaism still reflecting the model of plight and hope*

Although Second Temple Judaism was firmly grounded in OT theology, there was development from one period to another.¹ Different contexts have a way of placing new nuances on the same text. Though we will not elaborate on these nuances, the following is obvious and illustrates the plight-solution pattern.

- *From monarchy to messianism.* The exile dealt the monarchic ideal a heavy blow. In fact, it was rendered dysfunctional and inoperative. They were initially under governorship answerable to Persia till 332 BCE, then of Alexander the Great, followed by the Egyptians and the Syrians. The Maccabean Revolt ended this in 141 BCE.² In the time of Alexander the priestly office took charge of Jewish interests. It was especially in the period of Antiochus IV (175-164 BCE) that the priestly office rose to deal with the Jewish political governance of which the high priest was the political leader.³ The Maccabean Revolt was followed by a period of sovereignty: the period of the so-called Hasmonean Dynasty (140-63 BCE). In this period Israel experienced something of the old monarchic ideal with kings succeeding one another in familial fashion.⁴ Then came the Romans (63 BCE – 135 CE): a period of the greatest importance for NT scholarship. The dynasty ended and, although the ideal of nationalism persisted, the notion of a monarchy became a distant memory. In this void, the *messianic ideal* replaced the kingship ideal.⁵ The important point with regard to the current subject (plight-solution) is that Israel experienced the plight of religious, cultural and political oppression.⁶ However, they had the multi-dimensional hope that Yahweh would, by mediation of the Messiah, intervene in the near future to provide a solution to their plight.⁷ The Qumran community even expected two messiahs and longed for the eschatological feast when they would sit down with the priestly Messiah as well as with the Messiah of Israel, a military figure of Davidic lineage.⁸
- *Apocalyptic.* This subject having been dealt with extensively earlier on, it will not be repeated here. Suffice it to repeat that this phenomenon ex-

¹ Du Toit, 1997², 234.

² Du Toit, 1997², 231-9.

³ Du Toit, 1997², 236-7.

⁴ Du Toit, 1997², 239-42.

⁵ Du Toit, 1997², 233.

⁶ P.G.R. De Villiers, 1997, 462-5. Also P.G.R. De Villiers, 1978, 75-110.

⁷ P.G.R. De Villiers, 1997, 464-5. D.S. Russel, 1967, 144-8, elaborates on the point.

⁸ Du Rand, 1997, 296; Dumbrell, 1997, 398; J.Cook, 1997, 1120.

ploded onto the Jewish scene in this period.¹ The phenomenon emphasises the expected judgement of the unrighteous by Yahweh and the hope of eschatological salvation. It obviously stresses the plight – solution model as operative during this period. In this regard Hubbard observes:

I spoke earlier of the “apocalyptic paradigm” and argued that the primary role of eschatology and the motif of new creation within this paradigm was to enable the suffering elect of Israel to make sense of their present circumstances through the promise of ultimate redemption and vindication.²

- *Law.* As expressed earlier, law reigned supreme in this period. After the return from exile there was a fear of history repeating itself with Israel being disobedient once again, and consequently being punished. The reforms introduced by Ezra emphasised the need for total obedience. This sparked an overreaction, which led to law observance according to the letter. Ritual cleanliness, or purity,³ the observance of the Sabbath and circumcision was heavily emphasised.⁴ The Qumran community especially took this notion to its ultimate conclusion.⁴ They had lost the hope for the restoration of Israel as a nation and distrusted the high priestly office, putting their trust in the “Teacher of Righteousness” to lead them to the *eschaton*.⁵ Qumran literature emphasises man’s inability to please God and the hope that in the *eschaton* He would purify his people.⁶

It should be clear that the literature of the Second Temple period reflects the plight and solution pattern. Thielman puts it well:

In summary, both canonical and non-canonical Jewish literature from the era in which Paul lived demonstrate familiarity with a pattern of thinking about God’s dealings with Israel which runs from plight to solution. In some cases, the plight was conceived as the inability of Israel to obey God’s law and the solution was conceived in terms of a future in which Israel would be free from sin. This was certainly not the only way of thinking of God’s historical design for Israel in ancient Judaism; but it was one way, and it was current in the first century.⁷

W.O. McCready suggests:

the post-exilic writers were, in fact, successful in what they set out to do by way of implementing God’s design for the times. I hold that subsequent phases of Judaism, down to and including such groups as the Pharisees, Essenes, and Christians, at the turn of the Common Era, inherited a religious self-concept that anticipated a more glorious day for the people of YHWH. Whether their claims to be the community to introduce that glorious day were correct is not relevant here. What is important is that these later communities expected a better day,⁸ and that the source of their positive outlook has its roots in the writings of the post-exilic period.⁸

¹ D.S. Russel, 1967, 139-44.

² Hubbard, 2002, 48.

³ Du Toit, 1997², 234. Neyrey, 1986, 91-128, although dealing with the Gospel according to Mark, provides a very concise orientation of how Judaism’s purity functioned. In a later article, 1996, 80-104, Neyrey provides a very concise orientation with regard to the subject as well as influential scholars in the field.

⁴ Du Rand, 1997, 293-6.

⁵ Pretorius, 1981, 139-40.

⁶ Thielman, 1989, 36-41. In fact, Thielman illustrates from other Jewish literature of the time how the pattern of plight – solution was prominent (41-5).

⁷ Thielman, 1989, 45.

⁸ McCready, 1988, 224.

3.1.2.4. *Paul's move from plight to solution as reflected in Galatians*

One can assume that Paul, a product of the latter half of the Second Temple period, would think on these subjects in terms of plight and solution. He experienced the Christophany and formed his theology, christology and soteriology in this period. He wanted to make himself clear to believers who had been influenced by the theological views of the time. I believe this assumption correlates with the arguments Paul uses in Galatians.

- The contrast Paul introduces between *present evil age* (1:4) and *new creation* (6:15) is an explicit reflection of the movement from the human plight in the present evil age, to the solution provided in the dispensation of the eschatological new creation. He explicitly states that Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins to deliver the believers from the present evil age (Gl. 1:3-5). Man's plight is depicted as being in the grip of sin (Gl. 3:22). Despite the gift and presence of law, man could not loosen the grip of sin. Divine intervention and deliverance of a different order was needed. This eschatological new order was above circumcision, and, for that matter, above law. No longer did law matter, but new creation (Gl. 6:15) became the order of the day. In the advent of Christ and faith in Him a movement had taken place from plight to solution.
- Paul depicts the movement from plight to solution as from bondage to freedom. In the context of circumcision¹ Paul writes of false brethren who came to spy out their freedom in order to bring them into bondage again (Gl. 2:4), the latter being in contrast to the truth of the gospel. At the very least, circumcision and dietary laws, if not law as a whole, are portrayed as enslavers in opposition to freedom in Christ. Once again, a movement from plight to solution had been effected in Christ.
- Nowhere is the plight of sinful man depicted so tragically, and the eschatological solution so profoundly in terms of the covenantal promises, as in Gl. 3:10-14. Man's life before the advent of Christ was cursed. Israel was expected to live according to every precept of the law. Paul expressly states:

Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them (Gl. 3:10)

Paul's profound emphasis on grace in Galatians in contrast to the earlier experience of curse is expressive of the notion that in Christ a movement from plight to solution had been effected. Du Toit correctly refers to Paul's references to his Damascus experience as reflections of divine grace.² In Gl. 1:15 Paul writes: "But when *he who had set me apart* before I was born, and *had called me through his grace was pleased* to reveal his Son to me" (ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεός] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί).

¹ Titus not being compelled to be circumcised (Gl. 2:3); the division of missionary labour between circumcised and uncircumcised (Gl. 2:7-9); and Peter's withdrawal from the uncircumcised's table, for fear of the circumcision party (Gl. 2:11-12).

² Du Toit, 1996, 73-4.

Commentators stress that his use of the verb εὐδόκησεν (“he was well pleased”) and the substantival participles ἀφορίσας (“who ordained”) and καλέσας (“who called”), together with God as subject, indicate the basis of his ministry.¹ His whole ministry is thoroughly drenched in grace. The verb εὐδόκησεν is indicative of the Damascus incident as an exclusively divine event without any human foundation.² In his undisputed letters

Paul refers in no less than nine different contexts to his Damascus encounter as an experience of grace. In fact, grace became almost a name-tag by which means one could recognise a Pauline reference to his Damascus experience.³

He was fundamentally, even painfully aware of his own indebtedness to God for the grace endowed to him. In Gl. 1:13-14 he reiterates his indebtedness at the time of his calling, his being a persecutor of the church, and his choice to be faithful to the traditions of his fathers (Gl. 1:14) rather than accepting the Son, subsequently revealed to him on the road to Damascus (Gl. 1:12,16). Having committed such horrendous sin against Jesus, and then being elected to turn diametrically and become an apostle of the once rejected Jesus, was a profound deed of divine grace.

Grace provided the solution to the mystery of Damascus. Paul's theology grew out of a real-life encounter. It was the experience of the radicality of grace that led to a theology which took grace radically seriously.⁴

The pre-Christian Paul's spirituality was drenched in and defined by law. For him it was the expression of God's will. He regarded law-righteousness as necessary in order to be acceptable to God (Phlp. 3:9; Rm. 10:3). This was not at odds with those in Judaism who were zealous for the law, as for instance, Qumran “where the righteousness of God and his grace are stressed so strongly, obeying the law is proclaimed as (also) necessary for salvation.”⁵ Paul seemingly regarded it possible to fulfil law's demands, regarding himself blameless in terms of law (Phlp. 3:6).⁶ However, contra to Dunn one must agree with Du Toit:

In transposing himself back into his pre-Damascus era he calculates the various aspects of his pre-Christian prowess in terms of credits and debits, as the bookkeeping terms κέρδη and ζημία (3:7-8; cf also ἐζημιώθη) indicate. Following the way in which Paul adds up the six items to his credit in v.5-6a, until he reaches the result and climax of his

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 30.

² Rohde, 1989, 59. Equally, Hengel, 1991², 283, describes it as God's unfathomable deed of electing grace.

³ Du Toit, 1996, 75. He adds that it would be “incorrect to minimise what Paul himself has maximised.”

⁴ Du Toit, 1996, 83.

⁵ Du Toit, 1996, 76.

⁶ Hengel, 1991², 253, 283. Of course one is reminded of Dunn's so-called “New Perspective on Paul” to which more attention will be paid in Chapter 6, but of whom we have to take note at this point. In Dunn, 1990², 215-41, he argues that Paul distinguishes between fulfilling the law as a deed of faith (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως) in experience of the Spirit and living according to “the works of law” (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) which is in accordance with the flesh, namely the fulfilling of the law requirements pertaining to circumcision, diet and Sabbath as the outward markings or identity markers separating the Jews from the Gentiles. The latter was not enough and the typical Jew could easily think of himself as blameless in terms of these outward obligations, as Paul stresses in Phlp. 3:6 (227). Refer also to Dunn, 1990², 183-214 to which we turn in Chapter 6.

calculations in v.6b, one cannot but conclude that, in appraising himself to be ἄμεμπτος, the Pharisee Paul found himself to be measuring up to all that the law required of him.¹

To conclude, what we have in Phil. 3:6 is Paul's pre-Christian evaluation of himself. As a Pharisee Paul may have thought that he kept the law flawlessly (although even then this probably included offering sacrifices in the temple for his sins), but this was a pre-conversion view of himself which his encounter with Christ transformed. After Paul came to know Christ he realized that his so-called righteousness under the law was a false righteousness, an illusory righteousness.²

It should be clear that Paul, looking back to his pre-Christian days, realised the superficiality of his concept of being blameless before God. Although, as a zealot he had more in mind than his outward ethnic observances, looking back at his life from the advent of Christ he realised his plight was greater than his interpretation of law-observance had led him to believe. His observations in Gl. 3:10 ("Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.") can hardly be open to another interpretation. The clause πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά is clear about the fact that *everything* written in the *book of the law* had to be *done*. That not being the case, one would be under a curse. Sanders argues against this understanding of Gl. 3:10. To be sure, his arguments on this matter are rather flimsy, being dependent on a few assumptions that seem just too much against the natural thread and obvious meaning of the text.³ His arguments have been effectively refuted.⁴ If Paul uses OT citations to boost his arguments, then his argument in Gl. 3:10 is clearly that those who rely on works of law are under a curse, and his citation explains exactly why: no one can do all things stipulated in the law. Obviously, he is stating law as a whole should be kept flawlessly. The word πᾶς is in no way coincidental. In fact, it is essentially and intentionally the crux of the matter: man's plight is that he is under a curse from which he cannot escape in order to obtain the blessing of Abraham. The plight-solution motif is enhanced when Paul continues in Gl. 3:13-14 by explaining that Christ became that curse by dying on the cross, removing the curse in order that Abraham's blessing could be available to Gentiles through faith. However subordinate one regards Gl. 3:10-13 to be, it is fundamental to the logic of Paul's argument.

¹ Du Toit, 1996, 77.

² Schreiner, 1985, 262.

³ E.P. Sanders, 1983, 21-22, poses three arguments. *Firstly*, Paul was at a loss for a proof-text in which νόμος and ἐπικατάρατος ("cursed"), in whatever form, occur. He then selected Dt. 27:26 in which "all" does not appear in either the Masoretic or the known LXX texts. Betz, 1979, 145-6, suggests that Paul used an unknown LXX text, because others had also quoted in the same fashion. Another possibility is that Paul inserted it himself, but this is unlikely in view of the previous assumption. Ellis, 1957, 10-20, has laboured very well on the very tricky and complex subject of Pauline use of the OT. Unfortunately the word πᾶς, according to Sanders, only "happens to appear" in the text, but really has no bearing (21). *Secondly*, he postulates that Paul actually meant that those who accept the law are cursed (22). *Thirdly*, Gl. 3:10-13 is subordinate to 3:8 and 14, so that it is really not about all of law having to be kept in order to be justified (he uses "righteoused"), but about faith as only way by which Gentiles could share in the blessings of Abraham (22).

⁴ Amongst others by Schreiner, 1984, 151-60 and 1985, 256-60.

In the same vein, if one were to engage on the route of circumcision one cannot dismiss Gl. 5:3 from the assumption that Paul regarded the whole of law to be kept perfectly.¹ Whether there were means of atonement is irrelevant to the argument that full participation in and obedience to law was expected. Although there were means of atonement, it was still a fact that man suffered under the curse of not matching the expectation. Even if Paul used this remark as a threat, as Sanders asserts, it could only make sense if law was seen as undivided and every element of it as essential for Israel.

Dunn's arguments at this point are also unconvincing. He argues from the assumption that Paul is not against law as such. His rejection of works of law in Galatians is expressly with regard to those "works of law" regarded as "identity markers" of Jewish nationalism, such as circumcision and dietary and Sabbath observances.² This assumption, with which we shall deal more extensively in Ch. 6, does not seem to have enough supporting exegetical evidence and seems more like a construct to try to come to grips with the intriguing problem of Paul's predominantly negative stance on law in Galatians and seemingly more positive notes elsewhere. For argument sake, if we were to accept Dunn's position that they were pushing for the Galatians to accept circumcision and the other ethnic "badges", but were not concerned about the Galatians having to abide to the other laws, a host of questions arise. Why would they not push for observance of the other social and moral laws? Does the literature of the time nowhere reflect Judaism as concerned about more than just the badges? If Judaism regarded law as an undivided entity, as shown earlier, why would the opponents suddenly distinguish between law and works of law? Is there evidence of a strand in Judaism expressly making this distinction? Even more difficult: is there any evidence of a group in early Christianity expressly regarding the entire law to be observed with the exception of, amongst others, the "identity markers"? Questions abound and emphasise that Dunn's position is probably more of an assumption than a fact.³

On the other hand, we have Paul's letter to the Galatians in front of us emanating an obvious meaning, namely that Paul understood law as a whole as a yoke of slavery. He speaks of being "under law". Why, when he of all people knew of the breadth and depth of law as divine institution in Second Temple Judaism, would he speak in such an unrefined way if he had only the ethnic markers in mind? Surely, with a subject of such magnitude, and in such a contingent and urgent situation, Paul would have been clearer if he had only a part of the law in mind. Drane correctly states:

¹ Moo, 1983, 84-5. Sanders, 1983, 27, argues Paul meant it only as a threat that if one started on the route of circumcision one would logically have to go all the way. He adds that the Judaism of Paul's day provides no literature in support of the notion that perfect obedience was necessary, but impossible (28). This means restoration was instated on the assumption of imperfect obedience.

² Dunn, 1990², 194f. See also Silva, 1991, 339-53.

³ Moo, 1983, 90-9, stresses man's inability to do the whole law, because of an inherent deficiency making it impossible to gain sufficient merit before God. Man's plight is underlined. However, he adds that not only this inherent deficiency disqualifies law and works of law, but also the fact that a salvation-historical shift had occurred in Christ.

But 4:21, both grammatically and logically, seems to prove beyond the slightest possibility of doubt that the Galatian heretics were promoting the observance of the Law as well as circumcision.¹

Working with what we have before us, we must accept that in Gl. 5:3 Paul's explanation for rejecting the adoption of circumcision was not primarily that it would divide the Christian community. He expressly states that the problem would be, by implication, the reintroduction of the entire law.

[L]aw was a single fabric for Paul, and the acceptance of part of the law necessarily and logically implied that one had to obey the rest of the law as well. That this is Paul's view is clear from Gl. 5:4 also. Circumcision is a badge as Dunn says, but it is the badge of those who want to be justified by the law as a whole (cf. Gl. 5:4).²

- One cannot reflect on the plight-solution scheme without referring to Gl. 4:1-7. Paul emphasises the radical change in status brought about by Christ's advent (Gl. 4:4), i.e. from slavery to the elements (Gl. 4:3), to son- and heirship of God (Gl. 4:5-7). He adds that together with this radical change in status, they also received the Spirit (Gl. 4:6), an eschatological promise of the OT and the Second Temple period.

With regard to the plight-solution model we conclude that Paul's view of the past as a curse and his experience of grace is enhanced by his vision and understanding of Christ in whom he now partakes through faith. Sanders' Paul's participation in Christ is separated from the earlier plight, so that justification in Christ seemingly jumps up from nowhere. Looking back Paul describes that life as cursed. He might not previously have experienced this plight as seriously as he views it now, but for him it was, in retrospect, a movement from plight under law to solution in Christ; from life in slavery and bondage to sonship and the indwelling of the Spirit. The depth of his plight certainly became more defined and pronounced in the advent of Christ and Paul's subsequent Damascus experience and participation in Christ. The hope of the eschatological grandeur was profoundly enhanced by the Spirit's indwelling. It had not sprung up from nowhere. It was the christological redefinition of a plight-solution model existing in Judaism since time forgotten.

3.2. The law as παιδαγωγός during the time of plight

Paul introduces παιδαγωγός as metaphor for law in Gl. 3:24 and 25. It portrays his most essential understanding of the position and function of law in Galatians. It is probably Paul's single most enlightening metaphor in illustration of law's position in the covenantal relationship and salvation history. It is also one of the most bespoken metaphors. We will approach Paul's understanding of law from his understanding of παιδαγωγός and then move to related matters in especially the argumentative section.

The lexicographical history of παιδαγωγός, going back to the Hellenistic institution by which a child was placed in the care of a trusted slave, carries a magnitude of

¹ Drane, 1975, 47.

² Schreiner, 1985, 265.

meanings or nuances.¹ At the time that Paul wrote to the Galatians it was a common practice throughout Greco-Roman society. Interestingly, it was also found in Jewish households. Josephus' son is known to have had a pedagogue and Jewish writers made use of the word.² This designated slave was responsible for the child from early morning till bedtime, from his sixth or seventh year till his twentieth. With the exception of teaching, which was done by the διδάσκαλος, he supervised the child's complete life and accompanied him everywhere in order to protect him. He was also responsible for teaching the child good manners and overall socially acceptable behaviour.³ Obviously, this included the need for disciplining and punishment.⁴ There were παιδαγωγοί renowned for being overly strict and abrasive. Some were even portrayed bearing a whip or cane.⁵ In all fairness, from the child's point of view the παιδαγωγός could easily be wrongly judged as too much of a disciplinarian. Often, especially in the field of drama, caricatures of παιδαγωγοί were created for specific effect. One must be careful of interpreting the metaphor in terms of these caricatures.⁶ Many children experienced kindness from their παιδαγωγοί. Although friendships often lasted till after the child had come of age, his coming of age was the official point at which the παιδαγωγός' duty ended. The early guidance of the παιδαγωγός would still have an influence in the mature man's life, but his direct input would be missing.⁷

This background has crystallised into a vast array of meanings that have to be narrowed down contextually to prevent *illegitimate totality transfer*. It has been suggested that παιδαγωγός underlines the following aspects of law:

- The *refutatory function* by which the believer is made aware of his wrongs.⁸
- The *temporary task and status*,⁹ to which Belleville adds the strict and supervisory character,¹⁰ and Cosgrove the moral supervision.¹¹
- The *unbending character* in bringing people to live virtuously.¹²
- The *protective task* in order to preserve the people of God from Gentile idolatry until the Abrahamic promise would realise, a type of protective custody.¹³
- *Law, creating a situation of captivity*, confining people to slavery and minority¹

¹ Tolmie, 1992, 409-10.

² D.J. Williams, 1999, 61.

³ Betz, 1979, 177. D.J. Williams, 1999, 62, states: "The pedagogue had to teach the child all that the Greek meant by *eukosmia*: good manners, good deportment, 'decency' in every department of life."

⁴ D.J. Williams, 1999, 62. R.N. Longenecker, 1982, 53-6.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 177.

⁶ Witherington, 1998¹, 262.

⁷ Young, 1987, 169; Barrett, 1999, 67.

⁸ Reicke, 1985, 256.

⁹ Oepke, 1989, 161-3; Kertelge, 1984, 388; A.T. Hanson, 1988, 75. In fact most scholars, although not necessarily ascribing the temporary character as primary characteristic of the law to the metaphor, regard this as part of the metaphor.

¹⁰ Belleville, 1986, 70.

¹¹ Cosgrove, 1978, 163.

¹² Betz, 1979, 177-8.

¹³ Gordon, 1989, 153-4.

All this being said, we proceed to determine the most probable meaning of this significant metaphor in its specific context. The points of similarity between the metaphor and the law have to be determined.² This approach ought to eliminate a few possibilities and bring others into clearer focus. It is clear that Paul uses παιδαγωγός to stress the *limitations* inherent to Israel's law: limitations in terms of *time*, *function* and *scope*.

3.2.1. *Limited time*

Law's efficacy is restricted to the time between its inception (430 years after the promise to Abraham – Gl. 3:17) and the fulfilment of the promise to the seed, which is Christ (Gl. 3:16). Young points to the abundance of temporal terms with regard to law's function in Gl. 3:19-4:7, such as: ἄχρις (3:19), πρό (3:23), εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν (3:23), εἰς Χριστόν (3:24), ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως (3:25), οὐκέτι (3:25), ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον (4:1), ἄχρι (4:2), ὅτε (4:4), οὐκέτι (4:7).³ Law had a particular function to fulfil, but only till the advent of Christ, when it ceased.⁴ It can be accepted that most scholars regard the temporary status of the law in some way or another. It is in terms of function that many differences occur. The importance of the remark will become clearer as we proceed. At this point, suffice it to say that, because of a continued effort to ascribe an ongoing function of some kind to law since the Christ event, many scholars are forced either to revise their position on the temporariness of law, or to profoundly qualify law or its function. As soon as one ascribes an ongoing function to law, it implies that law's time was not limited to the period between Moses and Jesus. If this were the case, Paul's word on law's temporariness, central to Galatians, could not be taken at face value.

3.2.2. *Limited function*

We would do well to see law as a *guardian* of some kind. It was given because of transgression (Gl. 3:19). It was never meant to substitute the promise or to cast the latter in its shadow. It had to protect Israel against doing sin to which all humankind was prone (Gl. 3:22).⁵ At that stage Israel had only the promise and not the fulfilment. Just as Moses, according to Jesus, gave permission to divorce because of their hardness of heart (πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν -- Mt. 19:8; Mk. 10:5), God gave the law to indicate how He wished to be served in the covenant. It also served as their *identity marker* amongst peoples of other convictions and religions. Especially the first two commandments of the Decalogue reminded them of to whom they belonged and served. Added to this there were external identity markers drawing boundaries between them and the nations, i.e. circumcision, dietary and calendar observations.

¹ Lull, 1986, 497.

² Witherington, 1998, 265.

³ Young, 1987, 174. Also Lull, 1986, 483.

⁴ Lategan, 1987, 16; Hong, 1993, 149-56; Belleville, 1986, 71; Kruger, 1992, 325. Tolmie, 2004, 118-33, very effectively illustrates the point that Gl. 3:15-18 is an argument in favour of dissociating covenant and law, and that Gl. 3:19-25 adds to this the inferiority of law in comparison to God's promise and faith.

⁵ Refer back to my Ch. 3 at §2.2 and §2.4. Kruger, 1992, 318-21, 325.

Very significantly, one senses that while using this metaphor Paul reflects in a very objective and non-derogatory manner on law for the limited period for which it was intended. Whatever one's interpretation of the reference to angelic ordination and human mediation at the inception of law (Gl. 3:19), Paul does not seem to deny its divine origin. If that were the case, we would have to accept that the angels he speaks of were demonic.¹ He gives no such indication. It would also imply the almost unthinkable, that Moses, as intermediary, was playing to the hand of Satan. It is unthinkable that Paul would regard the pedagogue guarding over Israel, as demonic. It follows that Paul accepted the divine origin of the law. The question is then: why did he make this remark? Why did he not simply state that Yahweh gave the law? Why implicate the angels and Moses? True, it was probably how Yahweh did it, using angels and Moses as emissaries. I suggest Paul used this remark as a rhetorical mechanism to stress the limitedness of the law.² Bear in mind that Paul says a great deal about law in Gl. 3:19. *It was added because of transgression* (τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη), implying it was not initially given. Yahweh did not regard it as necessary from the start of his walk with his people, adding it afterwards as a gracious tool for them to deal with ethical choices. Its functional time was limited *till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made* (ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται).

He remarks that the angels and intermediary were involved and follows in Gl. 3:20 with the remark that an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. Now Hübner, who believes that Paul changed his opinion on law fundamentally between Galatians and Romans, and that he developed in his theological reflection, understands these angels to be evil angels.³ In Galatians Paul would then argue that law was not from God. We cannot agree with this position and agree with Witherington that the verb προσετέθη ("it was added") "is an aorist passive verb with a suffix, and the appropriate question to be asked is: 'added' by whom? The context does not say specifically, but it surely is most natural to take this as another example of the divine passive, especially when in the very next clause we find ἐπήγγελται, a passive, clearly implying God is the agent. Paul had previously said that God gave the promises"⁴ In this regard also, one would have expected Paul to be more specific. Wallace adds that in that case one would also expect the angels to have been mentioned with the main verb.⁵ Grammatically, the use of the preposition διὰ followed by a genitive is significant. If it were followed by an accusative, it would have the meaning "because of".⁶ This would place the angels nearer to a position of initial or initiating actors. Followed by a genitive, as is the case here, it has the mean-

¹ Lightfoot, 1890, 145, regards the angels as attesting to the law's excellence. Bruce, 1982¹, 177, refers to Calvin's view that the angels, as witnesses, provide law with authority.

² Tolmie, 2004, 128-9, chooses the notion of inferiority. He argues that God alone gave the promise, but that more parties were involved with law's inception. Law is thus inferior compared to the promise.

³ Hübner, 1984, 27.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 255.

⁵ Wallace, 1990, 235.

⁶ Moule, 1953, 54-5; J.W. Wenham, 1965, 66.

ing “by means of.”¹ This strengthens the notion that the angels acted on someone’s behalf. We accept it was on God’s behalf.

Heikki Räisänen, well known for his view that Paul contradicts himself, regards this as a case in point.² On the other hand, it seems rather unlikely that Paul would have changed his mind on the origin of the law and its position in Christianity. He had been involved in the Gentile mission for about 15 years. If Galatians was written prior to the Jerusalem council and reflected the position Paul put forward and which was largely accepted, there would be no reason for Paul to retract his Galatian stand. This is not to deny that Paul’s thought developed during his missionary activity. It was inevitable. After his conversion and calling Paul moved into largely fallow territory. He was not handed down a complete theology on the law at his Christophany. However, I do not detect a straightforward development on law from one extant letter to another. Whatever development there was in Paul’s thought on law, it must have taken place before he wrote Galatians.³ He was, after all, on no account a theological novice at the time. Is it not possible that he was playing the intermediary card to emphasise the fact that Moses represented Yahweh’s transgressing people?⁴ Could the angels not have been added as a parallel for Moses, but representing God? Had it not been for the transgressions of the people as represented by Moses, God would not have had the need to ordain the law via his angels. Had there been no transgression in the world, there would not have been any need for a human intermediary. Paul thus stresses the contingency of law as a divine and merciful interception, but also that Yahweh did not originally (in a temporal or salvation-historical sense and not ontologically) intend it thus.

The question as to Paul’s so-called ambivalence towards the law comes into scope. His so-called more positive position on law in Romans than the more negative position in Galatians has been vigorously debated. Of special interest, *sticking exclusively to Galatians*, is his seeming ambivalence on the subject in this letter too. In Gl. 3:10-14 Paul five times refers to the law as a curse (*κατάρρα*), making accursed (*ἐπικατάρατος*) those under it. In the broader context of Gl. 3:10-22 he strongly contrasts this curse with faith (11, 12, 14), Christ (14), promise (14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22) and blessing (14). But in Gl. 3:21 he puts the rhetorical question: “Is the law then against the promises of God?” and answers it with: “Certainly not.” Just before this (19) he states that law was given by angels, through an intermediary, which, as motivated earlier, probably expresses a positive view on law, but then, only with regard to its limited function and life span. All things being equal, he is negative about law in Galatians only with regard to a possible ongoing function in Christianity. With regard to its limited function of guardianship over Israel before Christ’s advent, Paul has no quibble. At that stage, Israel did not have Christ or his Spirit to guide them. Since Christ’s salvific work, they had his example, deliverance and Spirit to guide them. They no longer had any need for the law to guide or guard them.

¹ Moule, 1953, 56-7; Van Rensburg, 1953, 57.

² Räisänen, 1983, 59 & 205.

³ Räisänen, 1986, 5. See also Räisänen, 1992, 24.

⁴ An intermediary implies that relations had gone sour. This emphasises law as a divine contingency ruling.

In Gl. 3:23, just before introducing the παιδαγωγός, Paul describes life under law as ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι (“confined under law, kept under restraint”). The use of the passive participle συγκλείω is explanatory of the verb φρουρέω. In other words, being confined under law meant being restricted. He takes it a step further, continuing the idea in Gl. 3:24 by introducing a resultative clause with ὥστε in combination with γέγονεν, coming to the conclusion that it all boils down to the same as being under a pedagogue. Activities were restricted, life was controlled and free association impossible.¹ This was exactly one of the downsides of law’s function as a restricting identity marker. It made it almost impossible for Jew and Gentile to mix freely. We will return to this when our focus turns to the discriminatory effect of law.

In Gl. 4:2 he returns to the subject, referring to the position of the heir as ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους (“under guardians and trustees”). All of this leads Young to conclude that the metaphor is not about “discipline, education, instruction or punishment, but about restriction.”² He acknowledges that such restrictions would have been protective, but that it was not Paul’s intention in Galatians to stress protection. Restriction was the key functional factor. It obviously fits in well with his dispute with Peter over table fellowship (Gl. 2:11-14). Paul seems to totally ignore the *educational role* of the παιδαγωγός. He is not even mentioned as leading the child to the διδάσκαλος. In this regard it has been argued that Christ is the διδάσκαλος to whom the law as pedagogue leads the believer. This could not possibly be the case in Galatians as Paul depicts law as doing exactly the opposite.³ Εἰς in Gl. 3:24 has the meaning of *until* and not *to*, like in Gl. 3:23. Equally, Witherington remarks

Paul’s view of ‘salvation history’ is not developmental or evolutionary but apocalyptic or interventionist.⁴

Clearly, Paul is not arguing in favour of a continued function for law after the Christ event in the sense of driving sinners to Christ for salvation. He is actually confirming the notion stressed in Ch. 2 that the radical switch from the *present evil age* to *new creation* had taken place in the advent of Christ. The change was radical. There was no compelling reason for a continued function for law.

3.2.3. Limited scope

The law can be described as Israel’s in-house rules given to them by Yahweh, who created a special relationship with Israel going back to the covenant with Abraham. Because of Israel’s sinfulness (Gl. 3:19) and hardness of heart whilst being in the covenantal relationship, He gave them the law 430 years later in the time of Moses (*because of Israel’s transgression*). The divine intention was to assist Israel to live according to Yahweh’s wishes and to protect them from other influences. It was not meant for those outside the covenantal relationship. To them He gave their consciences (Rm. 2:12-16)⁵ and στοιχεῖα τοῦ

¹ Young, 1987, 170.

² Young, 1987, 171.

³ Gordon, 1989, 153.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 266.

⁵ Käsemann, 1980, 61-8; Moo, 1996, 145-51.

κόσμου to guide them.¹ He would deal with them as He in his righteousness saw fit. To Israel alone He gave a specific measure, which would only function till the advent of Christ. It was to assist Israel till the promise would be fulfilled. It was never intended as a general ethical code, only as a covenantal ethical aid. Law was God's specific στοιχεῖον for Israel.

3.3. Paul does not distinguish between cultic and moral laws

It should be clear by now that Paul does not distinguish between cultic, ceremonial and moral laws in Galatians. If he had such a distinction in mind, one would have expected him to have been very clear.² Law observance was a fundamental issue. It was still early days in the Gentile mission. If our assumption is correct that the letter was written urgently and only months prior to the Jerusalem council, it would have been even more necessary for Paul to have made such distinctions clear. If, against the backdrop of law as a unity, he had only certain laws in mind, more precise details would be called for. Paul is silent. True, he makes no mention of specific moral laws. His specific references are to circumcision, dietary and calendar laws.³ But, equally true, these were the specific subjects he was presented with. They were more obvious and heavily laden with identity connotations. Why is he so quiet about other cultic requirements? Probably because their discontinuance was obvious. Still, one would expect him to be very specific on such an emotional and contentious matter as moral laws if they still had to be observed.⁴ He acts to the contrary when he deals with highly moral issues in Gl. 5:16-25. He does not revert to any specific OT law. In fact, he makes abundant use of Hellenistic lists of common vices and virtues, acceptable to almost any religion. He fittingly adds that law has no problem with these virtues (Gl. 5:23). It is as if he tries to strip Christian morality of any specific religious address. Add to this the matter of the στοιχεῖα in Gentile circles and law being akin to them, and Paul's rejection of a return to such στοιχεῖα, then Paul is rejecting any form of exterior law, principal or ruling as moral guide for the believing community. This does not imply that Paul was not serious about believers having to live morally acceptable lives: on the contrary. We will tend to this in the following chapters.

¹ Obviously, in this case one has those elements in mind regarding God's common grace and provision as discussed earlier. This would exclude the negative elements of their so-called deities.

² Bruce, 1975, 266, correctly states the indivisibility of law, also for Paul. However, there are others who argue that a distinction be made between ceremonial and moral law, with the latter still being applicable after Christ's advent. Amongst the latter is, e.g., Cranfield, 1964, 67. B.L. Martin, 1989, 34, argues that Paul at least makes an "implicit distinction".

³ Calvin, 1975, 310, attests to accepting law as an entire entity, but does distinguish between moral and ceremonial law, and regards the former as still valid and the latter as "having been abrogated not in effect but in use only" (311).

⁴ Räisänen, 1986, 8, 48. Snodgrass, 1995, 155-6, raises the matter and dismisses any fundamental distinction between cultic and moral laws. Importantly, he adds that Paul, e.g., when referring to law as working death in him in Rm. 7:7-10, clearly has moral law in mind. Thus, there is no aspect of law as an entity of which Paul does not argue that it is a curse.

Paul mentions circumcision only 12 times, and only in passing makes remarks on calendar laws (Gl. 4:10). However, he refers to law as such 32 times. He very subtly introduces circumcision in Gl. 2:3-9 where he refers to his meeting with the apostles, and nobody having expected Titus to be circumcised. At this instance, it could be seen as an insignificant remark – almost uncalled for – except for the crucial fact that in their strained and explosive context the Galatians would immediately have picked up this remark. Except for the fleeting remark to the circumcision party in Gl 2:12, he reintroduces it overtly and as an issue only in Gl. 5:2. Now, other than in the case of the more neutral remark with regard to Titus' not being circumcised, it is a forbidden deed. Paul follows with harsh words. It leads to Christ being of no advantage to the circumcised person (Gl. 5:2). In fact, it implies being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4). Between Gl. 5:2 and 4 he adds that circumcision begs the keeping of the entire law. In this regard the occurrence of νόμος is most significant. Paul never uses νόμος prior to Gl. 2:3. Between the above two references to circumcision (Gl. 2:3-9; 5:2) he uses νόμος 25 times. This structure strengthens the notion that Paul is actually concerned with law as such. Circumcision cannot be viewed as an entity on its own. It is part and parcel of law. This aggravated the situation. His arguments against law were not aimed at certain laws (e.g., circumcision, dietary and calendar). The latter, being under consideration in Galatia, probably sparked the letter. However, Paul does not focus on them. He deals with law as a larger entity and in the process also deals with its constitutive parts.

3.4. Conclusion on law: no different from τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου

So, Yahweh graciously gave the law. The intention was good, namely to act as a guardian. It had to help Israel identify sin and avoid it. It was an interim measure. As an interim measure, it was to be positively evaluated. It was never intended to be permanent. In this regard, Witherington reacts very negatively on Dunn's remark on Gl. 3:21 that:

The response indicates clearly that Paul would deny the very antithesis between law and promise which so many infer from verse 20. On the contrary, the role of the law is consistent with, integrated into that of the promise.¹

To my mind Dunn's intention was not to state that the promise had been adapted by the introduction of the law. If that were the case Dunn would not have laboured the point earlier that law was an interim measure till the advent of Christ.² In this regard Witherington is absolutely correct – Dunn too – that:

This is precisely what Paul argues against in Gl. 3.15 when he says no one adds a codicil to or annuls an already existing testament (or covenant)! As Gl. 4.24 makes abundantly clear, Paul sees the *Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant as two separate covenants, not two parts of one*

¹ Dunn, 1993², 192.

² Dunn, 1993², 189, describes Gl. 3:19a "as a positive description of the role of the law in the period prior to the coming of Christ."

covenant. Paul is trying to maintain their separation, while the agitators presumably were seeing them as blended together.¹

It cannot be disregarded that the pre-Christian Paul experienced law positively and, after his conversion, continued to view law as such *for that limited and by-gone period until the Christ event*. Dunn is correct that scholars too often lose sight of the fact that law was not viewed in separation from the cultic remedies and sacrificial system. The latter was part of the law, helping God's people to remedy that which law showed as transgression and to which Paul alludes in references to the cross of Christ (Gl. 2:20; 3:13; 6:14).² This was not contra the promise. For that interim period it was made to serve the Abrahamic covenant.

How was it a curse? It was a curse for continually pointing out sin. It made man responsible for his wrongs and continually reminded him of defeat. The main point of the curse was that although law identified sin and sinners as responsible for their deeds, *it could never impute life into the sinner*.³ It could never provide him with victory over sin. Law could never guarantee or even hope to provide man with teeth to deal with flesh. It could not change corrupted man. Only Christ and his Spirit would decisively deal with flesh and provide man with the ability to follow the Spirit and not the flesh.⁴ Law was intended to be dissolved into the promise. When it is viewed as an entity – even as a God-given one – in isolation from the promise, it becomes merely another enslaver of the present evil age under the curse of sin and flesh. In other words, law is nothing more than another *στοιχέιον* divinely given and tailor-made for God's people, but now, since Christ's advent, a stumbling block. On the other hand, if it is regarded as dissolved into the promise and fulfilled in the Christ event, it should be honoured for that limited function.

4. PRESENT EVIL AGE AS DISCRIMINATORY AND DIVISIVE

One could argue that a section on Gl. 3:26-29 should not be positioned under a heading concerning the present evil age, but more specifically as part of the discussion on law. The immediately preceding context (Gl. 3:1-22) definitely deals with the position of law as opposed to Spirit (Gl. 3:2-5), faith (Gl. 3:1-9, 14), promise (Gl. 3:15-21) and Christ (Gl. 3:16, 22-25). This Paul continues throughout Gl. 4, which follows directly on the pericope under discussion. It is also true that the central thrust of Paul's argument links up much more strongly with the first of the three distinctions than the second, and especially the third.⁵ This links the formula more with an argument against law than as part of a broader discussion on the present evil age. It would even be more appropriate if seen as a baptismal formula⁶ concluding the arguments against Judaistic notions.

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 255.

² Dunn, 1993², 190.

³ Wilckens, 1982¹, 22. See also his more expanded version of this article, 1982², 154-90.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 259. Dunn, 1998, 161.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 184-5; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 157.

⁶ Most scholars accept it as a baptismal formula, or at least possibly based on one. It will not be argued.

However, there is another way of looking at it. True, Paul discusses the Jewish position regarding law from Gl. 2:15-3:25. In fact, he even uses the first person plural (Gl. 3:13, 23-25) with regard to his and fellow Jewish Christian's position prior to Christ's advent. Then, almost abruptly he points to the Gentile believers (Gl. 3:26) and addresses them in the second person plural: "For you are all sons of God" (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε).¹ He repeats the second person plural in Gl. 3:27-29. Then, after the baptismal formula, he reverts to the first person plural (Gl. 4:3-5) to equate the position of Jewish Christians under law as though under the slavery of the "elements of the world". In Gl. 4:6-11 he again returns to the second person plural, describing their former lives as under ungodly beings (Gl. 4:8) and elemental spirits (Gl. 4:9). The point he makes is that the baptismal formula could, rather than rap up the argument against the Judaizers, be the very important hinge on which Paul switches from the social dynamics of the broader pre-Christian society of the present evil age – both Jewish and Gentile – to that of the Christian society.

This notion is enhanced by apocalyptic overtones referred to earlier, i.e. the antinomies² of which Paul makes abundant use, and more specifically, the antinomies in the baptismal formula. Betz draws attention to the strong allusion to the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:3-11; Lk. 6:20-22) and other so-called "macarisms" in comparative religious studies. However, the strongest allusion is to what he refers to as "the element of 'eschatological reversal'" in both the beatitudes and Gl. 3:26-28, which "turn the natural order upside down" and declare "the abolishment of social, cultural and religious prerogatives."³ In the parallel formulae εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε ("baptised into Christ") and Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε ("having put on Christ"), Paul uses an effective and forceful metaphor, well known in Jewish tradition as well as in Hellenistic mystery religions.⁴ The neophyte entering the new religion underwent a total renewal of identity. In Christian terms it meant that, whatever the believer's culture, social standing or gender, after entry into the new community, through faith in Jesus Christ, previously important identity markers became irrelevant. A divine transformation had taken place.⁵ By faith in Christ, having put Him on like a cloak,⁶ the believer becomes part of the new aeon with the accompanying change in symbolic universe,⁷ virtues and behaviour.⁸ Obviously, this situation is enhanced by Paul's description of it as "new creation" (Gl. 6:15), and dying and rising with Christ (Gl. 2:19; 5:24; 6:14), which Eduard Schweizer describes as going "back to the apocalyptic hope of an eschatological life with Christ."⁹

¹ Betz, 1979, 185.

² Martyn, 1985², 410-24.

³ Betz, 1979, 183.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 184 & 188 provides more information on the subject.

⁵ Meeks, 1974, 182.

⁶ According to Moule, 1989, 47-48, 51-3, the metaphor most probably had a background against the neophyte's divestiture and being re-clothed after the baptism.

⁷ Latagan, 1992², 273-6.

⁸ Oepke, 1964¹, 320.

⁹ Schweizer, 1970, 183.

[I]t guards us from dissolving Paul's statements into mere anthropological descriptions. For, more than anything else, the apocalyptic hope of the New Testament for the new creation of the whole world, resists a mere existential interpretation.¹

With regard to the triple antithesis in Gl. 3:28 it seems that, even though it probably was part of a pre-Pauline, primitive baptismal formula, or in some way at least used in the baptismal liturgy, it reflects prejudices found in any society, as research of both Jewish and non-Jewish traditions reveals.² A fine example occurs in the benediction at the beginning of the Jewish morning prayer cycle:

Blessed be He [God] that he did not make me a Gentile; blessed be He that He did not make me a boor [i.e., an ignorant peasant or slave]; blessed be He that He did not make me a woman.³

Ethnic, social and sexual differentiation was so profoundly imprinted in their being, that it would always be a lurking danger to their relationships in the Christian community: small wonder that it became part of the baptismal formula. Enough said! There is reason enough to discuss the baptismal formula as part and parcel of the discriminatory and divisive nature of the present evil age as such. The emphasis will not be on what they state with regard to new creation, which will be attended to in Ch. 5, but on what they imply with regard to life in all societies before and without Christ.⁴

4.1. Ethnic differentiation

Humanity has never been harmonious, least of all ancient Mediterranean society.

[I]n the first century the Jews despised the Gentiles (even proselytes were often not fully accepted), the Greeks looked down on uncultured people outside their race, the Romans felt themselves superior to those they had conquered, and so on. Probably people of every nation look down on outsiders.⁵

One's status at birth determined everything in life. It was rather fixed for all time, and even determined one's appropriate behaviour towards other people and groups. The dyadic personality was embedded in a specific group with an own identity and ethos. Added to this was the stereotyping of other groups and the very specific defining of group boundaries.⁶ This was applicable to all Mediterranean groups of whatever ethnicity.⁷ Now, if one adds to this the very strongly defined rules with regard to purity in Jewish terms and the fact that Gentile Galatians were being urged to cross these boundaries, it makes the situation in Galatia very intricate. The rules with regard to the purity system, ho-

¹ Schweizer, 1970, 183.

² Oepke, 1964², 777, finds it reflective of "a saying current in different forms among the Persians, Greeks and Jews in which man gives thanks that he is not an unbeliever or uncivilised, that he is not a woman and that he is not a slave." More instances can be found in Witherington, 1980, 593-4; R.N. Longenecker, 1990 157.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 157, quotes this from *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregation of the British Commonwealth of Nations*.

⁴ Malina & Neyrey, 1996, 153-201, provide ample information on the cultural and social paradigm in which the ancient Mediterranean personality operated and which is relevant to our subject.

⁵ Morris, 1996, 121. Bruce, 1982¹, 188: when "a proselyte crossed over to the Jewish side of the gulf; the gulf remained."

⁶ Malina & Neyrey, 1991, 73-74; Van Eck, 1995, 176-7. Also Malina, 1996, 41-61.

⁷ Malina & Neyrey, 1996, 171-3.

liness mapping and boundaries were developed in painstaking detail.¹ One must add, in all fairness, that there were rabbis who, although they stuck to strict regulations, called upon followers to deal with Gentiles in such a way that they would be attracted to proselytising.²

This was where both the Galatians and the Judaisers came from. The ways of the present evil age came naturally to them. By faith in Christ and being clothed in Him, they had crossed the apocalyptic divide to the new creation in Christ. They were now all sons of God: united and on the same footing. It was a given that did not always come easily.

4.2. Social differentiation

The invalidation of the division between slave and freeman was most probably the most prominent social antithesis with which to describe society now renewed in Christ. If this very solid and prominent division were to be dissolved, all social boundaries would, by implication, have been disbanded. It was a social divide common to the whole Roman world. In fact, there were fixed guidelines and requirements for belonging to a certain class.³

Throughout the Roman world the division between slave and free was of the greatest importance. Slaves had no rights, and the lowliest free person was infinitely more important than any slave, however gifted. To recognise that a believing slave was just as important in God's sight as the highest among the nobility was to point to a radical abolition of a distinction that was taken for granted throughout Paul's world. These words mark a revolution.⁴

It is especially the Greek concept of freedom that comes to mind, i.e. to be a slave to no man.⁵ In addition to the social aspect and Paul's view that nothing in society can remain the same when it is redefined in Christ, we must acknowledge the theme of slavery under law, the elements of the world and flesh as the overriding theme. It is true though, that the old dispensation is characterised by slavery in the religious, ethical and social senses.

4.3. Sexual differentiation

In modern scholarship this is probably the most contentious element of Paul's threefold antithetical remark. Some would argue that the issue of gender is not central to Paul's argument in Galatians and that not too much should be made of it. Of course, they would take heart that Paul could not have meant it too seriously, seemingly contradicting himself in his Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 11:2-15; 14:34-35). I would think that, given the Mediterranean social situation, it is fundamental to Paul's position.

¹ For a detailed orientation on this subject refer once again to Neyrey, 1986, 91-128 and Neyrey, 1996, 80-104.

Van Eck, 1995, 196-203, also provides good reading and references.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 188.

³ Van Aarde, 1994, 63-4, 99-101. Malina & Neyrey, 1996, 173-6.

⁴ Morris, 1996, 122. Note that "these words" obviously refers to Gl. 3:28.

⁵ Rengstorf, 1964¹, 261-4.

Women had a subordinate¹ position in most societies in the Mediterranean Crescent.² In terms of the abovementioned Jewish and non-Jewish benedictions alone one is brought under the impression of how fundamentally institutionalised subordination of women was. I do not believe Paul was arguing a case for feminism or equal rights for women.³ He was making a statement against any form of distinction in the community of faith, by which one believer is “more equal” than another. In this regard the matter of men having fuller participation in the community of faith than women was relevant. It was particularly relevant against the Jewish background. Circumcision, for one, by nature excluded women. By considering the reintroduction of this rite the Galatians would necessarily make a distinction between men and women. In fact, women could even be made spiritually dependent on men if it implied the Jewish practice by which a woman only participated in fellowship indirectly via her husband or eldest son. Add to this Paul’s mention of their observance of certain times (Gl. 4:10) and it takes on an ominous colour. If this, for instance, included the monthly times of ritual uncleanness because of menstruation, it would obviously impact negatively on women’s full participation in spiritual fellowship.⁴ It might be stretching matters too far, but it is possible that the position of the unmarried woman in the believing community would also be affected, because of the absence of a believing father or brother.

There is another element. Societies in Jewish and Hellenistic circles considered marriage and procreation a moral duty. In Judaism it was rabbinical law.⁵ Augustus rewarded marriage and procreation, and penalised bachelorship.⁶ This was also the case in the Greek world.⁷ Paul was possibly ambiguous in his use of this antithesis, not referring only to the female disposition, but also to that of the unmarried believer. He could be arguing that marriage was not con-

¹ “Subordinate” should not be equated with adjectives such as “inferior” or “subservient”. Malina & Neyrey, 1996, 176-82, stress the strictly defined roles for the two genders. Men fulfilled their role in the public arena, whilst the woman’s role was bound to the privacy of the home and family. Thus the man was more in the forefront and the woman in the background and each had to keep honour and shame ratings in tact on his or her own turf. See also Neyrey, 1994, 79-82.

² De Vaux, 1973, 39-40. Boucher, 1969, 50-8, mentions the fact that Paul’s statement that there is no male and female is not unique to him and is also found in Rabbinic Judaism. Gundry-Volf, 1997, 187, warns against skewed views on the position of women in Jewish society. “Hellenism and Judaism were a mixed bag when it came to women’s status and roles. Though both cultural systems were patriarchies, women in both milieus enjoyed various rights and freedoms – an extension of their social roles was underway in Paul’s day.” She efficiently compares Paul with Joshua ben Sirach (188-94), Philo, his non-Christian contemporary (195-201), and the Greco-Roman novel of Jewish origin, Joseph and Aseneth (201-9), concluding that it is unjustified to portray Paul as having radically switched from patriarchalism to egalitarianism at his conversion. Paul and Christianity were not the only egalitarian forces at the time. However, Paul’s thoughts on gender were fundamentally influenced by his understanding of the gospel. Being “in Christ” had been his motivation to move away from patriarchalism (210). This move is especially dramatic against the background of Sirach and Philo’s strong patriarchal influence. Despite an egalitarian movement away from patriarchalism in Paul’s day, patriarchalism was by far the dominant position in society and Paul’s movement away from it more dramatic than meets the eye.

³ Although I would support the use of this text as part of a motivation for the equality of the sexes.

⁴ Witherington, 1980, 595.

⁵ Witherington, 1980, 595

⁶ Balsdon, 1975, 76-8.

⁷ Daube, 1977, 9f.

stitutive of the position one had in the community of faith. Grammatically it makes sense. In the previous two antitheses he made use of grammatical parallelism, merely replacing Ἰουδαῖος and Ἕλληνα with δοῦλος and ἐλεύθερος.

Οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνα,
οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος,

He disturbs the pattern in the third antithesis, replacing οὐδε with και, in effect breaking the neither/nor construction, and replacing it with “and neither is there *man and woman*” (οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν και θήλυ). Most scholars are of the opinion that this construction reflects the use in Gn. 1:27. The terms ἄρσεν and θήλυ are also usually used to contrast male and female distinctly.¹ Dunn is of the opinion that the use of και is of no consequence and that the basic use is the same as in the other antitheses.² This implies that only gender distinction is of no religious consequence in the faith community, but that humankind remains male and female after coming to faith. However, one must not rule out the allusion to marriage in the Genesis text. Grammatically there is another important deviation from the previous antitheses, i.e. the sexes are mentioned in the neuter. This could indicate that the biological differences are just as irrelevant in the believing community as social role differences. Paul could have alluded to marriage and kinship³ as unnecessary for either men or women in Christ. Most importantly, Paul wrote against the backdrop of the present evil age in which sexual orientation, marriage and kinship were almost absolutes. New creation, viewing everything in terms of being in Christ, stripped them of their former grand status.

4.4. Conclusion: Present evil age divisive and discriminatory

Undoubtedly, human society before the advent of Christ was immensely divided along ethnic, religious, cultural, social, and gender lines. The group to which one belonged determined one's identity and ethos. One's life, vocation and dreams were determined by one's being born into a certain ethnic group and family, and being of a specific gender. One's merely being the human that one was in a certain group and of a certain gender, determined everything. Thus, society was determined and structured according to flesh. It was a matter of honour to protect these boundaries. What the dyadic individual did reflected positively or negatively on the group's honour. Honour and shame ratings essentially determined one's social standing in the group. Add to this the accompanying stereotyping of other groups, and one thing is sure, society was strictly divided and discrimination was rife. It is not that the latter was necessarily experienced as negative, but it was inherent to a society that was always well aware of group identity and ethos.

¹ Oepke, 1964³, 362.

² Dunn, 1993², 157.

³ Witherington, 1980, 598-9.

The view of some¹ that only the first antithesis in Gl. 3:28 should be taken as central to Paul's argument against the Judaisers calls for attention. The argument is that Paul was actually debating the first matter, reminding the Galatians of what was said to them concerning ethnic identity at their baptism. They were now part of a new group, i.e. sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The other two antitheses were introduced merely because he cited the whole formula without further intention. It is true that Paul's initial irritation was along religious and cultural lines. The reintroduction of circumcision and Jewish dietary and calendar laws was certainly the door through which Paul accessed the situation. However, he did not stop there. He extended his argument to include the whole law as enslaving, despite the divine intentions. He even included τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου well known to the Gentiles in Galatia, and significantly dealt with these in the section following on this hinging verse (Gl. 4:1-11).

When Paul introduces this formula before moving on to the *elements of the world* from which the Gentile Galatians had been delivered, he seems to expand his initial argument into that field. He does this, because his argument is ultimately about more than the narrowly defined case put forward by the Judaisers. It is the argument of Gl. 1:4, i.e. that Christ came to deliver us from the *present evil age*, inclusive of the matters concerning social standing and gender. These were of the most basic elements of the Mediterranean world of their time, making up the bulk of societal relations. In the new community and creation these differences no longer determined identity, ethos and social relations. He probably added these elements in Gl. 3:28 for the same reason they were incorporated in the baptismal formula. They were central to what made society tick, known to and applied by all. They could not be functional in the new creation. They belonged to the time before Christ and in societies without Him² and were redemptive-historically anachronistic. Once again, the *present evil age* – life before and without Christ – was and is a life of division and discrimination in terms of what is merely human – life *according to flesh*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It should be clear that law and elements of the world cannot be discussed in isolation from *flesh*. They are part and parcel of a common entity to which Paul refers as *present evil age*. Therefore, it is fitting at this point to conclude on the whole of Part II.

(I) *Flesh: the domain of sin's influence on man*

The present evil age as Paul portrays it, was a life determined by flesh. In a morally neutral sense it would refer to man in his transitoriness, vulnerability, dependence and corruptibility merely living in terms of how he was created (*in the flesh*),

¹ Dunn, 1993:206, regards the other distinctions as elaborations of the first and primary distinction. Also Longenecker, 1990, 156-7.

² Waetjen, 1989, 1-12, illustrates how the social categories were associated with power or the lack thereof and how Christ as the "New Human Being" came to reorder that power. In the community of believers no such strata could be allowed to regulate interaction and decisions.

and not necessarily leading to sin. However, the picture changes when he lives life *according to flesh*. This happens when man lives life on his own terms and shuts himself off from being open to God's influence. It is not an ethically neutral stance. It is the result of man's having been corrupted by sin as a supra-human entity opposed to God and living in terms of that corruption. Man now has a propensity towards sin. The domain of sin's influence on him is referred to as flesh. It is not a discernible entity in man's being. It is a sphere of influence that has become part of man's facticity in his existence in the present evil age. It was not possible for man to escape this sphere. It encapsulated him. For relief or change to the situation the "capsule" encapsulating the present evil age, would have to be broken. Intervention from outside this closed system was needed. God Himself would have to intervene, and He did in the fullness of time, sending his Son to deliver man from the present evil age (Gl. 1:1-4) according to his promise to Abraham many centuries before Moses and his law.

ii) The inability of law and other elements to deal with flesh

God had not been inactive in the time since Adam. In his common grace he provided man in his pitiful situation with elements that would assist him and society to live life meaningfully to some extent. Paul, however, does not refer to these elements positively. He describes the elements in the negative sense of being human fleshly creations leading man away from God or into opposition to Him. It was no answer to flesh.

In terms of Israel, God's elect, the picture was different. 430 years after Yahweh elected Abraham and promised him His blessing, sealing it with circumcision, He provided Israel with the law of Moses to deal with the hardness of their hearts (sinfulness). One could say law was the specific element God gave to Israel to assist them in doing his will. This was to protect them from evil and to keep boundaries between themselves and people who served other gods.¹

Like Israel, and unlike his opponents, Paul did not distinguish between laws. He regarded law as a complete entity. Although it was divinely given (Gl. 3:19), he regarded law in its entirety as an interim measure until Christ and his Spirit would come (Gl. 3:19). In this sense, he was positive about law. Unfortunately, law would not prove altogether successful. It could not inject life into man. It could not provide him with the will to shun the influence of flesh. This resulted in man's sinning in terms of the law, emphasising his plight. There were covenantal remedies provided with law, providing temporary relief of the plight, but law could not help man not to sin. In fact, he became enslaved to law itself, living in terms of law and not in terms of his faith. Law in the hands of flesh actually promoted boasting in the flesh. Society became increasingly divided and caught up in group orientations. In this way, law became an instrument in the hands of sin.

¹ I cannot agree with B.L. Martin, 1989, 38, that one should distinguish between God's intention as negative and corresponding to the actual result, the increase of sin, and man's expectation that sin would be prevented.

iii) *Present evil age as no life at all*

Flesh, law and elements of the world enslaved man. He was indebted to God, because he could not live up to his standards, and therefore lived under a curse. Amongst themselves, they boasted of fleshly achievements. It was no life at all, and in terms of slavery,¹ not much different from the Gentile life and plight. Therefore, Paul could refer to life under law since the apocalyptic Christ event as a life of reversion to the elements of the world (Gl. 4:9). Since the Christ event, the divinely given law is on a par with the elements of the world.

With its wide-ranging enslaving and dividing characteristics, the present evil age is descriptive of a life in opposition to God and under a curse, ultimately leading to death (Gl. 2:19-20; 3:10-13). It was no life at all. Paul feared the Galatians were unwittingly reverting to this time before the advent of Christ and the Spirit in their lives. It would be apocalyptically anachronistic and disastrous in apocalyptic proportion. It would be tantamount to being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4) and setting one's vision on oneself and one's abilities, as opposed to being dependent on God and his provision in Christ and his Spirit.

iv) *Preliminary implications for freedom*

Freedom in Galatians is often regarded in terms of freedom only from law. Quite often, it is even narrowed down to merely freedom from ceremonial law or merely the curse of law or the wrong attitude towards law. I have tried in Part II to illustrate that much more is at stake. Paul actually moves in behind the initial matters of circumcision, dietary and calendar laws placed on his table by the Galatian situation. He discusses law in the context of the present evil age under the influence, even dominion, of sin and flesh. Christ did not come merely to deliver man from law and its curse. He came to deliver man from the present evil age in its totality. Flesh, the primary enslaver, was dealt with. In the process, law actually became antiquated and irrelevant. Deliverance from flesh's influence annulled the need for law.

Freedom in Christ exceeds freedom from law superlatively. It is about freedom from a complete paradigm of life in bondage to the present evil age. It is about freedom from the inability to know God's will, let alone live accordingly. It is along these lines that we turn to Part III to focus on Christian freedom itself.

¹ We will return to the *metaphor of slavery* in Ch. 5. It is fundamental in describing life in the present evil age.

PART III

THE FREEDOM OF THE NEW CREATION

CHAPTER 5

FOR FREEDOM CHRIST SET US FREE! THE NEW SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE.

1. ORIENTATION

Although the first two parts of this thesis are most important and integral to its argument, they are but stepping stones to Part III where our main subject, freedom in Christ and the accompanying ethic of freedom, comes into play. In Part I we emphasised the urgency with which Paul regarded the Galatians' consideration of adopting circumcision and certain Jewish laws as part of their ethics. For Paul this was no small matter. Employing rhetoric of urgency, he wrote from his heart. The truth of the gospel was at stake – its content, i.e. the cross of Jesus Christ through whom he had been crucified for Christ to live in him (Gl. 2:20), as well as its integrity in the changed lives of believers. His *modus operandi* was not the provision of an academic treatise on the irrelevance of circumcision, neither was it a gentle persuasion to reconsider their position on circumcision. He did not follow the route of weighing up the pros and cons of employing law in Christian ethics. The situation was far too precarious to risk this route. He opted for the radical reframing of their minds, using apocalyptic as tool to reach this goal. By using the rhetoric of disclosure and radical change he hoped to convince them that in the Christ event a new dispensation had arrived. The present evil age had been dealt with. New creation had dawned, and the Christian ethic had to be determined against this broader and foundational paradigm shift.

In Part II our aim was to determine what Paul meant by this present evil age. Our conclusion was that it refers to life before and without Christ, characterised by slavery to the flesh and its *secundi*, the elements of the world and law with all its paraphernalia such as boasting, division and discrimination. Law, although divinely given, could not restrain flesh. Instead, law itself became a slave to flesh and enslaved man. Because Paul gives such prominence to circumcision and law, one is at risk of defining freedom solely in terms of freedom from law. Freedom reaches much wider. It is another way of describing the totality of the believer's deliverance and redemption by Christ. The present evil age underscores both the Jew and Gentile's plight of enslavement to flesh, and calls for a solution to the total plight.

Part III moves on to the new paradigm or symbolic universe. It is devoted to our actual theme, i.e.: "For freedom Christ set us free!" On the one hand, believers are *free from the present evil age* and all its characteristics. On the other hand, they are *free to participate in the new creation* (Ch. 5).¹ It will be argued that in the new creation, characterised by freedom in Christ and a life in the Spirit, there is no room for any element – law included – originating from the present evil age. The latter has

¹ Kertelge, 1991,187.

been replaced in the advent of Christ and his Spirit. In as much as law was unable to justify man before God and to prevent him from evil-doing in the old dispensation, it is equally ineffective in helping those who have been justified by faith in Christ to live righteously. Paul's soteriology is founded exclusively on the cross of Jesus Christ, and so too is his ethics. In as much as the Spirit induces faith in Christ and his cross in the believer, He also induces the ethos befitting those of the new creation (Ch. 6). Freedom is as much freedom from flesh and law as it is the freedom to live as a new creation. It will also be argued (Ch. 7) that this pneumatological ethic, characterised by loving service, is responsibly lived in and with the help of the community of faith.

In the current chapter we move our focus to the aim of this dissertation, namely to come to an understanding of what Paul meant with: **“For freedom Christ set us free!”** Attention will be paid to a few structural matters in order to determine the relation between Paul's argumentative section (Gl. 1:11-4:21) and so-called paranetical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not a mere ethical addendum without which the letter would make equal sense. It is no afterthought, no mere warning against libertinism, and on no account, a reintroduction of a christologically redefined law. It will be argued that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is integral to Paul's whole argument. After having denounced law as ethical basis for the new aeon in Christ, he explains how ethics should now operate.

It will be argued that Gl. 5:1, as the focal point of Gl. 5:1-12, is pivotal at the intersection of Paul's argument that a new dispensation had arrived in Christ (Gl. 1-4:31), and his description of the accompanying Christian ethic (Gl. 5:1-6:10). Gl. 5:1-6:10 could be described as the pneumatological-koinonial ethical flip-side of the christological-soteriological foundation of the new aeon. Thus Gl. 5:1, together with the whole Gl. 5:2-12, both concludes the foregoing arguments and introduces the ethical flip-side to follow.

Hopefully, it will become clear that freedom, as Paul views it, is in no way comparable to the wide variety of views from his *Umwelt*. Freedom is christologically founded. Through the cross of Christ and the advent of his Spirit believers were free from the present evil age and its slavery. This made them part of the new creation in which they were now free to live in service to God and their neighbour.

It will be argued that Gl. 1:1-5; 2:19-21; 5:1-12 and 6:11-17 should be read in tandem to illustrate that it is either Christ, a new creation and freedom through the cross, or it is law as the present evil age's thin end of the wedge, and ultimately severance from Christ. It will be argued that Paul's call to stand firm against any form of slavery is, contextually speaking, a call to denounce the reintroduction of external ethical law in any form. It will be argued that new creation has replaced the present evil age according to God's will and through Christ's cross. Paul is adamant that law cannot be introduced into new creation. It would reopen the can of worms from the present evil age. If law was unable to justify believers or induce righteous living in the old aeon, it was equally unable and unfit to do so in the new creation.

Freedom in Christ and through his Spirit involves a clear break with the different slaveries of the present evil age. It is one in hope, because new creation will only fully settle at the *parousia*, but believers were to stand firm in this freedom and not to revert to any form of slavery again. This would jeopardise redemption in Christ.

2. STRUCTURAL ORIENTATION

In this chapter and the two to follow the focus will be on Gl. 5:1-6:10.¹ It is essential to decide on the position of this section in the letter. Not of equal importance, but of some consequence, is the position of Gl. 5:1. Does it fit with Gl. 4:21-31 or with Gl. 5:2-6:10? Together with this we have to decide on the sub-division of the section for Paul to speak as clearly as possible. Equally important, is the possible link between, on the one hand, Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17, and on the other hand between Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 1:1-5.

We have already determined the following in terms of structure:

- The *praescriptio* (Gl. 1:1-5/10) and *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18) are solidly linked and envelop the letter in *apocalyptic*.² The *praescriptio* introduces the letter with God's gracious and promised provision (elaborated on later at Gl. 3:14-18) in the christological deliverance from the *present evil age*, according to his will (Gl. 1:5). The *conclusio* returns to this theme. Hinged around Gl. 6:14-15 it expresses that the gracious provision in the cross of Christ has led to a *new creation*. Believer and world are now dead to each other.
- Gl. 1:11-2:21 is Paul's introductory argument along biographical lines.³ He introduces the argument with Gl.1:11-12, strongly emphasising his gospel as God's truth in contrast to man's. This argument ends in his concluding remarks (Gl. 2:15-21) of which Gl. 2:19-21 are certainly the climax. In Gl. 2:20 he states: "I have been *crucified* with Christ; it is *no longer I who live*, but *Christ who lives in me*; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself for me*."

We proceed to determine a workable structure for the rest of the letter, the emphasis obviously being on Gl. 5-6. Our aim is not to determine detailed structures, but a broad, workable structure *to assist in determining Paul's view on freedom in his ethical section*.

2.1. Where does Galatians 5:1 fit in?

There is no unanimity on whether Gl. 5:1 should be fitted with Gl. 4:21-31 or Gl. 5:2-6:10. Scholars opting for the former position argue that in Gl. 5:1 Paul summarises the immediately preceding section (Gl. 4:21-31) in which freedom and slavery are

¹ The reason for taking the whole so-called parenetical section (G. 5:1-6:10) into consideration, should become clear at sections §2.2, §2.3 and §3.2 of this chapter, where the unity and internal structure of the section is argued.

² See my Ch. 2.

³ See my Ch. 1.

very functional.¹ This makes Gl. 5:1 the grand conclusion to his fourth argument.² Bruce takes it a step further. He allocates a double function to Gl. 5:1, seeing it as both a summary and an application in non-allegorical language of the preceding allegory on Sarah and Hagar, as well as the conclusion to the whole line of argument started in Gl. 2:14.³ Witherington emphasises that Gl. 5:2-15 forms the next argument in which Paul returns to the matter of circumcision, which was the real bone of contention in Galatia, but had been delayed up to now in order to lay the foundation for that which is to follow.⁴ For this reason Paul follows with the refutation of circumcision and Mosaic Law (Gl. 5:2-12). He summarises this position by again emphasising freedom in Christ and its fruition in love for the neighbour. The rest of the section up to Gl. 6:10 explains the meaning of life in the Spirit and according to the law of Christ.⁵ In favour of this, one can add that Paul's tone seems to change from Gl. 5:2. He follows a more direct and personal approach.⁶ He calls for their attention by using the imperative form of ἐἴδον (Ἴδε) and then specifically refers to himself by name. He points to how well they had run, but how they had now been hindered (Gl. 5:7) by a bad influence (Gl. 5:9).⁷ He compares himself, his experiences and gospel with those of the other persuasion and declares his conviction that the Galatians will follow his understanding (Gl. 5:10). He is certain his opponents will be judged negatively (Gl. 5:10) and even calls for their mutilation⁸ (Gl. 5:12). This is passionate rhetoric and could benefit the position that Gl. 5:2 starts a new section, making Gl. 5:1 fit better with Gl. 4:21-31.

Esler makes a very important observation from a social-scientific perspective, stating that Gl. 5:1, in concluding the allegory of Gl. 4:21-31, lays down freedom as identity-descriptor for those associating with the action of Christ and adhering to

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 340.

² Also known as his fourth major argument in most analyses. Cosgrove, 1987, 219-35, makes a fine and deserving contribution to the discussion concerning Gl. 4:21-31. He argues that Gl. 4:22-27 constitutes a complete "argument to the effect that the Torah is in 'slavery' and has produced no 'children of the promise.'" In this way Paul reinforces his thesis that both the law itself (as παιδαγωγός) and those 'under the law' are in slavery (Gl. 3:21-4:11)" (234). Gl. 4:28-30 constitutes a second interpretation in the sense of a warning that "life in the Spirit" does not depend on law keeping (234). "The Galatians are children of the free woman, and to say that is to assert their freedom. The idea that sonship means freedom differs little in the end from the dominant theme in Gl. 3:23-4:7 that sonship means heirship, 'freedom' being closely associated in Gl. 5-6 with life in the Spirit. But the theme of freedom carries a strong ethical edge in Paul. Therefore, the motif of sonship in freedom provides a most appropriate conceptual means of transition from the ideas developed in the letter up to this point and the concrete exhortations to follow (see Gl. 5:1; 5:13), facilitating in the widest sense the movement from indicative to imperative" (235). He argues that the original readers would have heard a break by the auditor already in Gl. 4:31, which starts with διό, ἀδεῶς. He therefore chooses to add Gl. 4:31 to 5:1f (233). This is fine arguing, but still does not make it compelling to add Gl. 4:31 to Gl. 5:1f. It could equally well be argued that διό, ἀδεῶς introduces the conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31, or even the whole section from Gl. 3:1.

³ Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 364.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 359.

⁶ In both Gl. 5:11 & 13 he refers to them as "brothers".

⁷ It is commonly accepted that the metaphor of leaven working its way through the whole lump refers to a bad influence.

⁸ It could also be translated with "castration"; Morris, 1996, 162.

Paul's gospel.¹ However, although he is correct with regard to freedom as an identity marker of the believers, there is no conclusive reason in this regard why Gl. 5:1 should necessarily be added to Gl. 4:21-31. Gl. 4:31 is an almost perfect conclusion to Gl. 4:21-30, reading: "So, brethren, we are not children of the slave, but of the free woman."

More scholars favour the position that Gl. 5:1 is part of Gl. 5:2-12,² in which case the natural conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31 is not Gl. 5:1, but Gl. 4:31. The latter is a fitting conclusion in the same idiom as the preceding allegory and is introduced by the words διό ἀδελφοί, which can be translated as "in conclusion, brothers."³ Betz states that this section

is marked by an abrupt new start. There is no transitional phrase or particle.... The *probatio* section (3:1-4:31) now concluded, a new section is expected to begin, and its beginning should be clearly indicated.⁴

He even regards Gl. 4:31 as the conclusion to the entire *argumentatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:30) and a restatement and summary of his conclusions in Gl. 3:9, 14, 24, 29 and 4:7.

The last two words τῆς ἐλευθέρως ("of the free woman") repeat the end of the preceding v 30, and also point forward to the beginning of the new section of the exhortation (5:1). They indicate that the entire new section beginning in 5:1 is guided by its leading concept of "freedom" (ἐλευθέρια).⁵

Dunn speaks in the same vein:

Freedom is the leitmotiv of the letter. Having brought the discussion back round to that theme in iv.22-31, Paul reaches the climax of his exposition and appeal. The whole reason for his writing to the Galatians is summed up in the passionate cry of v:1. And the depth of feeling which so strongly motivated the writing, and which moves disturbingly beneath the surface throughout, bursts through once again in the forcefulness of the appeal... The consequence is a passage almost unique within Paul's letters in its passionate forcefulness, in its polarization of choice, and in its dismissal of those opposing him...⁶

In this thesis Gl. 5:1 is considered as a *most pivotal text* having affinities with both the preceding and the following text. It is transitional, containing an indicative of freedom as well as an imperative to stand firm in this freedom and not to fall prey to slavery again. In fact, it makes good sense as a *conclusion* to the whole theological argument (Gl. 3:1-4:31) if the prominence of freedom as soteriological metaphor is considered. Paul summarises and redefines the whole argument of Christ's deliverance and redemption of believers in terms of freedom. By the same token, he moves on to the flip-side of having received freedom, namely to stand firm in this new status. By doing this he *introduces* the way in which Christians should not

¹ Esler, 1998, 206.

² To mention but Betz, 1979; Dunn, 1993²; H.N. Ridderbos, 1976¹; Morris, 1996.

³ Betz, 1979, 251.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 255.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 251.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 260. R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221, agrees when he states: "All that Paul has argued for and exhorted previously in Galatians comes to focus here."

conduct their lives, i.e. in terms of law (Gl. 5:2-12), and how they should, i.e. in terms of Christ and his Spirit (Gl. 5:13-6:10). It will hopefully become clearer when the chiasmic structure of the letter is discussed in section 3 below. However, because Gl. 4:31 seems a more natural conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31, Gl. 5:1, although concluding the whole argumentative section, seems to be *more introductory to the so-called ethical section*. Therefore it will be regarded more as part of Gl. 5:2-12, but not exclusively so.

2.2. How functional is the position of Galatians 5:1-6:10?

Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not a mere addition to the foregoing. This should become clearer as we proceed. At this stage it would suffice to mention that the main themes of the argumentative section are revisited throughout the ethical section. This is obviously so because the letter is an integral whole of which the theological and the ethical arguments are in no way to be separated. The ethical arguments flow logically from the theological arguments. Paul does not have different sets of arguments for soteriology and ethics. They are two sides of the same coin. This cohesion and coherence must be respected if Paul is at all to be heard clearly. The following themes are revisited in Gl. 5:1-6:10.

- In Gl. 5:1 Paul revisits the christological indicative of deliverance (Gl. 1:4) by substituting ἐξέλιπται (“to deliver”) with ἐλευθερώ (“to set free”).
- The slavery metaphor so prominent in Gl. 3-4, is reintroduced as early as Gl. 5:1. It is also used positively in the sense of service to one another (Gl. 5:13). There might be an allusion to slavery in Paul’s reference to the marks of Jesus that he bore (Gl. 6:17).
- He revisits circumcision (Gl. 5:2-3, 6, 11) as introduced in Gl. 2:3, 7-9, 12.
- He juxtaposes the notion of reversion to circumcision with being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4), implying that those considering circumcision are drawing a line through his main christological arguments in Gl. 2:15-21 and 3:1-4:20.
- He revisits the Spirit as the One who gives life to those of faith (Gl. 3:2-5; 4:6, 28) in 5:5, 16-25; 6:8.
- The cross and crucifixion (Gl. 2:20; 3:1, 13) recur in Gl. 5:11; 6:12, 14, 17.

Scholars are unanimous in regarding Gl. 5:1-6:10 as primarily parenetical. Even Joop Smit, who regards Gl. 5:1-6:10 as a later Pauline addition acknowledges this. In fact, it is its exhortatory character, according to him, that makes it difficult to fit it into his deliberative rhetorical structure, so that he regards it as a later addition.¹ Already in the 19th century Lightfoot identified it as *hortatory*.² In modern times Betz³ is credited for bringing the literary composition of Galatians into sharp focus, setting

¹ J. Smit, 1989, 9.

² Lightfoot, 1890, 65-80.

³ Betz, 1975 & 1979.

a trend for many to react to. In terms of Greco-Roman rhetorical convention he refers to this section as *exhortatio*.¹

Although there is no disagreement on Gl. 5:1-6:10 being wholly or partly parenetical, there is disagreement on where the exhortation begins and how it should be sub-divided.² Some regard Gl. 5:1 as the parenetical beginning point, because of the imperative “to stand firm” (στήκω) and not “to be submitted” (ἐνέσθε) to the yoke of slavery again following the indicative of freedom in Christ.³ Others regard Galatians Gl. 5:13 as the beginning point,⁴ following on their choice to fit Gl. 5:1 with Gl. 4:21-31. This leaves the very operative imperatives “to stand firm” (στήκω) and not “to be submitted” (ἐνέσθε) to slavery again, separate from Gl. 5:2-12. One of the reasons for this choice is the supposition that, because the warning against law is strongly emphasised in Gl. 5:2-12, it rounds off Paul’s “dogmatic section” before he moves on naturally to the “practical part” starting at Gl. 5:13.⁵ Interestingly, there are scholars who opt for Gl. 4:12 as the beginning of the ethical section, because of its use of a passionate imperative (“become as me”), followed by another (“Cast out the slave and her son” - Gl. 4:30).⁶

Thereafter both imperatives and hortatory subjunctives appear repeatedly throughout 5:1-6:10: imperatives at 5:1 (twice) 13, 14, 16; 6:1,2, 6, 7; hortatory subjunctives at 5:25, 26; 6:9, 10. It is therefore necessary to insist that all of the request section of 4:12-6:10 is in effect the *exhortatio* of Paul’s Galatian letter, for throughout all of this section Paul is pleading with his converts.⁷

Longenecker continues by sub-dividing the *exhortatio* into two parts, namely Gl. 4:12-5:12, dealing with the Judaizing threat, and Gl. 5:13-6:10, dealing with the problem of libertine tendencies.⁸ I contend that the introduction of a libertine threat, or even a mere tendency in that direction, is both unnecessary and unwarranted. Paul deals with one subject throughout the letter, i.e. the believer’s deliverance by Christ from the present evil age, or as he formulates it in Gl. 5:1, his freedom in Christ, and how it relates to his daily living or *ethos*. His concern is that reversion to law in any form will render this freedom null and void (Gl. 5:2-12). Knowing that flesh was still a reality and that law had been unmasked as ineffective to deal with flesh, he introduces the Spirit as the new internalised ethical *Enabler*, with love as overriding ethical standard (Gl. 5:13-24). Nowhere is libertinism mentioned as a threat. He is more concerned with the problem of flesh still being around and influencing the believers to live according to its influence instead of to that of the Spirit. He is not attacking a possible libertine party from the left, but providing an answer to

¹ Betz, 1979, 253.

² See the following paragraph (§2.3) on the sub-division.

³ Betz, 1979, 253. Morris, 1996, 151-3, does not refer to it as an ethical section, although acknowledging its imperative nature. His title is significant, because it stresses the Pauline emphasis on freedom in Gl. 5:1-6:10.

⁴ Bruce, 1982¹, 239; Witherington, 1998¹, 260; Merk, 1969, 104.

⁵ Bruce, 1982¹, 239.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 186-9.

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 186.

⁸ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 187.

the Galatians' implied question of how to deal with the flesh in the absence of law (Gl. 5:18). He argues that the Spirit would provide ethical guidance (Gl. 5:22-23).

Dunn remarks that though most English commentators follow Betz, regarding Gl. 5:1-12 as the beginning of the parenetical section, it is better to follow the more German approach, regarding it as the conclusion to the main argument.

But since the exposition leads into the conclusion and the conclusion has the character of exhortation, the disagreement does not amount to much.¹

The question arises as to the importance of this section for Galatians. Should it be regarded as only loosely related to the all important argumentative section in which Paul downplayed the soteriological importance of law and its works, and emphasised the priority of faith, promise and the Spirit? If that were the case Paul could have ended his argument and the body of his letter at Gl. 4:31 after having come to the conclusion that: "We are not children of the slave but of the free woman." He might even have added Gl. 5:1, but more would have been unnecessary. Many scholars correctly regard Galatians' *exhortatio* as the climax of Paul's letter. Betz expressly states that it is the centre of Paul's argument.² Dunn refers to it as the climax of Paul's exposition and appeal. The whole reason for his writing to the Galatians is summarised in his emphatic declaration in Gl. 5:1.³ Having come to the conclusion in Gl. 4:31 he pushes on to stress both the indicative of Christ's soteriological action, expressed in terms of freedom, and the practical implications of its imperative for Christians. Fee fittingly states that Gl. 5-6 is

a crucial part of the *argument* of Galatians, not simply a collection of paraenesis added at the end, after the theological argument is in place. The ethical result of the life of the Spirit is part of the essential argument of the letter, since this is the burning question, "How do believers *live*?"⁴

Matera has been helpful with regard to the structure and importance of Paul's argument in Gl. 5-6.⁵ He regards the whole of Gl. 5:1-6:17 as the climax of Paul's argument. He differs from most, by not regarding the whole section as the letter's parenetical section. He does, however, argue that it contains a great deal of parenetical material, and that it is not an optional addition to Paul's theological argument. In fact, he too regards it as the culmination of Paul's argument.⁶ He reasons that Paul had been aiming at persuading the Galatians not to partake in circumcision. After introducing the subject in Gl. 2:3 he returns to it only now in Gl. 5:2. What he did in between, was to show the necessity of faith rather than works of law (Gl. 3:1-14); to explain the relationship between law and the promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:15-

¹ Dunn, 1993², 261. One can go along with this in the sense that Gl. 5:1-12 is pivotal in joining the indicative and imperative as long as the integrity of Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not affected.

² Betz, 1979, 255.

³ Dunn, 1993², 260; Witherington, 1998¹, 359 is in agreement with him.

⁴ Fee, 1994², 385.

⁵ Matera, 1988, 79-91.

⁶ Matera, 1988, 82.

29); to link law and other elements of the world to man's religious infancy¹ (Gl. 4:1-11); to appeal to their friendship (Gl. 4:12-20); and to allegorise with regard to their allegiance to Isaac, the freeborn (Gl. 4:21-31).

To be sure the circumcision question has been in the background (2.3-5), but Paul has not explicitly stated that the Galatians must refuse circumcision. The reason is clear. Before Paul can raise the question of circumcision, he must show the Galatians that they are no longer under the law, that the law belongs to their period of infancy (4.1-11). Only after he has dealt with the law can he concern himself with the most dramatic expression of the law's observance, the outward mark of circumcision.²

We have pointed to the fact that there are other scholars who regard Gl. 5:1-12 as part of Paul's so-called theological argument,³ but Matera insists there is also a connection between the theological argument and the rest of the parenetical section. He argues that the parenetical section proper (Gl. 5:13-6:10) is sandwiched between two very important sections in which Paul is pleading with the Galatians not to be circumcised (Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-18). He then quite rightly continues to find intentional literary parallels on circumcision between the latter two sections.⁴ It should be mentioned that these parallels are extremely solid, being based on both syntactic and thematic similarities.

Parallel 1

- 5:6 – For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail (οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία), but faith working through love.
- 6:15 – For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision (οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τι ἔστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία), but a new creation.

Parallel 2

- 5:3 – I testify again to every man who receives circumcision (περιτεμνομένῳ) that he is bound to keep the whole law (ὅλον τὸ νόμον ποιῆσαι).
- 6:13a – For even those who receive circumcision (οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι) do not themselves keep the law (νόμον φυλάσσουσιν).

Parallel 3

- 5:11 – But if I, brethren, still preach circumcision (περιτομή), why am I still persecuted (διώκομαι)? In that case the stumbling block of the cross (σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ) has been removed.
- 6:12 – It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised (περιτέμνεσθαι), only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ (ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται)

Fig. 5.1.

¹ It might be better to rather refer to their religious insufficiency, because of the fact that infancy or immaturity carries the undertone of religious developmental theory.

² Matera, 1988, 82-3.

³ Matera, 1988, 81, acknowledges, amongst others, Ropes, 1929, 24, for having pointed out the futility of an unconnected parenetical section. This is also the position of Kennedy, 1984, 146, who argues that Paul's arguments in Gl. 1-4 lead to Gl. 5-6, which is "the point of the letter". Furnish, 1968, 69, warns against sharp distinctions between doctrinal and ethical sections in Pauline letters.

⁴ Matera, 1988, 83.

Matera is correct about Gl. 5:1-6:17 being integral and indispensable to Paul's argument. He is equally correct about Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-18 being corresponding warnings against accepting circumcision as mark of the believing community, and about these pericopes enclosing the parenetical section proper. This highlights the parenetical section as descriptive of the believing community's actual identity markers. It is even more relevant if one considers that both are concluding summaries of the main argument. My contention is that not only Gl 5:1 is transitional from the theological to the ethical section, but also the entire Gl. 5:1-12, bearing elements concluding from the introductory and the theological arguments, as well as strong indications as to how ethics should be conducted; the latter being dealt with in greater detail in Gl. 5:13-6:10 (*fig. 5.2*).

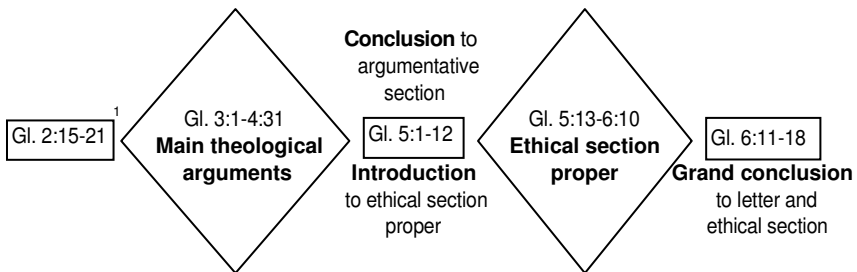


Fig. 5.2.

Clearly, Gl. 5:1-12 is transitional. Paul moves from theology to ethics, indicating equally that the two are not only related, but fundamentally inseparable.

It is significant that only now, at the pivotal point of moving on to his ethical section, does Paul expressly and overtly use the word group ἐλευθερώω ("to set free") to describe Christ's saving action. Only now, after having previously only introduced freedom in Christ as the truth of the gospel (Gl. 2:4-5), then arguing his case and coming to the conclusion that believers in Christ are children of the free woman (Gl. 4:31), does he stress freedom in Christ (Gl. 5:1) and add to it a vocation to live in freedom (Gl. 5:13) and to walk by the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25). This in itself suggests that Paul did not think of freedom merely as a matter of principle, but as a position that had to be concretely enacted in everyday living.

One has the impression, which will be substantiated in the pages to follow, that Paul, because he does not as a rule separate soteriology and ethics,² is about to emphasise freedom as essential to ethics as much as it is to soteriology,³ although he initially describes it as deliverance. It is also quite obvious that Paul would move

¹ Refer to Ch. 1 at §3.2.4.1 where it is argued that Paul used Gl. 2:15-21 as a *propositio*, reflecting the *narratio*'s material content and setting up the arguments to be reflected upon in the *probatio*.

² H.N. Ridderbos, 1975, 237-42, 253-8.

³ Morris, 1996, 153.

on to freedom in ethics, since his opponents could very easily argue – and probably did – that law was essential to determine ethical behaviour. Freedom is no side issue. It is fundamentally important with regard to daily Christian living. This he wanted to explain.

[B]ecoming a Christian meant entering a life of freedom, a life in which sin had been dealt with by Christ's death, a life in which the believing Paul now experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There was no pressure to keep a set of rules, no compulsion to earn merit in the sight of a God who was himself perfect and who demanded wholeheartedness from his worshippers. That the believer is called to live his or her life in obedience to the will of God did not, for Paul, constitute bondage. It was the natural outcome of the fact that the believer is set free from the slavery to evil that is characteristic of unbelieving humanity.¹

In Gl. 5:1-6:17 Paul brings his arguments to a close, becoming increasingly practical in what he meant by freedom for those delivered from the present evil age. He does not separate soteriology and ethics. After having argued that justification is not through works of law, but by faith (Gl. 2:16) in the promise of God (Gl. 3:14-18) and through the Spirit (Gl. 3:3-4), he follows with a very forceful ethical section in which he expressly implements the language of *freedom* (Gl. 5:1, 13) and *walking* in the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25). Paul's forceful closing section (Gl. 5:1-6:17) is the climactic fruition of his developing argument. He is not reacting against a libertinistic threat of some kind. He is not concerned about balancing out a so-called anomistic point of view with a new form of nomism. He is only drawing his arguments against circumcision and law to a logical conclusion. In as much as law could no longer determine salvation (soteriology), it could equally not be part of the ethical indicative of the time since Christ's resurrection. The freedom of believers in Christ should be evident in their ethical choices and actions in concrete daily living. It is a status that has to be lived to the full.² It is part and parcel of being in Christ and no longer being part of the present evil age. It is not something that can or should be put on hold for fear of being untrue to God's will and then reverting to law as the well-trodden and trusted ethical way.³

¹ Morris, 1996, 151.

² Betz, 1979, 256; Kümmel, 1973, 224-8.

³ 1 Cor. 8; 9:19-23 & 10:23-33 do complicate this position slightly. Paul calls on the Corinthians to be willing to put their freedom on hold when dealing with "those who are weak" (1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33). He himself became as a Jew to win the Jews, and as one without the law for those who were without the law in order to win them over (1 Cor. 9:19-23). To be sure, the situations are totally different. In the *Corinthian situation* it was, on the one hand, about sensitivity towards people without Christ who could easily experience a heavy-handed or imperialistic approach as belittling and offensive and consequently resist the gospel. On the other hand, with regard to the "weak" in the community of faith, their associations with regard to the eating of meat sacrificed to the gods, together with their immature faith and limited knowledge, could lead to disgust at the "accommodation" of these gods in the church. Once more, sensitivity and patience on the side of more mature believers was called for. This is in tandem with Paul's remarks that neither circumcision nor non-circumcision were of any value, but faith working through love and new creation (Gl. 5:6; 6:15). Faith and love would dictate the believer's application of freedom, and not his or her *right* to be free from circumcision and law. The *situation in Galatia*, however, was one of principle and not occasion. Non-Jews were being wooed into believing that Christianity involved becoming more Jewish in addition to believing in Jesus. This was untrue to the gospel.

2.3. How Galatians 5:1-6:17 could be sub-divided

This section has been regarded as a collection of a variety of loosely fitted ethical remarks.¹ The collection of *sententiae* at the end of the exhortation especially (Gl. 5:25-6:10) gives the impression of being without structure.² It will become clearer as we proceed that this section is not only well integrated with the rest of the letter, but that its internal structure is not at all loose. It is impossible to find unanimity amongst scholars on the internal structure of this section, which is greatly influenced by positions taken with regard to the matters raised above. One is humbled by the magnitude of activity in this regard. Therefore the word “could” in the above subtitle. Esler correctly acknowledges: “[T]here is always a measure of artificiality in any structural division of a Pauline letter.”³

In view of this remark and the variety of positions taken, an overview of the latter is unnecessary. Much in line with Matera’s division is that of Betz.⁴ He argues that Gl. 5:1-6:10 can be seen as an ethical trilogy consisting of Gl. 5:1-12, 5:13-24 and 5:25-6:10. Each sub-section is dominated by an introductory text consisting of an indicative, restating the discussed salvation, and an imperative or warning related to the indicative.

- Galatians 5:1(a) restates the indicative of *freedom* obtained in Christ and follows with the imperative to stand firm (in this freedom) and a warning not to submit to slavery again. He then explains how detrimental Mosaic Law and circumcision is, and stresses that, through the Spirit (Gl. 5:5), faith working through love is all that counts (Gl. 5:6).
- Galatians 5:13(a) restates the same indicative of *freedom* as a vocation, following with the warning not to give flesh an opportunity, and the imperative to serve one another through love. Believers are to *walk by the Spirit* (Gl. 5:16). He stresses the irreconcilability of the desires of the Spirit with those of the flesh (Gl. 5:16-17). The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are listed and the obsolescence of law is stressed (Gl. 5:18, 23).
- Gl. 5:25(a) restates the indicative in terms of *living by the Spirit*, and follows with the hortatory subjunctive to *walk by the Spirit*. Then follows a series of gnomic sentences in which there is a heavy emphasis on *intra-group relations*. He concludes with an eschatological warning (Gl. 6:7-9) and a summary of the whole parenetical section (Gl. 6:10).⁵ He refers to the bearing of one another’s burdens and the fulfilling of the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2), sowing to and reaping corruption from the flesh or sowing to and reaping eternal life from the Spirit (Gl. 6:8), and the household of faith (Gl. 6:10).

For the sake of perspective, I reiterate the previously made point that Gl. 5:1-12 is a transitional pericope concluding the argumentative sections, and introducing the

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 359.

² Betz, 1979, 291.

³ Esler, 1998, 205.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 254-5.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 255.

ethical arguments. In this regard the occurrence of “love” (ἀγαπᾶν in Gl. 2:20; 5:14 and ἀγάπη in Gl. 5:6, 13, 22) is significant. Outside this ethical section reference is made to “love” only in Gl. 2:20, and as christological indicative at that. It resurfaces only in Gl. 5:6 at the introduction to the ethical section. This time around it consistently refers to the correct ethical behaviour expected of believers, enhancing the notion that Gl. 5:1-12 has strong links with the rest of the ethical section. Gl. 5:13-24 seems to deal with the operative principle for Christian ethics, i.e. living the fruit of the Spirit (primarily love) in freedom, and Gl. 5:25-6:10 with the same principle in the context of the faith community.

This being said, we proceed to Gl. 5:1-12 and its “twin section” Gl. 6:11-17.¹ The emphasis will obviously be on Gl. 5:1 as Pauline indicative on soteriology *and* ethics. The Christian is a new creation characterised by freedom. His freedom from flesh and, amongst others, law, should be illustrated by not being circumcised or subjected to law, but by “faith working through love” (Gl. 5:6).

3. THE MOST STRATEGIC POSITION OF GALATIANS 5:1-12

3.1. Galatians 5:1-12 in relation to Galatians 1:1-5

In Ch. 2 we emphasised parallels between the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) and the post-script (Gl. 6:11-17). The main aim was to point out Paul’s total reframing of the Galatians’ symbolic universe. Through the advent of Jesus Christ and his cross the *present evil age* had met its match and had been replaced (although not yet removed) by the *new creation*. In the following section we take note of the implications of the parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17. It could be expected that there would also be a parallel between Gl. 1:1-5 and 5:1-12, which indeed there seems to be.² The main connecting lines are the following:

- In Gl. 5:1 Paul states: “For freedom Christ set us free” (τῆ ἐλευθερία ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν). In Gl. 1:4 he refers to this same deed of Christ with a phrase reflecting the same intention, i.e.: “to deliver us” (ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς).
- *Christ* features strongly in both (Gl. 1:1, 3 and 5:1-2, 3, 6). Add the reiteration of the christological basis of the *deliverance* or *setting free* of believers.
- He refers to God as “him who calls you” (τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς- Gl. 5:8). He refers to himself as “an apostle – not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Gl. 1:1). Although “call” is not used, it is implied. Add the judgement that those who have themselves circumcised “are severed from Christ” (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ – Gl. 5:4) and “have fallen away from grace” (τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε – Gl. 5:4), as opposed to their having been called. In other words, because one has to

¹ The reader is reminded of the solid parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17 motivated above. It will become clearer in §2.2. below, why they are here referred to as “twin sections”.

² Some might argue that it was not intentional. Such a position would actually unwittingly enhance the notion of Paul’s theology in general and his arguments in Galatians specifically, as being very well integrated.

be called before one can be severed from Christ or fall away from grace, by using these opposing verbs, Paul actually implies that they had been called.

- Continuing on an antithetical level, Paul refers to *judgement* (κρίμα) on those who preach circumcision (Gl. 5:10), which could be in opposition to the *glory for ever and ever* (ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων – Gl. 1:5) to God for deliverance through Jesus. Once again, the judgement of God comes into effect, because his will (Gl. 1:4) his glory were dismissed.

These are enhanced if one accepts Longenecker's arguments that there is also a marked parallel between Gl. 5:2-12 and Gl. 1:6-10.¹ He stresses:

- The severe tone in both sections.
- He accuses the Galatians of deserting "him who called you" (Gl. 1:6), echoing it in Gl. 5:8 regarding the persuasion not being from "him who calls you."
- In Gl. 1:6 the Galatians are said to have been called in the *grace* of Christ, while Gl. 5:4 makes mention of their having fallen away from *grace*, or being in danger of it.
- Gl. 1:9 and 5:3 give prominence to πάλιν, introducing confirmations.
- Both Gl. 1:8-9 and 5:10, 12 contain profoundly harsh anathemas on the opposition and their position.

Obviously, the first two are the strongest connecting lines between the two pericopes. After having stated the deliverance from the present evil age in the advent of Jesus Christ as the banner of the letter, he follows with his autobiographical section and his theological arguments against law. In Gl. 5:1-12 he returns to this deliverance, now referring to it as "freedom". The specific law now coming into play is that of circumcision, probably because circumcision was the one law with which the Galatians were confronted, but also because it was the *mother of identity markers and representative of all law*. He states that if circumcision were to be applied they would have to adhere to the whole law, which he had just refuted in the preceding arguments (Gl. 3-4). Law as such, law in its totality, was rejected. In this pericope, when Paul addresses circumcision, he implicitly refutes the whole law once more. The Christian had been set free from law as such and as an undivided entity: "If you are led by the Spirit you are not under law" (Gl. 5:18). There was no way in which law could be unravelled, certain parts be done away with, and others retained.²

It is very possible that by framing the arguments against law with the theme of deliverance and freedom, Paul rejected any form of law as part of the new creation. Just as circumcision represented the whole of law in Gl. 5:1-12, circumcision and law were probably representative of the present evil age dominated by flesh from which man was delivered or freed. This is especially possible, considering Gl. 5:13-25, di-

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221-2; Witherington, 1998¹, 360 is also supportive of Longenecker.

² Hansen, 1997, 229.

rectly following, is dedicated to life in the Spirit in opposition to life according to flesh. We have already deduced that the flesh is the overall description of the plight of the present evil age.

The theological-christological indicative of deliverance from the present evil age is introduced in Gl.1:1-5 and subsequently strongly argued in terms of Christ as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise (Gl. 3-4). In Gl. 5:1 he rephrases christological deliverance as christological freedom. However, he immediately expands it to include an imperative to live in this freedom. In other words, the *argumentative section* (Gl. 1:11-4:31) is *framed* in a movement from *deliverance to freedom*, and from *indicative to imperative*.

3.2. Galatians 5:1-12 in relation to Galatians 6:11-17

We have already taken note of the parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17.¹ The main parallel is certainly the recurrence of the warning against circumcision as opposed to Christ and his cross. Gl. 5:1-12 being his conclusion to the theological argument, and Gl. 6:11-17 the grand conclusion in his own hand, it could be expected that these two pericopes would strike a parallel. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of the ethical section in between as part and parcel of his argument and not as a mere ethical addition.

Paul frames the ethical section in-between with the theme of circumcision (Gl. 5:2, 3, 6, 11, 12; 6:12, 13, 15) as opposed to Christ and his cross (Gl. 5:2, 4, 6, 11; 6:12, 14, 17). That which the believing community is supposed to have, namely a life in the Spirit, characterised by loving service to one another, could not and cannot be provided by circumcision. In fact, whether one was circumcised or not, the result was still the same, namely a life not lived according to the Spirit, but according to flesh; in other words, considering Part II of this thesis, the present evil age. What was needed was not circumcision, but faith working through love, and this would be possible only if man were completely recreated to *καὶνὴ κτίσις* (Gl. 6:15 – “new creation”), possible only in the advent and cross of Jesus Christ (Gl. 6:14). Paul then draws persecution into the picture. He calls on the Galatians to open their eyes to the fact that he himself, who is aligned to the life in the Spirit (Gl. 5:13-6:10) was being persecuted. He probably had the opponents in view. They, on the other hand, feared persecution and therefore practised circumcision.

Without a doubt, the cross and the crucified One are absolutely central in Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17. Equally, in Gl. 5:1-12 the central point of opposition to circumcision, and the slavery it entails, is the freedom in Christ and his cross. In tandem with this, Gl. 6:11-17 finds its focal point in Gl. 6:14-15. In this case the opposite position to circumcision is the cross, the triple crucifixion and new creation. Thus, the result of the cross is *freedom* (Gl. 5:1-12) and *new creation* (Gl. 6:11-17), the two fundamental concepts that frame the ethical section. Because of the freedom from the pre-

¹ See Fig. 5.1.above.

sent evil age brought about by Christ, the believer was now part of the new creation. Inevitably, as a result of such a new situation of freedom and new creation, a new ethic is called for. This ethic is found in Gl. 5:13-6:10. Because these two concepts, i.e. freedom and new creation, are inseparable, new creation will also be tended to in this chapter.

The fact of the matter is that between the parallel sections (Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17) faith working through love, the cross of Christ and new creation are aligned with the life in the Spirit, and circumcision and its adherents are portrayed as unable to produce such a life. In fact, they do their best to prevent others from living it. This makes the whole ethical section (especially Gl. 5:13-6:10) more than a list of Christian do's and don'ts. It becomes an argument on the *secret of Christian ethics*.

Hopefully the strategic importance of Gl. 5:1-12 in Paul's total argument has been illustrated. If all these arguments are accepted, it means Gl. 5:1-12 is in tandem with both Gl. 1:1-5(10) as the introduction to the letter, and Gl. 6:11-18 as its conclusion. Gl. 1:1-5(10) thus introduces Paul's letter and theological arguments (Gl. 1:11-4:31) which culminate in the conclusion that Christians are free in Christ (Gl. 5:1-12). The latter immediately introduces the ethical argument culminating in his personal closing of the letter (Gl. 6:11-18).

It should be clear that Gl. 5:1-12 is vital and pivotal in Paul's argumentation. At four instances Paul summarizes the truth of the gospel in different ways. What makes Gl. 5:1 so incredibly important is *firstly*, that it is situated at the pivotal point where Paul's argumentative section ends and the ethical section is introduced. *Secondly*, it contains an indicative as conclusion to the argumentative section, as well as an imperative as introduction to the ethical section. *Thirdly*, the indicative is formulated in terms of christological freedom, and the imperative equally so, by denouncing its antithesis, i.e. slavery. *Fourthly*, Paul's statement is almost an exclamation. This is where he gets a hold on the whole situation. Circumcision and law prompted him to write the letter. In Gl. 5:1-12 he gets a firm grip on the whole issue with his fundamental theological-Christological indicative of freedom and the imperative of standing firm in that freedom. The rest of the pericope is devoted to the fatal implications of reverting to circumcision and law and faith working through love as the only correct way in which to stand firm. If this is accepted, then Gl. 5:1 is the pivotal text on which Paul's theological and ethical arguments and conclusions rest. One could say that his indicative arguments converge into 5:1a ("For freedom Christ set us free") and diverge ethically at 5:1b ("Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.")

If we break up Paul's argumentative section into its main components, we end with a structure that could be illustrated with the following model:

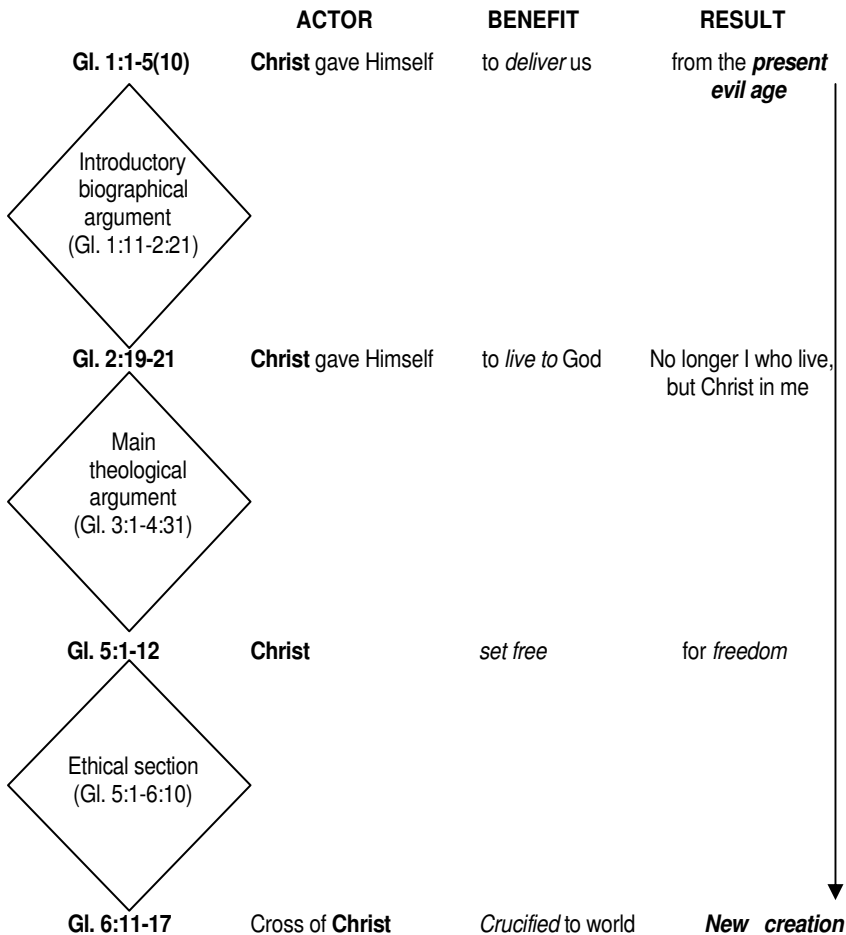


Fig. 5.3.

4. FREEDOM AS CHRISTOLOGICAL-SOTERIOLOGICAL INDICATIVE

4.1. Semantic Orientation

Paul's parenetical, final section begins with an indicative of salvation in Christ: *For freedom Christ set us free* (τῆ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν). Till now Paul used christological formulae¹ akin to the Jewish cultic tradition from which he stemmed. These formulae are not void of the notion of freedom. In fact, Gl.1:4 with its use of ἐξέλιπται sets the tone of the letter, introducing the notion of freedom in Jewish apocalyptic terms. The formulae in Gl. 2:20 and Gl. 4:4-5 at least allude to freedom in

¹ E.g. Gl. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4:4-5.

Christ. He has, however, kept the concept of freedom itself in the background, only briefly introducing it in Gl. 2:4-5 and explaining that submission to those who wanted to spy out their freedom and bring them into bondage to the law would jeopardise the truth of the gospel. He draws it a little closer in Gl. 3:26-28 and even closer in Gl. 4:22-31. He only now, in the parenetical section, emphatically introduces it into the equation of salvation in Christ by presenting it as a christological formula.

As a result, ἐλευθερία (“freedom”) is the central theological concept which sums up the Christian’s situation before God as well as in this world. It is the basic concept underlying Paul’s argument throughout the letter.¹

This is even more significant, considering the occurrence of the *freedom* word group. The expanded Pauline corpus uses it 28 times, whilst it occurs only 13 times in the rest of the NT.² Of the 28 occurrences in the Pauline corpus, 11 are in Galatians.³ Of these, 4 are in the parenetical section under discussion and 5 in the immediately preceding Gl. 4:21-31,⁴ of which Gl. 5:1-6:10 could well be the *ethical conclusion*.⁵ Longenecker remarks that τῆς ἐλευθερίας (“of the free woman”), used throughout the allegorical section (Gl. 4:21-31), provides the linguistic basis for all the discussion on freedom following in Gl. 5. He adds the profound insight that the idea of freedom does not originate here, but runs through the letter like a golden thread. In the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:4), as indicated earlier, he writes that Christ “gave himself...to deliver us from the present evil age.” The *narratio* (Gl. 1:11-2:14) emphasises freedom from the restrictions of Jewish law for Gentile believers. He refers to “the freedom we have in Christ Jesus” (Gl. 2:4) and equates it with “the truth of the gospel” (Gl. 2:5). In the *probatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:11) he stresses that believers are no longer under law’s prescriptions,⁶ but in a newly established relationship with Christ. The *probatio* intensifies this idea in Gl. 3:26-28.⁷ No doubt, freedom is at the heart of the ethical conclusion, and for that matter, at the heart of the letter.

The abruptness of the exclamation without syntactical link to the preceding theme... suggests that Paul wanted the verse to stand on its own, not simply serve as a conclusion to the exposition of iv.22-31... Since the eye of the reader would not run smoothly over a grammatical bridge between iv.31 and v.1, the reader would be forced to pause, and thus to signal to his Galatian audiences a statement of importance to follow. The predominance of long vowels in the Greek and repetition of the theme of freedom (noun and verb) would also serve to give the exclamation the resonance and forcefulness of a slogan or epigrammatical summary which brought to focus the burden of the whole letter.⁸

¹ Betz, 1979, 255.

² Morris, 1996, 153.

³ Jones, 1987, 70.

⁴ Schmoller, 1989, 160.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221.

⁶ Of the 32 occurrences of νόμος and its derivatives in Galatians, 17 occur in the *probatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:11).

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 223.

⁸ Dunn, 1993², 261.

4.2. The metaphor of slavery

Focussing on freedom in Galatians, especially Gl. 5:1, one cannot ignore the metaphor of slavery.¹ As Paul presented the metaphor of the *pedagogue* to indicate the limitations inherent to law in Gl. 3:21-4:2, he introduced the metaphor of *slavery* in Gl. 4:3-31, on the one hand, to indicate the negative type of life associated with the present evil age, but, on the other hand, to indicate the opposing positive type of ethic associated with new creation.² A brief semantic orientation reveals the importance of the metaphor.³

Firstly, the immediate context of Gl. 5:1 resounds with the metaphor. Paul refers to an heir, as long as he is a child, being equal to a *slave* (δοῦλος - Gl. 4: 1). He says that in that status of still being heirs, they were *slaves* to the elements of the world (δουλοῦν - Gl. 4:3). Since God had sent forth his Son (Gl. 4:4) and his Spirit through whom they call "Abba! Father!" (Gl. 4:6), they were no longer *slaves* (δοῦλος - Gl. 4:7). One should also add his reference to formerly being in *slavery/bondage* to ungodly beings (δουλεύειν - Gl. 4:8, 9; also 2:4). All these references are to the status of the Galatians in their pre-Christian days in the slavery of the present evil age. *Secondly*, with the allegory of Sarah and Hagar Paul equally stresses the antithesis between those who believe in the promised Christ and those who hold onto Sinai, as respectively of the *free woman* (ἡ ἐλευθέρα - Gl. 4:22, 23, 26, 30, 31) and the *slave* (ἡ παιδίσκη - Gl. 4:22, 23, 30, 31).⁴ He also uses δουλεία (Gl. 4:24) and δουλεύειν (Gl. 4:25) in this negative regard. *Thirdly*, Gl. 5:1 itself uses the term negatively when calling on the Galatians not to submit again to a yoke of slavery (δουλεία).

But *fourthly*, Paul also makes *positive* use of the metaphor. In Gl. 1:10 he refers to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος), as opposed to pleasing man. In Gl. 5:13 he defines the ethic pertaining to freedom as one of being slaves of one another (δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις) through love. In Gl. 3:28, quoting a baptismal formula, he states that the difference between *slave* (δοῦλος) and freeman had been disbanded in Christ.

Although both the phenomenon and the metaphor of slavery are intriguing subjects, one should be extremely careful of exploiting the metaphor beyond what Paul intended in the specific context. Therefore the current discussion will be limited strictly to those aspects applicable to Galatians. Hermeneutically speaking, it is equally important that one should not cloud the issue of slavery in antiquity with that of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries CE. Despite many similarities, the issue

¹ Jones, 1987, 77-8.

² Loubser, 1994, 172.

³ Although the metaphor of slavery is of great importance and a most fascinating subject, we can afford only a brief orientation on the matter in this dissertation.

⁴ Although παιδίσκη could be translated with "girl"/"young woman" it should be translated in this context with "slave", "slave girl" or "slave woman". Nida & Louw 1, 1988, 742; Braumann & Brown, 1975, 282; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 208.

of slavery in antiquity is best discussed in terms of its *Umwelt*.¹ For one, slaves were not easily distinguishable in terms of race, language, clothing, financial status, level of learning, professional capacity and other external features.² They were allowed to own property – even to own slaves of their own.³ Some even became slaves voluntarily for reasons of debt, job security and social integration.⁴ Most importantly, slaves of Greco-Roman antiquity had the very real expectation of manumission. Except for instances where slavery was handed down as a criminal sentence, it was never regarded as a permanent state.⁵

Harris correctly stresses that regarding the metaphor of slavery one should distinguish between physical and spiritual bondage. The physical or literal slavery is about the external and observable relationship between a slave and his owner. Spiritual slavery or bondage is about metaphorical use. This indicates an inward orientation according to which a person is under the authority and influence of another person or entity.⁶ We now suffice with a brief description of slavery as phenomenon and then continue with the metaphorical use.

4.2.1. The phenomenon of slavery in Paul's day

4.2.1.1. Slavery as total bondage to the owner

No matter what position the slave had, he was not free. Whether he was forced into slavery or entered into it voluntarily, he was the property of his master as much as the horse and the plough it drew, or the goblet from which he drank, and the wine in it, belonged to the master. The slave was an object totally at the disposal of his master. He was even disposable. Not only his labour belonged to his master, but his whole being.⁷ He was even marked by his owner.⁸ Although this did not necessarily include maltreatment, the fact remains, the master had full control, his purpose for living being to do what pleased his master and to suit his whims. However, responsible slave-owners treated their slaves well and even went to great trouble to improve their skills. Obviously, a skilled slave was a greater asset with improved market-value.⁹ Equally, after manumission of a slave such a former slave-owner would benefit from an ex-slave who had an obligation to be of future assistance to his former owner.¹⁰ There were also slaves who did not wish to be freed,¹¹ probably

¹ Harrill, 1995, 11-2.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 44; Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66; D.B. Martin, 1990, 1.

³ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66.

⁴ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66; Harris, 1999, 130, 141. The latter denounces the notion of D.B. Martin, 1990, 30-5, that slavery was a popular way of social upward mobility. Be that as it may, the fact remains that however prominent or obscure, it did occur and was thus a possible way of social improvement.

⁵ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70; Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998, 798.

⁶ M.J. Harris, 1999, 27.

⁷ M.J. Harris, 1999, 108; Weiser, 1990, 350; Tuente, 1978, 593.

⁸ M.J. Harris, 1999, 123.

⁹ Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998¹, 797.

¹⁰ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 72.

¹¹ Tuente, 1978, 594.

because they were well-treated. This being said, most slaves looked forward to being free to make their own choices and to serve whomever, however they wished.

4.2.1.2. *Slavery as temporary disposition*

Biblical slavery reflects strict measures regarding the temporary status of Hebrew slaves. There were numerous laws on slavery. It would be incorrect to state that Hebrew slaves never served longer than six years or till the next Sabbath Year. However, the duration of slavery not being our main concern, one could state as a rule of thumb, granted there were exceptions, it would seldom exceed six years, or till the debt leading to the slavery was repaid.¹ There were provisions for extended periods, but then, only till the next Year of Jubilees, and at that, the slave had to be treated and paid as a wage-earner or a guest.² In instances where the slave declined emancipation to attach himself to a specific house voluntarily, his ear would be pierced to the doorpost symbolising final, life-long attachment to the household.³

In both Greco-Roman and Jewish slavery their freedom was religiously based. The latter was about Yahweh's divine grace translating into regularly setting his people on an equal footing.⁴ In the Greco-Roman world it was about keeping the social and economic system running smoothly. Slaves could be costly and owners would see to it that their investment was taken care of. Some were furthered an education, received wages and even shared in profits, improving the slave's output and benefiting the owner. Although there were slaves who wished not to be manumitted for fear of losing their securities, most could later afford manumission. This, their former owners being Romans, afforded them Roman citizenship – a sought after status. In fact, so common was manumission that Augustus Caesar introduced legislation to regulate and restrict it in order to protect citizenship from being cheapened. Diligent slaves exercising self-discipline usually accumulated the funds to manumit and became examples to others to follow suit in hope of a better future.⁵ We have not touched on the practice of slaves being manumitted by well-meaning patrons, a common practice in Roman society. Patrons would be motivated by altruism, gratitude for faithful service, or self-interest, such as seeking the vote of the ex-slave who was now a citizen.⁶

But manumission never brought absolute freedom, for in Roman society a manumitted slave entered a client-patron relationship with his former master, a relationship which involved particular duties prescribed by the patron.⁷

¹ For a short overview, see Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 63-4.

² De Vaux, 1973, 82-3; Tuente, 1978, 594.

³ De Vaux, 1973, 88.

⁴ Du Plessis, 1997, 328.

⁵ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70.

⁶ M.J. Harris, 1999, 40-1.

⁷ M.J. Harris, 1999, 41.

In Roman society these duties varied from caring for a patron in ill health or old age to just keeping the patron's interests at heart. Failing to do such could lead to a charge of ingratitude.¹ Relevant to Galatians, one of the duties a patron could expect of his client or ex-slave was that he acted as his son's guardian.²

The idea is not to romanticise slavery. There were incidents of maltreatment. Roman slavery was less regulated and protective of slaves than Jewish slavery.³ However, regarding the temporariness of enslavement, one must emphasise, slaves did not expect to die in slavery. Obviously, this excluded those enslaved as convicted criminals who would usually be worked to death or died as gladiators.⁴

4.2.1.3. *Slavery as undignified status*

In all societies of the Ancient Near East slavery was regarded as the lowest position on the social ladder. In Greek society dignity was attached to freedom. To compromise freedom in any way was equal to giving up one's freedom and becoming a *slave* in some way. One was to be as independent from others and as free to choose as possible. This did not exclude service or the taking up of certain responsibilities. Service was actually regarded as essential, but then as a deed done in freedom and the actor described as *διάκονος*. The term *δοῦλος* was regarded as derogatory.⁵ A slave was the epitome of being at the beck and call of another. It was about belonging not to oneself, but exclusively to another.⁶ This was regarded by Greeks with "revulsion and contempt."⁷ Slaves lacked full rights of citizenship in the Greco-Roman world. Amongst Greek thinkers wisdom was regarded as a possession of the free, and slaves viewed as largely ignorant.⁸

4.2.2. **Slavery as positive metaphor in Galatians**

4.2.2.1. *A matter of controversy*

Dale Martin has pleaded for a rethink of the positive meaning of the metaphor.⁹ He correctly emphasises the importance of the reader's context. Focusing on the Corinthians, he motivates that Paul would have used a metaphor regarding slavery in

¹ M.J. Harris, 1999, 72-3.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 72. Refer to my Ch. 4 for a discussion on guardianship, where even the guardian's task is seen as limited and temporary. It is quite possible that Paul intended the use of the slavery and pedagogue metaphors in such close proximity in order to exponentially enhance the temporariness of law for the period between Moses and Jesus.

³ Weiser, 1990, 350; M.J. Harris, 1999, 41; Du Plessis, 1997, 328.

⁴ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70.

⁵ Rengstorf, 1964¹, 262-3.

⁶ Rengstorf, 1964¹, 261.

⁷ Tuente, 1978, 593.

⁸ M.J. Harris, 1999, 70.

⁹ D.B. Martin, 1990, is the result of his rethink on the matter. One must take note of his own acknowledgement that the scope he allows for himself is very limited: "[O]ne function of one metaphor as seen primarily in one text" (xiv).

a positive light only if there was ample sociological evidence of such a usage, since the Greco-Roman world did not view slavery positively. Related to this, he warns against the fallacious practice of explaining *slave of Christ* in terms of the origins of the metaphor without ascertaining whether it still makes sense in the new context. Lastly, he points to the dilemma that the so-called “high literature of Greco-Roman culture” more often than not receives too much attention at the cost of literature reflecting the views of the commoner. The former reflects a more negative view on slavery and the lower classes in general, so that one could possibly get a skewed impression of the phenomenon.¹

Martin argues that when Paul refers to himself in 1 Cor. 9:17 as having been commissioned (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι), he has in view that he is in a managerial position. Thus, in the eyes of the other followers of Christ in Corinth, Paul was emphasising his position of authority when he referred to himself as a slave (1 Cor. 9:19), which would have been understood as such, especially by the lower class people. He also acknowledges that the higher ranking believers would probably have understood it as an offensive self-degradation.² He even argues that Paul’s very early reference to himself as a *slave of Christ* in Gl. 1:10 is curious. Equally strange, according to him, is Paul’s reference to his bearing of the *marks of Christ* (Gl. 6:17). He reasons that the latter refers to the tattoo often placed on slaves in order to denote ownership. He concludes that it probably is a rhetorical mechanism to indicate that Paul is answerable only to God. The letter opens and closes with this notion. For Martin this makes perfect sense, since he operates with the notion that Paul’s apostolic authority was at stake.³

Because it is not in our scope to discuss 1 Cor. 9, and because it addresses a totally different situation, I would rather steer clear of an exposition of this text. However, because Martin’s study does reflect on Galatians it cannot merely be ignored. It does seem strange that Paul would use the δοῦλος terminology in 1 Cor. 9:19 if he had οἰκονόμος in mind and available (refer to 1 Cor. 9:17). Together with this, it is not clear that οἰκονόμος necessarily indicated slave status in either Pauline or wider Greco-Roman usage.⁴ Turning to Galatians, one must insist that δοῦλος is placed in opposition to ἐλεύθερος (*freedom*).⁵ The text indicates that this is the literary context within which one has to make sense of the application of the terminology and within which one has to ask one’s sociological questions. Paul was, after all, not motivating an ideology to his hearers. He was motivating that they were to make a radical switch from one theological-ethical paradigm to another. He was not advocating life in terms of what

¹ D.B. Martin, 1990, xvi-xviii. He also warns against disregard for sociological context in favour of “a world of ideas” (xx).

² D.B. Martin, 1990, 84.

³ D.B. Martin, 1990, 59-60. Refer to my Ch. 1 on the matter of apostolic authority and rhetoric.

⁴ Byron, 2003, 181-4.

⁵ Byron, 2003, 193-4.

they knew, but life as crucified with Christ and being a new creation. One should consider that Paul had *διάκονος* available. In fact, he even uses the term in Gl. 2:17. Granted, it is in a different context and has a different meaning. The point is, if Paul wished to assert his authority and to steer clear of slavery as a metaphor denoting a positive meaning, he had the apparatus to do so, and yet, he chose not to.

4.2.2.2. *Indicating a special relationship*

Paul uses the metaphor positively in Gl. 1:10 and Gl. 5:13. Both references are in connection with a special relationship in which the believer as a free person finds himself. In Gl. 1:10 Paul refers to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος). In Gl. 5:13 he calls on the free not to abuse their freedom, but through love to *be slaves of one another* (δουλεύετε ἀλλήλους). *Firstly*, with regard to the relationship with God, scholars are largely unanimous about the metaphor entering the NT *Umwelt* via the Jewish notion developed after the Exodus from Egyptian slavery and not via Greco-Roman philosophy or religion.¹ It might be pushing things too far to understand it exclusively in terms of a Jewish origin. Marshall helpfully suggests that the occurrence of a ransom in combination with a change of ownership, probably points to Greek influence in the Christian use of the metaphor.²

The Jewish notion carries a sense of reciprocating endearment on the part of the believer. They were formerly in Egyptian slavery from which Yahweh saved them. In this regard we read that He would free them from being slaves and “redeem” them (Ex. 6:6). Yahweh refers to them as his “treasured possession” (Ex. 19:5-6; Dt. 26:18) and “his people” (Dt. 26:18). In Ps. 74:2 the Psalter reminds Yahweh of “the people you purchased” and “whom you redeemed” (Ps. 74:2). In Mt. 3:17 Yahweh states: “They will be mine in the day when I make up my treasured possession.” Harris correctly speaks of the OT concept of slavery to Yahweh as carrying a dual meaning: *redemption – acquisition*.³ It is about Israel having been served well by Yahweh and voluntarily feeling obliged to reciprocate. It is a term of intimacy indicating Israel’s wanting to be his possession and wanting to serve Him, acknowledging that they existed by his grace.⁴ By referring to himself as a slave of Christ Paul was actually indicating to whom he owed his allegiance. God had shown him, and all believers in Christ, special

¹ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 72. A marked exception is Deissmann, 1927, 322-3. He grounds the expression in 1 Cor. 7:22 in the Greek practice of manumission where the slave provides his own ransom to the god of his choice. The owner accompanies him to the temple to receive the ransom from the priest. Technically the slave becomes the property of the god, but not of the temple. M.J. Harris, 1999, 121-2, acknowledges there are striking similarities with the position of Christians, but also significant differences. In terms of the NT, the ransom is paid by the divine figure; the former master is not involved; Christians are permanently free, but attached to a new Master; there is no obligation by the freeman to the former master. See also the very similar objections of Combes, 1998, 85-7.

² Marshall, 1974, 159.

³ M.J. Harris, 1999, 122.

⁴ Tuente, 1978, 595.

grace in providing his Son as a ransom. He was no longer merely a slave of God in the sense that the Jews regarded themselves, but slave of the God who provided in Jesus, breaking the bondage of the elements, law and flesh.¹

Secondly, with regard to slavery to one another (Gl. 5:13), Paul again emphasises believers are not to serve flesh. Faith did not provide the believer with that type of freedom. He was to seek to serve fellow believers as well as others (Gl. 6:10). In the new aeon brought about by Christ one shared in his love and servanthood and freely seeks to love and serve. One is inextricably bound to one's neighbour and his well-being. Being part of the new aeon meant being bound up with the weal and woe of one's neighbour.

The bottom-line of this aspect of the metaphor is thus that having been freed from slavery to the present evil age in its different forms the believer is not without special allegiance. He is bound to serve God and neighbour as part and parcel of his being. It is no side-issue in which one can engage condescendingly, or as a matter of option.

4.2.2.3. *Slavery as a special kind of service*

We have already referred to the Greek notion of willing service to the community for the common good, not because it was expected, but because the individual willingly took the initiative in full freedom. They referred to such a person as a δίακονος in distinction from a δοῦλος. It is as strange as it is a pity that most English translations translate δοῦλος, and its associated terms referring to the Christian and his service to God and neighbour, with *servant*. This seems in order in terms of the believer not serving grudgingly or under duress, but lovingly and gratefully. However, Paul, having had διάκονος available, chose to use δοῦλος. Was he not, seen against his *Umwelt*, meaning to stress man's being *free* in his subservience to Christ; serving his neighbour in love and not patronisingly like in the Greek paradigm? I am of the opinion that Paul used the term *slave* to stress man's service as essential to his faith. Man's being in a relationship with God in Christ involves that he serves Him as a matter of necessity. His faith in Christ also involves that he serves his neighbour, not because he has the urge to show kindness for some reason or other, but because he has been placed in a relationship with the neighbour in which his love must be translated into concrete service. But, equally, whilst one should not think in terms of a natural inner urge, it does not exclude the divinely created new inner willingness to serve God and neighbour. The willingness is not naturally part of man's ethical make-up. On the

¹ Combes, 1998, 87-9, emphasises the notion of slavery as social death and of death as a form of manumission. In slavery a person was dead to the world to live only for his master. In death that slave was regarded as free. Paul probably had in mind that by dying with Christ the believer was dead to the slavery of the world and free to live in allegiance to God in Christ. The paradox of freedom as well as slavery in Christ ceases to be a problem if it is brought into relation with the crucifixion of Christ.

other hand, it is also not divinely forced upon him. It is about God so renewing man that he wishes to serve Him in Christ.¹

4.2.2.4. *All depending on the Owner and his yoke*

Israel was not in the position of having been sold by one merciless master to another. Firstly, they did not regard the pharaoh as their master. Secondly, Yahweh did not purchase them from the pharaoh. He took them from the pharaoh, because they were his own. Thirdly, he did not do it to enrich himself or for any other ulterior motive. He did it through grace, having heard the pitiful cry and lament of his people (Ex. 3:7-9). He was Yahweh: unique! Being his possession would not entail the harshness of an owner seeking only to enrich himself at another's cost. Serving Him would be life-fulfilling.²

In fact, Paul states that the slave becomes like a son to the Owner (Gl. 4:7). This is a totally different relationship than the usual slave-master relationship. Now, in Gl. 4:1 he also used the son-slave analogy, but negatively. In the latter case he made the point that the slave was as unequal in relation to his master as the immaturity of a son in relation to his father's maturity. The son, although he is the future heir to his father's possessions, was as little entitled to own it as the slave was. During the time before maturity he was under the guidance of the pedagogue, who, ironically, was a (very trusted) slave. However, in Gl. 4:7 the position is totally different. The time had fully come (Gl. 4:4); the Son had been sent forth to redeem those under law to receive adoption (Gl. 4:4-5); and the Spirit was witnessing to this in their inner beings (Gl. 4:6). The son was now no longer in the position of immaturity and no longer needed guardians. Having reached maturity, he was now the heir (Gl. 4:7).

The point having been made is that the relationship of the believer in Christ to the One to whom he owes allegiance, is not altogether comparable with the usual master-slave relationship. It is about an Owner who is in a class of his own, regarding those that belong to Him as sons and not as slaves.

4.2.2.5. *The marks of Jesus*

Paul refers to his bearing of the marks of Jesus on his body (Gl. 6:17). It is not altogether clear what Paul intended with this reference. The most probable indication, on the surface of things, was to persecution. We know Paul was persecuted at different instances. But why would he refer to his persecution here? The immediate context suggests that he is juxtaposing himself and the integrity of the true gospel with his opposition and their so-called gospel. He clearly states they sought to be circumcised in order to avoid persecution for the sake of the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:12).³ He adds that the Judaisers were encouraging circumcision with ulterior mo-

¹ M.J. Harris, 1999, 153-6, reflects on the willingness of the slave in Christ's service.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 149-53, reflects on Christ as the perfect Master.

³ He also played to this tune earlier on at Gl. 5:11.

tives. They were not seeking the good of the Galatians or the honour of God, but the gratification that the Galatians had received the marks of circumcision. He states that they wished to glory in the Galatians' *flesh* (Gl. 6:13). What they should have done was to follow Paul's example of not glorying in the flesh, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world had been crucified to him and he to the world (Gl. 6:14). Clearly, the context suggests that marks of persecution for the sake of the cross and marks of circumcision are in opposition to each other, the one aligned with salvation in Christ, and the other with the flesh.

However, Paul need not have referred to the physical marks of persecution on his body as the marks of Christ. He could have meant it wholly metaphorically in the sense of having identified himself completely with the marks of Christ, a reference to Christ's crucifixion. I suggest that these marks, metaphorically or literally meant, seen as a reference to allegiance with Christ, probably allude to the marks of slavery common in the Greco-Roman context. Not that circumcision symbolised the slavery of Jews to Yahweh, but that Paul enhances the notion of slavery to Christ, special allegiance to Him, by using the phenomenon of the marking of slaves. One is reminded of the custom of the slave who wishes not to be manumitted and voluntarily undergoes the ceremony of being nailed to the doorpost as a sign of unwavering allegiance. In this way he implied that he belonged exclusively to Christ,¹ but the Judaisers were still in slavery to the flesh, seeking to glory in what was typical of the present evil age, whilst Christ had dealt with that slavery. Paul had left those elements behind and gloried only in the cross. This notion finds further support in the extended *praescriptio* where Paul refers to himself as a slave of Christ (Gl. 1:10) in contrast to pleasing men. In the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-17), which we have indicated, combined with the *praescriptio*, envelopes the letter, he again contrasts man's both-ering side, flesh, with slavery to Christ.

4.2.3. Slavery as negative metaphor in Galatians

4.2.3.1. Bondage of the will

The slavery metaphor was widely used in the NT *Umwelt* in order to depict certain aspects of the relationship with the different divinities and philosophical schools of thought. One should be careful not to regard this metaphor exclusively in terms of either its Jewish or its Greco-Roman roots. This is extremely important in the Galatian context. Although they were largely of Greco-Roman pagan background, they would have been aware of the Jewish background of their newfound faith. Paul himself would have had a broader context in view. We have noted in my Ch. 1 that, although he was Jewish, Paul not only had a vast knowledge of the Greco-Roman world, but was influenced by it to some extent.

In our reflection on the present evil age it became clear that man in the present evil age is in bondage to the *flesh*. Man had become corrupted and allowed sin to dominate his life – his decisions and actions. He had become enslaved to

¹ Harris, 1999, 112.

flesh in the sense that he lived in terms of his own transitoriness, frailty and corruption. He was focussed on himself and lived for himself. This was not something he could merely rid himself of. God had to intervene in his Son (Gl. 1:3-4). But, prior to this intervention man had certain elements according to which he ordered his life: principles, rites, laws, superstitions, entities that are by nature not gods, but regarded by many as such, etc (Gl. 4:3, 8-10). To Israel he gave a very special set of elements, namely *Torah*. However, *Torah*'s limitations were not always central to Israel's mind and they became so focussed and dependent on it that it determined their entire relationship with Yahweh. Life and life's decisions became dependent on knowledge of, focus on and allegiance to *Torah*. Paul describes this orientation as a *yoke of slavery* (Gl. 5:1).

Whether in allegiance to law, other elements of the world, or to so-called gods, it carried with it the bondage of the will. It resulted in man not living according to God's will. In fact, humanity became self-serving in its bondage to flesh. Even law was unsuccessful in dealing with flesh. Jewish believers became so focussed on law that many of them unwittingly replaced Yahweh with his law. While they regarded themselves as God's slaves, they had actually become slaves of his law.

4.2.3.2. *Lack of choice and responsibility, an abundance of curse and miserable*

They had no need to reflect on how to deal with new ethical situations. They did not always think along the lines of how to serve Yahweh and others in love, but rather how to interpret law. Even this was the function of learned men. The ordinary Jew had no need to take great personal responsibility with regard to interpretation. His was to remember the necessary laws and slavishly to abide by them.

The accompanying tragedy was that he neither had the inherent capacity to deal with flesh, nor to abide by the law given to aid him. This resulted in law becoming more of a burden and a heavy yoke. It continually reminded him of his failure to do what law demanded. It even led to his having to accept the punishment accompanying his misdeeds, or having to rely on the mercy of the One who gave the law. The fact is that Paul's references in Galatians to slavery and bondage to an entity other than God, have an extremely negative bearing. If one bears in mind that Paul refers to being under law as a curse (Gl. 3:10-13), as well as being in slavery (Gl. 3:23-4:5), it seems he hitches onto the notion of slavery as a miserable state.

4.2.4. **Conclusion**

Paul uses the metaphor of slavery to describe the position of both those without Christ in the *present evil age*, and those in Christ and part of the *new creation*. Although he uses the same metaphor, he clearly attaches totally different bearings to the two positions of slavery. With regard to slavery in the present evil age, he has in mind man's inability to deal with flesh, elements, law and gods of

his making in any other way than subjecting to their demands. The problem is that their demands are against Yahweh's will and lead to destruction and the unleashing of God's wrath. It refers to a burdensome life under wrong leadership and ownership. With regard to slavery to Christ and one another, he interprets the metaphor very positively, much in line with Israel's notion in the OT.

Firstly, the Owner involved was our God and Father who willed that Jesus Christ would deliver those who believe in Him (Gl. 1:3-4). The object of his taking ownership was not to place people in pitiful servitude, but to redeem them in order to become his sons and heirs (Gl. 4:4-7). *Secondly*, it is a concept depicting man's allegiance to God and his neighbour. It is about the special relationships and the acceptance of the responsibilities that accompany this relationship; about being willing even to be persecuted for being true to God and neighbour; about wanting to be owned by Him. *Thirdly*, it was about service in a new situation that God had created (Gl. 6:15). It would no longer be an inevitable fact of life that man would live according to flesh and so bring God's wrath upon him. God had taken away the temporary taskmaster of law giving orders and direction from outside man's being. He had, through the cross of Jesus Christ, dealt with flesh and provided man with the Spirit to guide him from his renewed inner being. Through the Spirit he had been renewed, enabled and provided with inner guidance to live according to the law of Christ.¹ New creation removed the notion of automatic failure and curse. *Fourthly*, the metaphor of slavery aimed to indicate that the redeemed person was not relieved of all responsibility. He had no responsibility to any entity of the present evil age, but was most definitely accountable to the One who redeemed him (Gl. 1:10). He had to serve Him in love, and also had a responsibility to fellowmen, especially to fellow believers (Gl. 5:13; 6:1-6, 10).

The movement from the present evil age to the new creation is about being under new Ownership and having been internally renewed to want to live in allegiance to Him. One is reminded of the appropriate remark by Harris: "Slavery and love are perfectly compatible in the divine economy!"²

4.3. The metaphor of sonship

In antiquity one was left to the elements if one was not part of a family. Being part of the family, having access to that which belonged to the family, sharing in its honour rating, and acting in accordance to what the family represented, etc., afforded one the protection of the family. Within the family one was safe and free to live one's life to the full, according to the family's traditions. Being taken into a family by adoption, one was freed from the whims of the elements. For

¹ We will deal with *law of Christ* in Ch. 6. At this stage it is enough to say that it will be argued that law of Christ does not refer to a new law, not even to the words of Jesus and the so-called love-command, but to *Christ as paradigm*. One who so fully lived up to fulfilling the demand to love and serve, that He was willing to die for sinners, in order to give them life and make the new ethic possible for them.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 104.

this reason one could say that sonship was equal to freedom within the borders, traditions and spheres of influence of that family. Sonship of God meant freedom from the elements and the present evil age in general.¹ As Lull puts it, in Galatians *sonship, freedom and new creation* are all synonyms for salvation.²

4.4. τῆ ἐλευθερία : a peculiar construction of significance

Paul's peculiar use of the dative τῆ ἐλευθερία is central to the correct understanding of the whole section. We will therefore firstly investigate the significance of the use of the definite article in its reference to freedom. Secondly, a decision will have to be taken on the question whether the dative in the construction τῆ ἐλευθερία is one of cause or instrument, or rather of purpose and destiny. Careful consideration of both these matters is fundamentally important.

4.4.1. Freedom: christologically defined by the definite article

Both Morris and Bruce remark that Paul uses the definite article in reference to freedom in Gl. 5:1 in order to define the freedom of which he speaks as the freedom given by God in Christ.³ Believers have this freedom as a result of their being children of the free woman (Gl. 4:31). They are from the Jerusalem above that is free (Gl. 4:26). They are children of the promise (Gl. 4:28) and from the Spirit (Gl. 4:29). These references immediately recall Paul's earlier remarks that: "Christ redeemed us..." (Gl. 3:13), "... that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gl. 3:14), and: "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings' referring to many; but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' which is Christ" (Gl. 3:16). When Paul speaks out on freedom he has Christian freedom in mind.

He is not talking about the abstract concept of freedom, or about the kind of freedom the lordly Romans enjoyed, but specifically about Christian freedom, the freedom Christ died to bring about.⁴

In view of the textual context in which Paul has explained the difference brought about by God in Christ Jesus, and how the promise made to Abraham had been fulfilled so that Gentiles now believe through the Spirit, he could very well have intended to specify the obtained freedom by using the definite article.⁵ Morris' remark might be slightly ambitious. However, different concepts of freedom were operative in Paul's time. The Galatians were obviously exposed to these and

¹ Niederwimmer, 1966, 195, states "daß υἱός und ἐλευθερος synonym sind." See J.L. De Villiers, 1950, 181.

² Lull, 1980, 109. We shall return to the metaphor of family in Ch. 7.

³ Morris, 1996, 152; Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁴ Morris, 1996, 152-3.

⁵ There is also the suggestion by Hort, in Westcott & Hort, 1974, 122, that τῆ= should be seen as a primitive textual corruption of ἐπὶ and should be read in accordance with the parallel sentence in Gl. 5:13. If this were the case the definite article would not be in discussion at all. Bruce, 1982¹, 226, regards this suggestion as unnecessary. In fact the evidence to this effect is not substantial.

Paul would want to be clear that the type of freedom he had in mind, was in no way related to the *elements of the world* (Gl. 4:3) which are part of the *present evil age* from which Christ had delivered them (Gl. 1:4). This would include Jewish and Greco-Roman views on freedom. It is also in keeping with the conclusion already reached,¹ namely that Paul writes in apocalyptic fashion and makes use of antinomies to stress that the new situation of freedom in Christ is radically different from anything anyone might have thought before Christ's advent.

At this point it seems apt to cast a bird's eye view on the main conceptions of freedom in the time of Paul in Galatia. Obviously it cannot be more than a superficial orientation concerning the more prominent positions on freedom and how they relate to or differ from Paul's conception. The idea is certainly not to indicate how Paul's views on freedom were developed or influenced along these lines.

4.4.1.1. *The backdrop to Paul's christologically defined freedom*

i) *Political freedom in the secular Greek world*

In the Greek world of antiquity ἐλευθερία was primarily a political term. Initially it was used in antithesis to the social position of a δοῦλος. In as much as slavery was regarded as essential for the healthy functioning - even preservation - of society, it was equally true of the opposite institution, namely that of ἐλεύθερος. One was born into one of these institutions. Political reality determined everything. From this point of view, freedom primarily referred to the social position of those not born as slaves. Freedom was a political term designating social position and rights within society,² including the rights to free speech, openness, boldness and frankness.³ Greek philosophical reflections on freedom were from this political basis. Obviously their reflections concerned only the ἐλεύθεροι. Aristotle was very influential in determining that freedom was all about doing what one wanted to. This was obviously problematic, because it could result in total chaos and anarchy. For this reason he argued that νόμος was necessary to provide the limits within which the free could operate freely. Freedom and law were not opposites, but belonged together and qualified each other.⁴ Man could not be a law unto himself within society and therefore νόμος was the expression of the will and claims of the polity while the state was there to administer the law.⁵ From this the notion of democracy was born as the best way to maintain self-government. It included the freedom to alternate governments when they did not administer the state to the liking of the common will of the ἐλεύθεροι. It was a guard against tyranny.⁶ In conclusion to this paragraph on freedom as primarily a political concept in Greek antiquity, it need only be mentioned that it reached a climax after the Persian war. At this point, the country realis-

¹ See my Ch. 2.

² Schlier, 1964, 488.

³ Blunck, 1975, 715.

⁴ Blunck, 1975, 715.

⁵ Schlier, 1964, 488-9. Gerhardsson, 1987, 4, writes: "The free men put themselves under a common law and appointed common rulers whom they could also dismiss."

⁶ Schlier, 1964, 489-90.

ing it was at war in defence of the freedom of its ἐλευθεροί, and for that matter, of the entire society and its institutions, freedom became a word denoting the state's autonomy to act as it saw fit.¹

ii) *Freedom as Greek philosophical concept*

It was especially the philosophical schools of the Cynics and Stoics² that developed the concept of freedom along non-political lines. The Cynics were champions for freedom, regarding themselves as ἐλευθεροί in the true sense of the word, fearing no human lord, subject only to a god, and constantly defending freedom and freemen from tyrants whom they perpetually criticised. The Stoics continued in this vein, but recognised a new dimension to freedom. The Greek state had started to decay³ and individuals no longer had the security provided by societal law. The emphasis moved from political freedom to that of the individual “set apart and under the law of his own nature or of human nature generally.”⁴ He had to become introspective. Within the frame of his self-understanding and experience of the cosmos he had to find his own position of freedom. It became “independent self-determination.”⁵ When one has insight into one's own situation one identifies spheres of life in which one can exercise free dominion, and others in which one has less freedom. There are external entities such as the body, possessions, family, etc., to which it was important to become less attached to and less dependent upon in order to be able to occupy oneself with that which is inward – the soul, ideas and principles – where one's real existence supposedly lies. It could also be described as participation in a divinity of sorts.⁶ One is reminded of the earlier discussed “elements of the world” (Gl. 4:3) and “beings that by nature are no gods” (Gl. 4:8).

In so doing he only fulfils what he is, “a part of God,” “a son of God,” even “God” Himself.⁷

In Stoicism there was a profound emphasis on ethics. Because they had the notion that freedom meant doing whatever one wants, one could get the idea that they promoted libertinism or amoralism. However, this is far from the truth. According to them, man had a natural law that was good. Thus, man who does not want to do what is bad, but that which is good, is truly free when he does what he really wants, i.e. the natural law of good. Although it was always debated how close to true the law of the day was, there was no doubt as to the necessity to live truthfully.⁸ In this sense, even a slave was free.⁹

¹ Schlier, 1964, 492.

² Klauck, 2003, 372f. and Long & Sedley, 1987, 158-83, attest to the fact that the Stoics were probably the most influential philosophical school in the Roman Empire.

³ Blunck, 1975, 715; Vollenweider, 1989, 23.

⁴ Schlier, 1964, 493. J.L. de Villiers, 1997¹, 187, reminds us that they were pantheists.

⁵ Schlier, 1964, 494.

⁶ Schlier, 1964, 494; Vollenweider, 1989, 30-1; Gerhardsson, 1987, 4-5.

⁷ Schlier, 1964, 496.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 856; Vollenweider, 1989, 82-5.

⁹ Vollenweider, 1989, 85-7.

The next step in the movement from political freedom towards individualistic philosophical freedom was the enhancing of detachment or withdrawal from the world, and restricting of one's personal desires (so-called *apatheia*). It involved the abandoning of one's life's course to circumstances and to the gods, accepting it as the divine will to which the individual should resign himself.¹ Freedom involved even the abandoning of passion, and ultimately, abandoning of one's fear of death.² In fact, death was deprived of its menacing character by allowing man to become part of the *Absolute Individual (Überindividuellen)* that transcends individuality. Suicide even became attractive.³ Importantly, according to this school, man never fully attained freedom. It always remained an ideal to strive towards and hope for.⁴

iii) *Freedom in the OT*

In the OT freedom is almost exclusively a social phenomenon, regarding slavery, manumission,⁵ prisoners of war (Deut. 21:14), and once, exemption of obligations (1 Sm.17: 25).⁶ The reference to *hōrīm* (חור) is actually to nobles (1 Ki. 21:8,11; Neh.13: 17; Jr.36: 2). Taken with 1 Sm.17: 25 and 8:10-18 one concludes that under the monarchy the Israelites were in effect not free subjects, but slaves to the king. Only the nobles and a few privileged subjects were regarded as free. Once again, freedom is employed in the context of slavery.⁷

Other than could be expected the OT never developed a theology of freedom based on either the exodus or the return from exile. Rather, it understood Israel's obtaining of freedom from Egyptian slavery as a divine deed of *redemption*.⁸ Israel did not understand freedom in a political sense. The whole concept of slavery and freedom was seen in terms of Yahweh's lordship over his people. They belonged to Him and He gave them protection and took care of them. It was not seen as something they had by nature, but rather as a gift from God. Within this context it was always seen as part of God's redeeming acts towards them. Freedom is the result of returning to God.⁹

iv) *Freedom in Second Temple Judaism*

In Second Temple Judaism the picture changes from the apolitical position of the OT to a more political one. Although the freedom movements that arose had a reli-

¹ J.L. De Villiers, 1997¹, 189; Blunck, 1975, 715-6.

² Schlier, 1964, 494-5.

³ Vollenweider, 1989, 72-4; Klauck, 2003, 363-5.

⁴ Schlier, 1964, 496.

⁵ Jones, 1992, 855. It is reflected in passages like Ex. 21: 2, 5, 26-27; Lv.19: 20; Dt.15: 12-18; Jr.34: 8-17; Ezk.46: 17; Job 3:19 with the use of Hebrew terms such as *hōr*, *hupša*, *hopsī*, *dērōr* and *hāpaš*. The LXX translates these terms with the ἐλευθερία word group. However, there is no fully corresponding term for freedom in the OT. Gerhardsson, 1987, 5: "The vocabulary shows that the very idea for freedom was not a matter of reflection in ancient Israel."

⁶ Blunck, 1975, 716.

⁷ Blunck, 1975, 716.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 855.

⁹ Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998², 112.

gious foundation, they had the political intention to overthrow the pagan secular authorities and to implement the freedom promised by God.¹ Movements of interest in this regard are the Maccabees of the second century BCE and the Zealots who operated in Jesus' time.

But it is not only on the political front that the Jewish concept of freedom began to develop. The more Judaism came into contact with the vibrant stream of thought from the Greco-Roman world, the less it could escape the influence of their philosophers.² Philo is probably the most prominent exponent of this tendency to remould Jewish tradition by introducing complimentary ideas from Hellenism.³ He drew from the Stoic notion on true freedom, but maintained that the true law that kept freedom from breaking loose and becoming counter-productive, was the Jewish law.⁴ Freedom and law are the two sides of a coin.⁵ Further, he did what the LXX had not done. He described the exodus in terms of freedom. He also emphasised that all freedom was a gift from God and that the freedom of the mind was more important than any other form of freedom. Only God could enable this.⁶ Another point of difference relates to their conceptions of God. Being Jewish, Philo did not entertain a pantheistic view of God. As Vollenweider puts it:

Der Kosmos ist als ganzes die wunderbare, einzigartige Epiphanie göttlicher Gnade und ist entsprechend von einem *unwandelbaren Gesetz* durchwaltet, das Gottes Willen vollendet zum Ausdruck bringt.⁷

The Maccabean religio-political struggles are depicted in terms of freedom (1 Macc. 14:26; 2 Macc. 2:22). Josephus even depicts the Maccabees as freedom fighters. Coins from the second and third years of the revolt bear the inscription: "Freedom of Zion."⁸ In fact, the struggles of the Maccabees were regarded as struggles for political freedom. It was feared that loss of political freedom would result in loss of religious freedom.⁹ Added, was a growing eschatological and apocalyptic hope of freedom.¹⁰ This is in line with our prior discussion of the use of Jewish apocalyptic throughout the letter, but most explicitly in Gl. 1:4, referring to deliverance from the present evil age.

4.4.1.2. *Paul's christologically defined freedom as totally different from his Umwelt's*

After this very brief orientation to the variety of views on freedom with which Paul had to contend, we return to the question of how these conceptions relate to or differ

¹ Blunck, 1975, 717.

² Jones, 1992, 856.

³ Hagner, 1988, 509.

⁴ Jones, 1992, 856; Vollenweider, 1989, 125-6; Gerhardsson, 1987, 7.

⁵ Vollenweider, 1989, 128.

⁶ Kosnetter, 1970, 282; Jones, 1992, 856.

⁷ Vollenweider, 1989, 132.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 856

⁹ Kosnetter, 1970, 281.

¹⁰ 4 Ezra 7:96-98, 101, and 13:25-26, 29. Targum to Lam.2: 22.

from Paul's views in Galatians. Obviously, since clarity on Paul's view on freedom in Galatians is the objective of the current study, we cannot at this stage make but a few cursory remarks. It is, after all, the aim of this paragraph to draw attention to the fact that it would not be unlikely for Paul to emphasise that he was concerned only about Christian freedom – the freedom for which Christ lay down his life. He had to define his position against a wide backdrop of views. Although his agitators were of a Jewish background, his audience was, despite the Jewish influence of the agitators, originally from a Greco-Roman background.

The subsequent history of this concept cannot be traced here even in its broadest outlines. Indeed, such summary presentations, especially those by theologians...run the risk of being too sweeping to allow for the details necessary to illustrate exactly how Greek and Roman ideas influenced Judaism and Christianity, and thus they often fall prey to the standard theological bias that portrays Hellenistic thought only as a foil against which the Jewish and Christian tradition gains its contours.¹

Jones is obviously correct if his intention is to prevent theologians from making sweeping statements and regarding Christian thought as having originated in a total cultural void. Paul obviously wrote against a backdrop of preconceived ideas of which he was very knowledgeable. However, Jones seems at fault when he, almost effortlessly, identifies direct Hellenistic influences in Paul's views.² One is reminded of the appropriate observation in this regard by Earle Ellis regarding source criticism: "There is a tendency to convert parallels into influences and influences into sources."³

It seems more responsible to contend that terminology from the Hellenistic philosophical and religious spheres relating to freedom would have assisted Paul in providing the necessary apparatus in order to find a foothold in their hearts and minds. Strategically and rhetorically freedom was a very appropriate term to use. This is true for both Christianity and the ancient world in which it first germinated; the latter preparing the way for God's unique dealings with man in Christ.⁴ In view of Paul's presentation of a radically new and different situation in the advent of Christ, it is very appropriate to point out the differences.

Speaking in broad terms, one sees that Paul's Christological interpretation of freedom in Galatians differs radically from his Umwelt's conception both in terms of its foundation and its content. To what extent he used terminology from his *Umwelt* is nigh impossible to determine. What does seem certain is that he provided the terms with new content.

- His views were far removed from the political conceptions on freedom. True, his views, especially the baptismal formula (Gl. 3:38) had social implications, but were far removed from politics. They were concerned pri-

¹ Jones, 1992, 855-6.

² Jones, 1992, 857-8. With regard to Paul he sites mainly instances in I Corinthians. He does mention a few instances in Galatians and Romans. Discussion of the references is not necessary.

³ Ellis, 1979¹, 29.

⁴ J.L. de Villiers, 1997², 204; Duvenhage, 1975, 27.

marily with social interaction in the believing community. He does not deal with the broader community. But more importantly, his freedom was founded in Christ (Gl. 5:1) and not on human endeavours.

- Freedom from slavery in Galatians' terms was primarily a religious and not a political concept, in keeping with the OT notion of redemption. It was not about being freed from slavery to other humans, but about becoming free from the oppression of the flesh, sin, law and the elements (Gl. 1:4).
- However, freedom reflected negatively on the Greek institution of *δοῦλος*. Within the parameters of the believing community this institution could not be continued in the same way as before; if at all. This matter remains open for another discussion.
- He is adamant that man is no longer *under law* (Gl.5:2-4). He does not have in mind the ordinary civil laws that every state and community deems necessary to function to the benefit of all. His reference is specifically to Jewish law, although he does imply the elements of the world (Gl. 4:3).
- Pauline freedom is not about self-realisation, but about the freedom to realise that which God wants. Dying to the world through the Cross of Christ and no longer living according to the flesh took the essence out of that one. It was now about Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20).
- It is not about becoming one with God through inner detachment from material things or through the soul's release from the body and this world to be absorbed by or dissolved into the sphere of the divine. It is about being freed by the One sent by God for the believer to live in the flesh, but not according to it (Gl. 2:20). It is about walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25).¹
- It was not about superior knowledge, but about knowing God and being known by Him (Gl. 4:9). Freedom could not be attained by one's own endeavour. It was revealed to one by God's initiative, as indicated in Ch. 2.
- Freedom is especially not about being detached from fellow humans, as we shall see in the next chapters. It is profoundly emphasised in the believer's and believing community's imperative to love (Gl. 5:6, 13, 14, 22) and to serve one another (Gl. 5:13; 6:10). Then there are the many ethical calls in Gl. 5:25-6:10.

That which the Greeks regarded as the highest form of freedom becomes in the NT the source of man's most abject bondage. Man, bent in upon himself, obstinately waves God's help aside and busies himself in running his own life in his own strength, trusting in his own resources, and falls into the grip of fear (Rom. 8:15; Heb. 2:15). He trusts in the tangible and is subject to the "bondage of morality" (Rom. 8:21). He makes use of the law and the powers of this world to create "his own righteousness", and is enslaved under the "curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13).²

¹ Chamblin, 1993, 314.

² Tuente, 1978, 597.

Christ's advent and resurrection was the apocalyptic turning point in salvation-history. Everything changed radically, because, when the time determined by God had fully come (Gl. 4:4) Christ delivered man from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Paul goes to great lengths to make this point absolutely clear.

- He refers both to Christ as God's Son (Gl. 1:16) and to the content of his gospel (also Gl. 1:4)
- Gl. 2:4 specifically refers to "freedom, which we have in Christ Jesus" (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἣμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).
- Although Gl. 2:16-21 deals with justification as christologically founded and defined, it has as much bearing on the christological definition of freedom, because it is about being set right with God and therefore also being set free from guilt and hopelessness, the latter being taken up in Gl. 5:5 as "hope of righteousness" (ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης).
- Then there is the very pungent Gl. 2:19-20 where Paul refers to his having died to the law and having been crucified with Christ who lives in him. He draws both the death and resurrection of Christ into the equation and applies it to his own life through faith. This is reiterated in Gl. 6:14 with the even more pungent threefold crucifixion formula where law is replaced by the much broader concept, "world" (κόσμος).
- He stresses the vividness of the crucifixion (Gl. 3:1). Not identical, but evident of the vividness and immediacy of their experience of Christ's work, is Paul's reference to their almost having equated him with Christ (Gl. 4:14) at their acceptance of Him.
- In Gl. 3:13 Paul refers to Christ's deliverance and setting free of the believers as redemption (ἐξηγόρασεν). Importantly, it is once again connected with the crucifixion. One could probably add our previously discussed metaphor of slavery to Christ (Gl. 1:10) to this notion of redemption.
- Gl. 3:22-29 places a heavy emphasis on Christ as fulfilment of the promise to Abraham and as the One by whom the believers were set free from the custodianship of the law. They had been made sons of God through faith in Christ. In Gl. 4:1-7 he stresses it even more strongly by stating that God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: "Abba! Father" (Gl. 4:7). This theme is picked up again in Gl. 4:21-31. Through this divine activity in Christ the Galatians' former "bondage to beings that by nature are no gods" (Gl. 4:8) and "elementary spirits" (Gl. 4:9) had been broken.
- Gl. 3: 27-28 emphasises baptism into Christ as the putting on of Christ, resulting in the negation of previously all-powerful social structures, so that all in Christ are one.
- The previously discussed Gl. 5:1 ("For freedom Christ set us free.") is essential to the christological foundation of Paul's freedom. Can it be any clearer?
- Equally central to our topic is Gl. 5:24 – "And those that belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

- He emphasises the role of the cross in Gl. 2:20 and 6:14 very existentially. What Christ did through his cross, he did for Paul. He not only turned salvation-history onto a new track, but equally turned Paul onto that track.

Quite obviously, Paul founded the notion of freedom in Galatians on the cross and resurrection of Christ. It was not about self-realisation, as Bultmann would have it – an anthropologically founded and motivated notion that could be either individually or socially determined. Neither was it about inner detachment from external entities and the individual's ambition to be released from this world in order to be absorbed in a deity. It was not about self-mastery, but about a liberation that was introduced from outside the believer through which he would submit in obedience to God.¹ It did not involve the attaining of superior knowledge placing one on a higher hierarchical intellectual level. It was about God's initiative in Jesus Christ to deal decisively with flesh and sin, and his gracious inclusion of man into that position of freedom through faith in Jesus Christ alone.²

4.4.1.3. *Freedom from flesh and its secondary jailors of the present evil age.*

In Ch. 3 the point was elaborately made that, although he approaches the subject at hand from the angle of law, Paul takes it to a much deeper level and spreads the wings of freedom over a vast array of slaveries. It is a pity that while so much scholarly labour has been spent on the subjects of freedom from the law; the extent to which law is still applicable to the Christian community, or how it should no longer apply; as important as these subjects are, too little attention is paid to freedom from the much deeper form of slavery reflected in Galatians, namely freedom from flesh!³

Paul, we have seen, introduces the notion of flesh very early in his letter. Although he initially uses it very neutrally, but does contrast it with God (Gl. 1:16), he gradually increases the negative light in which *σάρξ* should be viewed. In Gl. 2:16 the need for *σάρξ* to be justified is expressed and elaborated on in Gl. 2:20, and eventually he comes to the use of *σάρξ* in an explicitly negative ethical sense in Gl. 5. It would be a mistake to ignore this build up and confine

¹ Layman, 2000, 298.

² Jones, 1987, 82, quite correctly states: "Christlicher Glaube ist Freiheit."

³ Fletcher, 1982, provides much with which I agree. He denounces a division of Paul's letter into a section against opponents advocating law (Gl. 3-4) and another against opponents of libertinistic orientation (Gl. 5-6). I agree with his understanding that there was only one opposing group advocating law and that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is as much part of Paul's argument against them (Judaizers) as the foregoing section (220-68). I also agree with him that Gl. 5-6 is not an added on exhortation without which the letter could very well do (141-5). However, in his endeavour to emphasise the absence of a second opposition group I must disagree with his remark: "Freedom is consistently, in this letter, freedom from the law" (244). As I have advocated up to now, Paul takes his cue from the Judaizers advocacy for law, but moves in behind the scene set up by them to deal with the real problem, i.e. flesh. If this perspective is not followed the arguments against law tend to be too indiscriminate and the real enemy, flesh, almost gets away again by pushing law forward. Unless, of course, he is correct in his criticism of Betz who holds that Paul's arguments are primarily against flesh and secondarily against law. In this regard Fletcher is of the opinion that if Betz is correct, Paul misunderstood the problem, "since the body of the letter deals with the law and not social problems" (217). I believe Fletcher is wrong.

Paul's use of flesh only to Gl. 5. This easily leads to the understanding of law as the primary or essential jailor and Gl. 5 as an addition (if not an afterthought) to warn against libertinism or amorality in the absence of law. But, there is more to be said. Paul quite unequivocally opposes flesh and Spirit (Gl. 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-25 – most elaborately). One should see flesh and Spirit as a proleptic pair of antitheses. Where the one is read there is also an allusion to the opposing other. Paul very early in his argumentative section employ's the antithesis between the two ("Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" – Gl. 3:3).

Paul aligns circumcision, law and flesh as enslaving in opposition to respectively non-circumcision, promise and Spirit as characteristic of deliverance or freedom. The further his argument develops the more the two opposing sets of alignments are set up against each other. It should be accepted that in the Galatian congregations the letter would most probably have been read a few times. Through this repetition the two opposing tripartite alignments would have become more obvious. For instance, a second reading of Gl. 2:3, stating Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, immediately involved the rest of law and a life according to flesh. It also anticipated the antitheses of non-circumcision, faith and Spirit, introducing them into the equation proleptically.

In view of this way of observing matters one must argue that Paul starts off by introducing circumcision – that to which some Galatians were considering subjecting themselves – expanding it with dietary laws in his biographical section and with law as such in his argumentative section,¹ and then boils it down to the actual problem, namely flesh as the primary jailor of the present evil age. This is enhanced when we take the chiasmus between Gl. 5:1-12 and "Paul's own hand" in Gl. 6:11-17 into consideration (*fig. 5.3*).

Both the opposing alignments are present in these two sections. The circumcision-law-flesh alignment is shown to be "a yoke of bondage" (Gl. 5:1); severance from Christ, falling away from grace and of no value (Gl. 5:2,4); disobedience to the truth (Gl. 5:7); a bad influence² (Gl. 5:9); and fear of persecution for the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:12). The non-circumcision-faith-Spirit alignment is portrayed as "waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gl. 5:5); being concerned that faith is portrayed in love (Gl. 5:6); glorying only "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gl. 6:14); being crucified to the world (Gl. 6:14) and a new creation (Gl. 6:15); and a life of "peace and mercy" (Gl. 6:16). The emphasis is on circumcision and non-circumcision. This is obviously so, because Paul is wrapping up his arguments which started with the dilemma of circumcision. He does, however include flesh in the second section. But, very importantly, he brings the opposition between flesh and Spirit to its climax in the two sections in-between (Gl. 5:13-24 and Gl. 5:25-6:10). He portrays flesh as impotent to do any good (Gl. 6:8), and the Spirit

¹ Inclusive of τὰ στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου (4:3).

² Betz, 1979, 266.

as the One through whom one reaps eternal life and through whom one does “good” to “the household of faith” (Gl. 6:10). In other words, in the core of the chiasmus Paul stresses that circumcision and law, with which the Galatians had become troubled, was neither the issue nor a solution to any problem. It all boiled down to the problem of flesh. Man had been corrupted to such an extent that scripture consigned everything to sin (Gl. 3:22). This was the problem. God’s divine initiative of promise to Abraham was made (Gl. 3:6-14). Only later (430 years later), because of sin (Gl. 3:19) God gave the law. It was not to annul the promise (Gl. 3:17), but to help believers till the promise would be fulfilled (Gl. 3:23-24). Unfortunately, because of flesh – man in his corruptibility and indeed having been corrupted – law was not successful in its limited task. For this task law was impotent against flesh. The Spirit would provide the believer with the capacity to deal with flesh after the advent and resurrection of Christ.

The fact is that for Paul deliverance or freedom from the present evil age is more than freedom from law or τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. It is about freedom from the corruption of flesh, but then, also from law and στοιχεῖα that had become secondary jailors because of their inability to deal with flesh.¹

Obviously, a new dispensation having been brought about by the advent and resurrection of Christ, and flesh in its corruptness having met its match in the Spirit, there was no longer a need for law. An apocalyptically new dispensation had arrived. A new creation had dawned. The remedies provided by the cultic rituals within law, had been fulfilled in Christ. He became “a curse for us” (Gl. 3:13). The Spirit had replaced the impotency of law in its effort to deal with flesh. Law had become obsolete, because flesh had been dealt with.

4.4.1.4. *Freedom to partake in new creation*

As stated earlier and illustrated schematically, Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17 can be regarded as parallel pericopes; both being concluding summaries of Paul’s theological arguments. One sees a movement from Gl. 1:4 and the believer’s deliverance by Christ from the slavery of the *present evil age* to the preliminary conclusion in Gl. 5:1 that *for freedom Christ set us free*. This is further developed in the ultimate conclusion (Gl. 6:11-17) that “neither circumcision counts for anything, nor non-circumcision, but a *new creation*” (Gl. 6:15). For this reason and others that will become obvious, new creation is discussed here in relation to freedom.²

A very encompassing term with which Paul describes the new aeon that had arrived in the apocalyptic event of Christ’s advent, death and resurrection, is καινή κτίσις (“new creation”).³ Hubbard correctly insists that, although the phrase καινή κτίσις

¹ Of course it was meant to be a παιδαγωγός with all its positive intentions and elements. Because σάρξ rendered it impotent to fulfil its divine appointment, law as a whole had actually become a jailor or enslaver.

² Lull, 1980, 110, 129-30, even states that for Paul *new creation* is summarised in the term *freedom*.

³ A decision has to be taken on whether κτίσις denotes a noun or an action. In other words, does it refer to the act of creation or to the resultant product of the creative act? Without making too much of these possibili-

occurs only twice in the NT (2 Cor. 5:17¹ and Gl. 6:15), the notions of newness of life (Rom. 6:1-11)² and of Spirit (Rom. 7:1-6),³ which are in tandem with *καὴνὴ κτίσις*, are well represented. When these 3 notions are viewed in the contours of the death to life construction in Pauline thought, it should be apparent that *καὴνὴ κτίσις*, despite its infrequent use, is not at all as scarce in Pauline thought as meets the eye.

This is probably one of the most apocalyptically loaded phrases in Galatians. In view of our earlier observation that the *praescriptio* and *salutatio* envelop the letter apocalyptically one can assume *καὴνὴ κτίσις* is a description of the aeon opposed to the *present evil age* (Gl. 1:4). It describes the new paradigm in which the believer operates since the paradigm switch⁴ in the advent of Christ. Taking Gl. 6:14 into consideration, the point is made even clearer. *Καὴνὴ κτίσις* is very strongly contrasted with *κόσμος*.

In dealing with the freedom of being a new creation and/or being part of it, we shall have to deal with a few matters of which the importance will become clearer as we proceed. *Firstly*, a decision has to be taken on whether Paul's specific use of *καὴνὴ κτίσις* in Gl. 6:15 has an anthropological or a cosmological bearing. *Secondly*, to what extent is *καὴνὴ κτίσις* antithetically related to *κόσμος* to which Paul says he was now dead, and to law. *Thirdly*, the foundation of the new creation (the cross of Christ) will have to be discussed. *Fourthly*, how does the Spirit relate to the new creation? *Fifthly*, we shall have to pay attention to the ethical norm of new creation, namely love. *Sixthly*, we turn to Paul's reference in Gl. 3:28 to the non-discriminatory character of the new society in Christ. *Lastly*, a short reflection on new creation being in hope is in order.

ties, it seems the contrast with *κόσμος*, which is a noun, should settle the matter. It thus acts as a noun referring to the product of creation.

¹ Although one is tempted to partake in the most intriguing scholarly reflection on the occurrence of *καὴνὴ κτίσις* in 2 Cor. 5:17, I shall refrain from doing so and stick closely to the occurrence in Gl. 6:15. Hubbard, 2002, 133-87, provides interesting reading and sound reasoning regarding 2 Cor. 5:17. I find his conclusion wholly sound that Paul meant for new creation to have an anthropological bearing, but both on an individual and a communal level.

² Hubbard, 2002, 103: "In keeping with initiatory symbolism generally (chapter 5), Romans 6.11 stresses ritual suffering (death, burial and crucifixion with Christ), empowerment ('so that we might walk in newness of life,' v. 4), and transformation ('alive to God,' v. 11). Further, and also at home in this broader symbolic network, Paul's death – life symbolism in Romans 6.1-11 is focused on the individual and provides a basis for the moral imperatives which must result from the believer's identification with Christ. This ethical renewal is best expressed by the word 'life' (6.2, 4, 10, 11, 13)."

³ Hubbard, 2002, 112: "Romans 7.1-6 introduces two crucial themes routinely featured in Paul's death-life symbolism: the Spirit, and Paul's New Covenant retrospective. The two are intrinsically, that is, salvation-historically connected, and the presence of one implies the other. This section has also clearly exposed the substructure of Paul's soteriological imagery, which helps to account for the interconnectedness, even interchangeability, of some of Paul's favourite concepts... Finally, this section pointed to Israel's prophetic traditions, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as the inspiration for Paul's letter – Spirit antithesis."

⁴ "Paradigm switch" is chosen instead of the usual "paradigm shift", in order to emphasise the radical nature of the change. In doing this the salvation-historical approach is not harmed, neither is the continuity between OT and NT diminished in favour of discontinuity. Too often continuity boils down to merely a smooth shifting of gears. Here the emphasis is more on the steering mechanism taking the believer on a new route to God's destination for man.

Betz is of the opinion that *new creation* sums up Paul's whole soteriology. The Christian is only new, because he is in Christ. In Christ he has risen as part of the body of Christ; he has the Holy Spirit; and partakes in the new life in which he is clothed with Christ.¹ Although this observation is largely acceptable, one must, however, agree with Dunn² that Betz overstates his case when he, on the grounds of this antithesis between *new creation* and *circumcision or non-circumcision*, claims that Paul is actually announcing a new religion.³ In terms of Gl. 3-4 alone we have more than enough evidence that Paul understood *new creation* as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise and the coming of age of the Jewish heirs, namely the believers in Christ.⁴

(i) *New Creation: Anthropological or cosmological?*

In Ch. 4 I briefly illustrated Israel's hope for a solution to their plight. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Joel were called to witness to this hoped for divine solution.⁵ Although the words "new creation" do not occur in these prophets, they definitely witness to an eschatological new creation of God's people⁶. Yahweh would renew their inner being so that they would find divine ethical guidance from within. His Spirit would be given to them.⁷ When Paul speaks of new creation in line with the long prophetic and Second Temple tradition the question arises: what did he have in mind? Broadly speaking, did he view it cosmologically or anthropologically? Differently put, does it refer to man becoming a new creation or to the whole cosmos, man included, being renewed?⁸ Aymer,⁹ as well as Mell,¹⁰ provides a quick survey of the past century's main positions. We will not go into detailed arguments. Adams identifies three main approaches, namely of new creation as the individual believer, or as the believing community, or as a new cosmic order.¹¹ Aymer divides the trains of thought slightly differently, providing a less rigid approach, i.e. new creation

¹ Betz, 1979, 319.

² Dunn, 1993², 342.

³ Betz, 1979, 320.

⁴ Although Dunn's criticism of Betz is valid, he himself is probably guilty of overemphasising the continuity between Judaism and Christianity. One such instance is his understanding of "Israel of God" (Gl. 6:16), which is related to the subject of new creation. Refer to the subject at (ii) in §4.4.1.4 below.

⁵ See also Ch. 2 on the death of the world and new creation.

⁶ Eichrodt, 1979, 390.

⁷ See §3.1.2.2. in my Ch. 4.

⁸ Mell, 1989, 47-257. The expression *καλλὴ κτίσις* is found in Jewish apocalyptic where it is used synonymously with "new heavens and new earth" and most definitely has a clear cosmological bearing. It referred to the transformed creation that was to replace the current world. It was seen as a future event. It must, however be acknowledged that it was not at all exclusively cosmological. Westermann, 1969, 407-11, stresses that Trito-Isaiah (65:16-25) describes redemption as having both anthropological and cosmological significance. Everything (the whole creation) was to be miraculously renewed and the people filled with joy.

⁹ Aymer, 1983, 17-30.

¹⁰ Mell, 1989, 9-32, provides a more elaborate overview from a tradition historical perspective.

¹¹ Adams, 2000, 226.

as anthropological (individual and personal); anthropological, but with cosmic effect; or cosmic, but including humanity.¹

One must be careful of a too quick decision on Paul's use of new creation as anthropological or cosmological. Hubbard clearly indicates that even in the tradition from which Paul stemmed the bearing changed situationally. He argues that Is. 65-66's reference to "new heavens and a new earth" definitely has a cosmological bearing, but the anthropological bearing is not excluded. Is. 65:18 clearly has an anthropological bearing in reference to Jerusalem becoming a delight and its people a joy. Equally, Is. 66:22, after referring to "the new heavens and the new earth," assures the inhabitants: "So will your name and descendants endure." Trito-Isaiah seems to discern the anthropological and cosmological bearings.²

Hubbard might be too hasty in denouncing Westermann's interpretation of "new heavens and a new earth". The latter reasons the phrase should not be understood literally. He regards it as apocalyptic and therefore figurative language; even as "language of exaggeration" or as a quotation introduced from another context unknown to us.³ Westermann's further argument is that, whilst "new heavens and a new earth" are introduced, Trito-Isaiah's focus remains on Jerusalem and Judah. To his mind the gulf between the focused reference to salvation for Jerusalem and Judah and the more general creation of a new heaven and earth is too great to give the cosmological bearing prominence above the anthropological.⁴ Hubbard's criticism that later developments in Jewish apocalyptic, which tend towards a cosmological interpretation,⁵ disprove Westermann, is not convincing. Regardless of such a development subsequent to Trito-Isaiah, and despite the possibility that Trito-Isaiah might have sparked such a development, one cannot assume that Trito-Isaiah intended an exclusively cosmological bearing. Westermann, on the other hand, emphasising the localised Jewish salvational bearing, underplays the broader picture. Granted, the language is apocalyptic and figurative and addressed to Judah and Jerusalem; and granted it was probably not primarily concerned with replacing the cosmological order. However, one should take into consideration that Trito-Isaiah specifically addressed Jerusalem and Judah. His focus was on them. It does not, however, imply that the wider world was not included in the bigger picture. Of course, if that world refers to the wider human world it still carries an anthropological bearing. On the other hand, if Trito-Isaiah had only an anthropological inten-

¹ Aymer, 1983, 17-30.

² Hubbard, 2002, 17.

³ Westermann, 1969, 408-9.

⁴ Westermann, 1969, 409. Hubbard inadvertently creates the impression that Westermann chooses for an anthropological bearing against a cosmological one. My impression is that Westermann emphasises the new creational activity of God in relation to his people, because it was Trito-Isaiah's intention to do this. However, Westermann does not ignore the cosmological element. He very clearly states (410-1) the inclusion of the animal world, Is. 65:25 probably referring back to Is. 11. "This lets us see an important step in the transition from prophecy of salvation addressed to Judah and Israel to the description of a transformed world such as we find in apocalyptic (Westermann, 1969, 410-1).

⁵ Hubbard, 2002, 17.

tion with this phrase and did not mean to imply the created world of man, he could have made use of exclusively anthropological terminology akin to his time or to the Isaianic prophetic tradition without introducing creation terminology. This he does not do, so that one can acknowledge that the scale tips towards accepting a cosmological bearing of some kind and magnitude, but probably not exclusively or predominantly so.

[T]he Isaianic motif of new creation is both anthropological and cosmological in scope. It includes God's people and God's world. Addressing the needs of a community in exile, it speaks of a transformed people (40-55) in a transformed universe (65-66).¹

Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant (Jr. 31:31-34) is profoundly important for our subject. It most definitely has an anthropological bearing and is used exclusively with regard to Israel as God's elect. As indicated in Ch. 4, Jeremiah's reference to Israel's wickedness throughout the prophecy is a lament on its heart or inner being not being in tune with God's will, and a life of "organized hypocrisy".² The new covenant addresses this plight by promising an inner renewal of the elect. This is also Ezekiel's bearing.³

Hubbard continues the investigation of Paul's tradition, turning to new creation in both apocalyptic and diaspora Judaism of the second temple period. He investigates the book of *Jubilees*⁴ as representative of the former, and *Joseph and Aseneth*⁵ of the latter. He finds that new creation has both a cosmological and an anthropological nuance in *Jubilees*, although the cosmological nuance is more prevalent. An interesting observation, anthropologically speaking, is that it envisions both the moral and physical renewal of man. Longevity, good health and peace are envisioned for Israel. Cosmos' natural order would be renewed, Satan overthrown and the yoke of Gentile oppression broken.⁶

Battling both earthly and heavenly forces, the apocalyptic visionaries felt the cosmos itself closing in around them, and it is hardly surprising that their picture of the future was that of a completely transformed universe.⁷

However, *Joseph and Aseneth*, concerned with entrance requirements for pagans into Judaism, is wholly anthropological. Hubbard therefore concludes that both anthropological and cosmological nuances are present in the writings of Second Temple Judaism, but the cosmological element is more pronounced.

However, a pessimistic appraisal of the human condition (*Joseph and Aseneth*) called for a different solution than a pessimistic appraisal of the historical situation (*Jubilees*), and this observation provides a fitting introduction to the treatment of new creation in Paul's letters.⁸

¹ Hubbard, 2002, 17.

² Hubbard, 2002, 19.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 20-3.

⁴ Hubbard, 2002, 26-53.

⁵ Hubbard, 2002, 54-76.

⁶ Hubbard, 2002, 48.

⁷ Hubbard, 2002, 53.

⁸ Hubbard, 2002, 74.

This brief background on new creation in the tradition from which Paul stemmed being given, we move to determine Galatians' specific bearing on the term.

(ii) *New Creation in Galatians*

The strategic point where Paul employs *new creation* is fundamentally important. An overwhelming number of scholars are agreed that Gl. 6:11-17 is Paul's *conclusio* to and *recapitulatio* of the letter's main arguments, and therefore also the *hermeneutical key* to its meaning.¹ Most scholars regard Paul's drawing attention to his own handwriting as a way of emphasising the profundity of what is to follow.² On the basis of the urgency of the letter, the seriousness of the situation, Paul's not seeming to be frivolous, and the fact that his arguments are revisited in the subscript, one should accept Paul's reference to his use of large letters as emphasising and summarising his main arguments.

Hubbard's view from his death-life paradigm is quite in line with Betz' earlier remark that *καληὴ κτίσις* sums up Paul's whole soteriology.

Functioning as the "life" side of this death-life equation, *καληὴ κτίσις* resonates back through the entire epistle.³

Paul states that through "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (*ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὼ κόσμῳ* - Gl. 6:14). The old created order, present evil age, the world in its corruption, had met its match. It had come to an end. God created a new order in Christ.

The death of Christ on the cross changed the world, it had cosmic effects.⁴

With the *κόσμος* crucified and replaced by *καληὴ κτίσις*, it seems obvious Paul had the whole creation in mind, not merely the individual human creature.⁵ The whole creation had been affected. A new cosmological order had been founded. God's redemption through his Son extends beyond mere human regeneration.⁶ Af-

¹ Betz, 1979, 313; Weima, 1993, 90-170. The importance is enhanced by the fact that Paul himself took up the pen at this point. Bahr, 1968, 27-41; Fitzmeyer, 1974, 201-25, make it clear that there is ample evidence of such personal subscripts in antiquity. Bahr, 1968, 32-3, however finds it rarely has any connection with the bulk of the letter. Witherington, 1998¹, 440, is therefore probably correct in stating, in line with Betz, that in the subscript Paul follows rhetorical rather than epistolary practice. Once again, one should remember the criticism of Du Toit, 1991, 236, that it is not a true summary of all the arguments. It does, however, reflect the main content. For our argument that is enough.

² Lightfoot, 1890, 221; Oepke, 1989, 270-2; Lührmann, 1978, 119; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 290. Morris, 1996, 186; Witherington, 1998¹, 441. Bruce, 1982¹, 268, seems to accept a hint of emphasis, but remains undecided. Moule, 1953, 12, on the basis of Paul's use of the so-called *epistolary aorist*, is willing to acknowledge only that Paul took the pen from the amanuensis, but regards attaching a meaning to it as speculative.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 191. He refers to Weima, 1993, 170, who quite rightly agrees that *καληὴ κτίσις* might very well typify Paul's major thesis in Galatians. See also Harnisch, 1987, 279-96.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 451. In this regard one is reminded of Richard Hays' criticism of Betz and other post-Reformation interpreters who read the text "through a hermeneutical filter that highlights the relation of the human individual subject to God. Focussing on the problem of how a person may find justification, Betz places heavy emphasis upon individualistic soteriological elements in Paul's message," 1987, 271.

⁶ Aymer, 1983, 29.

ter all, man's living according to flesh was the primary cause of pain and suffering for the whole creation (Gn. 3). Restoration would involve both man and cosmos.

Anthropologically one can safely say, although Paul implies an individual and personal element in new creation – after all, it is an individual who comes to believe and is taken up in the new community – the communal element is not underplayed (e.g., Paul's recollection of his encounter on the road to Damascus in Gl. 1:11-24; 2:18-21). He is, after all, addressing congregations and makes abundant use of collective figures of speech, such as "men of faith" (Gl. 3:7) and "sons of Abraham" (Gl. 3:7); nations are blessed (Gl. 3:9); "all sons of God" (Gl. 3:26); "sons" (Gl. 4:5,6); "my little children (Gl. 4:19); etc. He speaks collectively of Jews and Gentiles on many occasions; and, importantly, in Gl. 6 the very emphasis of the ethics is on inter-group relations and responsibilities.

Pauline eschatology is concerned not merely with the individual but with the whole of human history and creation.¹

The very obvious alternative to this individualistic approach is the emphasis on the believing community as new creation.² If it does not exclude the individual element it is a whole lot better than the previous one, but both these anthropological approaches lack the cosmological element. On the one hand, that which happens to the believer or believing community has an affect on the cosmos. If man is renewed he is also renewed in his relation to the rest of creation and the latter is also renewed.³ On the other hand, one must not think of man's coming to faith as the decisive event in history. That honour goes to God (Gl. 1: 5) for having willed the cross and resurrection of Christ.

For Paul, both humanity and the cosmos are fallen and thus in need of redemption (Rom. 1:18ff; 8:22ff). He attributes the fallen state of the cosmos to humanity's transgression (Rom. 5:12; 8:20), but nowhere does Paul state or imply that the redemption of the cosmos will be affected as a consequence of the redeemed humanity's world view. Rather, for Paul both the redemption of humanity and the transformation of the cosmos are acts of God (1 Cor. 7:29-31; 15:23-28; 11 Cor. 5:17; cf. Rom. 8:38; Gl. 4:3).⁴

It would probably be safe to assume that Paul's theology included both the cosmological and anthropological bearings of new creation. The use of *κόσμος* in close proximity and in opposition to new creation, as well as the opposition of "present evil age" in the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:4), provides enough cosmological foundation. It does, however seem that in Galatians Paul employs it very strongly in terms of its significance for the believing community.⁵ It must be emphasised that the believing community is not equated with new creation. They are not the new creation. They are part of the new creation. Just as their living according to the flesh had caused sorrow to all creation of

¹ Aymer, 1983, 20.

² Chilton, 1977/8, 311-3.

³ Aymer, 1983, 21.

⁴ Aymer, 1983, 24.

⁵ Adams, 2000, 227.

which they were part, they now obviously have a very fundamental role to play in the well-being of the new creation by living according to the Spirit.

In the community of ἀδελφοί in Christ, God takes humanity to himself and loves with a truly human heart. Christian *agapē* is the fulfilment of the New Covenant, whereby God puts his own will in the hearts of the members of his Church to make of it the beginning of a transformed humanity.¹

One could thus argue that the cosmological transformation is currently more in the background, while the anthropological renewal is more to the forefront and very conspicuous in the community of believers. One should not set the cosmological and the anthropological bearings against each other. Rather, it might be better to consider Paul's use of new creation in Galatians as an *aeonological-soteriological concept* involving both the cosmological and the anthropological bearings. It is about the new order of things. It is about the new paradigm of being in Christ, having the Spirit and being dead to the world. That is why Paul, in the very next sentence, refers to this new creation or order of things as a κανὼν (rule or paradigm) according to which the Israel of God is to live (Gl. 6:16). Although it will ultimately be fully concretised in the *parousia*, the paradigm has been introduced by the advent of Christ and his Spirit.²

"New" is for Paul, that which is eschatologically new; that which is of definitive consequence. And the one who, by faith and baptism, is "in Christ," participates in this new eschatological creation, which has begun with the resurrection of Christ. Such an individual also eagerly awaits Christ's return for the full expression of this new creation.³

In view of what has been argued, one should remark that *Israel of God* is not to be equated with *new creation*. The Israel of God partakes in the new creation, which is God's new dispensation in Christ that will be fulfilled in Christ's *parousia*, but new creation exceeds it by far.

(iii) *New creation as non-discriminatory (Gl. 3:28)*

Theologically and eschatologically there is no longer an old Israel or any other people. In the new dispensation there is only one eschatological people of God, the Israel of God.⁴ Obviously, by the latter he means those who had come to faith in Christ and to whom the world had died and they to the world.⁵ It was the commu-

¹ Deidun, 1981, 149.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 451: "Paul is saying that the new creation, not circumcision or uncircumcision, is the measuring rod by which persons should evaluate their lives." Dunn, 1993², 341, states that by the death of the world a whole new world of possibilities had been opened.

³ Gordon, 1984, 112.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 451. In this regard, one should also make mention of the Jewish notion that the ideal Israel of the end-time would be known as the "sons of God". See Byrne, 1979, 62f.; my Ch.7 at §3.2.3.

⁵ I will not go into the debate concerning *Israel of God*. Suffice it to mention the following: (1) The letter thoroughly rejects any notion of Israel having any preference soteriologically. Paul emphasises the radical eschatological change in Christ. He slams the Judaisers for thinking in terms of Jewish identity. Strategically, Paul would have been inconsistent if he were to acknowledge such a group in the closing. It is also unthinkable that he would incur a blessing on them. (2) Even if Paul were to have included the believers in Christ into the historical people of God (Dunn, 1993², 345), or thought wholly in terms of Jewish Christians, it would contradict his strong emphasis on a totally new dispensation having arrived in Christ. It would be like the metaphorical new wine being poured into old wineskins (Mk. 2:22). (3) Grammatically it is possible to translate the final καί with "that is", "indeed" or "in fact"

nity typical of the new creation.¹ The distinctions between people were no longer conclusive or constitutive of one's position before God and in the community (Gl. 3:28). However believers were dealt with outside the community of believers, they were to run counter to ordinary society.² Within the community all were on the same level. Faith in Jesus Christ was the only determining factor drawing the line between believers in Christ and all other people – Jewish or pagan, and determining relations and conduct in the community of faith.³

In Christ the old privileges which men use to erect barriers between themselves (circumcision and uncircumcision) are no longer valid. Only belonging to him counts – the new creation. The past has been cancelled by the cross. Therefore the world, as the embodiment of the old creation, is unable to make any claims upon Christ. For his part the Christian is unable to live in dependence on the world: they are dead to each other (Gl. 6:14f.).⁴

The only defining factor for life in the new dispensation is the relationship with Christ.⁵ Association with the cross would have been humiliating, but the believer was to find glory in that revolting instance. Christians could not boast in anything like law-observance from the previous dispensation. The cross of Christ was the only orientation point. A lasting separation from the old world had occurred.

[A] lasting separation has also been effected from the whole contemporary world, with its climate of opinion and canons of honour and dishonour.⁶

A new creation had been inaugurated, which would inevitably transform the whole cosmos.⁷ In the interim the community of faith had to pursue being non-discriminatory. However, Paul does not implement or advocate a program of non-discrimination. He advocates being orientated to Christ.

No social agenda will correct the situation, and no pedagogical strategy will suffice, because the power of evil is such that it can corrupt even the purest motives and the sternest resolve.⁸

In light of this broader context of movement from the *present evil age* to *new creation* in Christ, I find it impossible to argue as Miller does⁹, that Paul argued

(Bauer, 1979, 392-3; Moule, 1953, 167; Witherington, 1998¹, 452). It is thus accepted that *Israel of God* refers to Gods eschatological people, all believers in Christ. See also Clark, 1980, 21-9, who argues that Paul assumed that his Gentile converts followed his understanding of Judaism, namely the one based on faith and not on works.

¹ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 124-5, describes the community of believers as a new family. They were totally different from the old genetically determined families. "Being born again at that time meant joining Christ's new family of inclusiveness, grace and universal access to personal salvation by adoption into Christ's new family" (125).

² Duff, 1989, 287.

³ Johnson, 2002, 34-44, is most valuable in this regard. Presenting baptism as an apocalyptic act (41), she states: "[B]aptism represents the very end of the created order, replaced by the new creation in Christ" (42).

⁴ Esser, 1975, 385; Gerhardsson, 1987, 17-18.

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 343; Jewett, 1994, 251.

⁶ Bruce, 1982¹, 271.

⁷ Martyn, 1997, 382-3, 570-4, observes that Gl. 3:28 represents the switch from the old aeon with its building blocks of opposites to the new creation which is orientated to Christ alone. New antinomies had arisen, such as being in Christ or without Him; living by the Spirit or according to the flesh.

⁸ Gaventa, 2000, 278.

⁹ Miller, 2002, 9-11, interprets the οὐκ-οὐδέ and οὐκ-καὶ combinations as: "It is a matter of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, because believers are all Jews, all free, and all males" (11).

for a salvific union with Christ amongst all believers, but only on a soteriological level. On the ordinary, day to day practical level this would have no bearing. In fact, he argues that these differences are integral to his argument – actually constitutive thereof. He argues from the immediate context of the believers being heirs. In terms of the Jewish background or roots of Christianity, Paul actually re-enforces being Jewish, free and male in the sense of all believers in Christ having been *promoted* to being Jewish, free and male in God's sight. But, back in civil society believers experience the opposite and Paul seems to be at peace with the situation. According to Miller, this would account for his lack of a program for social change, as well as for other pronouncements that seemingly reek of patriarchy.¹

If so, Paul is presupposing, and thus reinforcing, a conception of the social order in which these distinctions are not real, but are in fact to be pressed into the service of explaining how God makes good his salvific promise. The explanation presupposes not only those differences, but, more importantly, the practical and social superiority of the position of the Jew, the free person, and the male!²

I agree with him that Gl. 3:28 is not the introduction of an egalitarian program, and that Paul was largely a child of his time and therefore, not insensitive to the way in which society ordered itself.³ However, I have to disagree that Paul had no intention that this paradigm should transform wider society. Seen against the broader context, not of heirship, but of the introduction of the new paradigm (*present evil age to new creation*) he would have had the wider society in view too. After all, faith cannot be contained in the narrow boundaries of the fellowship. It had to be concretised in daily life and believers were to bear witness of their faith and partake in the expansion of the fellowship and its beliefs. In this regard Paul's words in Gl. 6:10 are most relevant: “*Do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith*” (my emphasis).

(iv) *New creation as free to love*

Paul undoubtedly intended a definite parallel between Gl. 5:6 and 6:15, reading:

Gl. 5:6 ...neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail; but faith working through love. (... οὐτε περιτομή τί ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη)

Gl. 6:15 ...neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (... οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἔστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις)

Was his intention to equate “new creation” and “faith working through love”? Without much ado, the parallel use of circumcision and non-circumcision certainly *aligns* “faith working through love” with “new creation”, but certainly does *not equate* the

¹ Much has been written in this regard. Pelsner, 2000, 433-5, although in a different context, reiterates his earlier position in 1976, 92-109, that Paul not only revealed the positive attitude of Jesus towards women, but even awarded them with equality in the service of the gospel.

² Miller, 2002, 11.

³ Buckel, 1993, 177.

two. If this were the case new creation would simply be a matter of attitude: where there is faith working towards love, a new creation arises or manifests. This would defeat Paul's objective. He reasons the other way around. Because of God's having created anew and the believer's partaking in this newness through faith, love is not only possible, but should be manifest as proof of such a recreation. The way in which they should be aligned with each other is that faith manifesting itself in love is the one identity marker signalling the presence of God's new creation, be that in the individual, in the believing community, or in the structures of society and the cosmos. New creation and love born from faith are inseparable.¹ On the other hand, they separate the present evil age and its adherents from those who are part of the new creation. We will return to this subject in the next chapters. For now it will suffice to emphasise the importance of love as identity marker of the new community.²

(v) *New creation as a life in the Spirit*

Paul employs the Spirit intensively. After laying extremely heavy emphasis on Christ as the inaugurator of the new aeon (Gl. 1:4); as the One who gave Himself for our sins (Gl. 1:4); who delivered us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4); on faith in Christ making all the difference (Gl. 2:16-17); and the existential impact of this faith on the believer as equal to the believer himself being crucified and no longer living so that Christ lives in him (Gl. 2:20); and the vivid remark that Christ was as good as publicly portrayed to them as crucified (Gl. 3:1), he introduces the advent of the Spirit into the picture in Gl. 3:2-5. Paul makes a remark on justification (Gl. 2:16, 17) and shortly afterwards juxtaposes it with a similar sounding question (Gl. 3:2), revealing the following:

Gl. 2:16, 17: "(We) who know that a man is not *justified* by works of the law, but *through faith in Jesus Christ*"

Gl. 3:2: "Did you *receive the Spirit* by works of law, or by *hearing with faith*?"

Both justification and the reception of the Spirit are through faith. In the first instance he qualifies faith christologically. This is evidently implied in the second instance, because of the heavy emphasis on Christ and his crucifixion in between (Gl. 2:20-3:1). Now, faith in Christ is obviously the beginning point of Christian living. It is about almost reliving the scene of Christ's crucifixion (Gl. 3:1) and then existentially being crucified with Him, so that he now lives in the believer (Gl. 2:20). When Paul follows onto the reception of the Spirit through faith with: "having begun with the Spirit" (Gl. 3:3), he implies that the Christian's

¹ Niederwimmer, 1990, 433. However, I disagree with him that the moral obligations of Torah remain applicable. We will deal with this in Ch. 6. Kertelge, 1991, 193, 203-7.

² I will not pursue the matter regarding Paul's insistence on love of neighbour without mentioning the need to love God. I assume that Paul simply accepted the believer's love of God as a matter of fact. He assumed the Galatians would know this. Love of God is implied in terms such as the believer's faith (Gl. 2:16), living to God (Gl. 2:19) and crucifixion with Christ Gl. 2:20). Together with dying to the world (Gl. 6:14), these terms indicate the primary dedication to God from which the love of neighbour and fellow believer originated and in which it was concretely proven.

faith in Christ also marks his reception of the Spirit.¹ He does not speak of two events. Add to this his use of the antithesis between Spirit and flesh in Gl. 2:20 and 3:3 that would have been more obvious to his readers with a second reading. In Gl. 2:20 he refers to his life, i.e. as a believer, as a life in the flesh, but by faith in Christ. The reference to a life in the flesh, but qualified by faith in Christ, already alludes to that life not being in accordance with the flesh, but with the Spirit, about which we read more in Gl. 5 where flesh and Spirit are in absolute opposition. There he remarks: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (Gl. 5:25). The implication of the distinction between “live by the Spirit” and “walk by the Spirit” is that life by faith in Christ has its beginnings through the Spirit and should be lived through the Spirit.

Being crucified with Christ and His living in the believer is equal to living by the Spirit. One is reminded of Paul’s remarks in Gl. 3:6-20 referring to the promise God made to Abraham and the blessing he would bestow on his offspring. Without any further discussion on the matter, one is impressed by how the Spirit and Christ are interwoven. In the same vein, Paul identifies the two extremely closely when he refers to the Spirit in Gl. 4:6 as “the Spirit of his Son”. Equally, in Gl. 5:5 he draws a very close relation between “through the Spirit” and “by faith (in Christ)”.² The point being that Paul’s elaborate arguments regarding new life since the advent of Christ, cannot be read in isolation from the advent of the Spirit. The deliverance from the present evil age through the advent, cross and resurrection of Christ, is equal to beginning that new life through the Spirit. The Christian obtains existential value resulting from the advent of the Spirit through whom we call: “Abba, Father!” New creation in Christ is equally new creation through his Spirit.

We return to the specific matter of new creation and the Spirit. Hubbard puts forward two extremely important questions begging an explanation. *Firstly*, why does Paul, after nowhere in the rest of his letter employing *καὶ νῦν κτίσις*, suddenly do so in his *recapitulatio*? Did it just pop into his mind from nowhere? If the *recapitulation* is intended to conclude the letter and summarise the main arguments, should it not have featured somewhere previously in the letter? *Secondly*, after having dealt with the Spirit very extensively throughout Gl. 3-5, and very expressly so in Gl. 5:16-25, why does he seem to ignore the Spirit in the *recapitulatio*?³ He revisits circumcision and law; gives great prominence to Christ and his cross, as well as to the triple crucifixion; and even fleetingly refers to the flesh, but most surprisingly makes no mention of the Spirit. Keep in mind that already in Gl. 4:3, 8 & 9, together with his emphasis on both the law and the elements of the world being enslaving and holding man in bondage, Paul was actually placing Judaism and paganism on the same level. They had

¹ Lull, 1980, 153-61.

² Gordon, 1984, 125-8.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 210.

a common plight.¹ One should add that this is with reference to their positions since the advent of Christ. Law was now nothing more than *another element of the world*, although originally divinely given. Because faith was now oriented to Christ and no longer to the temporarily given law, law could no longer be regarded as of faith (Gl. 2:16-17; 5:18). In Gl. 6:12-13 Paul associates circumcision and law with glorying in the flesh. He juxtaposes this with glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gl. 6:14) through which the world has been crucified to him and he to the world. Thus we have the alignment of circumcision, law, world and flesh as opposed to that of Christ and the cross. The former accentuates the underplaying of the Spirit in the latter. Furthermore, the former is outwardly orientated and Paul signifies that that mode of life had passed away in the crucifixion of the world and its elements. It therefore seems that the Spirit in us is accentuated precisely by its being underplayed.

It is therefore probable that the term *καινή κτίσις* is employed as the opposite of the world and its life according to flesh. But its use implies the Spirit as the one who determines this new order of things as opposed to the old world or present evil age. No longer could the order be trusted in which outward appearances such as circumcision or non-circumcision determined one's standing with God. It was now about inward orientation. It was about the new creation changing man's heart and orientation to life outside himself. The long awaited Spirit who would write God's law on man's heart had come. Placed alongside its parallel text in Gl. 5:6, it means that new creation is about faith working through love. This would not be imputed by law, but by the Spirit.

In conclusion, new creation is about a life according to the Spirit and producing the fruit of the Spirit characterised by love. It is about a life in which external markings are of no essence. It is an indication of the mode of living of those who have been crucified with Christ and no longer live other than with Him living in them through his Spirit.

(vi) *New creation as life in hope*

After the above discussion of Paul's "already-not yet" conception of new creation one cannot simply pass by Gl. 5:5, which is part of our chiasmus.

"For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."
(ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.)

Bear in mind that Paul speaks of persecution and the cross as a stumbling block. He bears the marks of persecution. One is reminded of the Spirit's call in believers: "Abba! Father!" There is the promise of inheritance (Gl. 3; 4; 5:21) and reaping of eternal life (Gl. 6:8). One already hears the early chords of Paul's hymn in Rm. 8. We should not forget that the new creation, although it

¹ Hubbard, 2002, 205.

has irrevocably come and cannot be undone, has replaced, but not yet displaced, the present evil age.

In Paul's view the present evil age exists, but has been dealt a death blow by the crucifixion of Jesus. All of the world's basic values and assumptions and operating procedures have been put on notice that they are passing away (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31). What really matters are the new eschatological realities brought about because of the death of Christ. In Paul's view, even the Law, as well as other good things about the material world, are part of the things that are passing away or are fading in glory (cf. 2 Cor.3). Having lost their controlling grip on a human life when Christ came and died, one must not submit to such forces again, but rather live on the basis of the new eschatological realities. The new age has already dawned and Christians should live by its light and follow the path it illumines.¹

One is therefore compelled to hold onto new creation as a present and future reality – the so-called *already* and *not yet* concepts. Bultmann, with his typically individualistic and existentialistic approach says of this concept:

...salvation is determined by the salvation of the individual who is a new creature in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). And this salvation is present for the believer who is 'in Christ.' It is true it will be perfected by the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living...²

Adams reflects the conviction of many in this regard, when he writes:

In the event of the cross, God has declared that "this world" is on its way out and that a new cosmic order is on its way in. Believers, through participation in Christ's death and resurrection, have already been separated from the old world (cf. 1:4) and are in some proleptic sense already participating in the life of the new world.³

Paul uses the perfect tense of ἐσταύρωται (Gl. 6:14) and the present tense of ἐστίν (Gl. 6:15). The cosmos has therefore been crucified. It is a past event with present effect.⁴ New creation is a present reality. On the other hand, from other Pauline references (1 Cor. 7:31; 15:27-28; Rm. 8; 19-22; Phlp. 3:20-21) it is clear that although Galatians stresses the renewal in the cross and resurrection of Christ, Paul had a future hope of an inevitable cosmic change at the *parousia*, and initiated by the Christ event. In Galatians Paul speaks of a reality of some kind, but clearly not of the created cosmos having been physically renewed. This lay in the future with the arrival of the *parousia*. This renewed reality, however, correlates with the expected physical renewal of the cosmos.

The new age, in some undefined (and non-physical) way, has dawned (1 Cor. 10:11). Hence Paul can declare that "this world" has already been judged and cast aside in the cross (1 Cor. 1:20-21). The liberation of believers from this present evil age is presently underway (Gl. 1:4). The tenses of Gl. 6:14-15, therefore, reflect Paul's modification of the apocalyptic cosmic schema. For Paul, the cross has not brought about the expected cosmic transformation or recreation, but it has in some way started the ball rolling toward that end.⁵

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

² Bultmann, 1954, 13.

³ Adams, 2000, 227.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 295.

⁵ Adams, 2000, 227.

In Gl. 6:16 Paul wraps up the point with his benediction “upon all who walk by this rule” (ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν). The word κανών is very significant. It probably has the meaning of “measure” or “norm”.¹ He is clearly referring back to Gl. 6:15, stating that the norm is no longer to be taken from the old dispensation under slavery of the flesh in which circumcision and uncircumcision (for that matter law as such) was determinative. In the new eschatological dispensation the question is whether life is lived according to its having been renewed, in fact, remade. New eschatological realities had arisen in the new eschatological dispensation. The glory of the previous dispensation, inclusive of the law, had faded and the way of life had to change accordingly.²

(vii) *Conclusion on new creation in Galatians*

Very briefly, new creation is an *aeneological-soteriological concept* describing the new dispensation brought about by the advent of Christ and his Spirit. In this sense it is in juxtaposition to the present evil age from which Christ delivered believers (Gl. 1:4). The deliverance from the present evil age, according to God’s will, resulted in the new creation in which the believer was free and free to partake in. In this new dispensation believers were not only free from the elements of the world, including law, but equally, free to live according to the guidance of the Spirit. The result would be a life lived in loving service. It would also be a life lived in hope, because the final fulfilment of the new creation, also its cosmological fulfilment, would only occur at the *parousia*.

Freedom and new creation, although not synonyms, are inextricably connected. Without new creation from God’s side, there is no freedom. Equally, without freedom the believer is not new and does not partake in what is new. In Christ Jesus a new world was opened for believers. In this world they were to live anew and free, but only in relationship with Christ and his Spirit. Without them there is no freedom.

4.4.1.5. *Preliminary conclusions on the uniqueness of freedom*

The reader is reminded that we are currently investigating Paul’s use of the definite article. This having been said, it seems reasonable to accept that Paul used the definite article to alert his readers to the fact that a new type of freedom, a uniquely Christian freedom, had entered their lives. He wanted to orientate them to this specific freedom and this one only. Had Paul not intended it that way – and this is doubtful – it would have had that affect on them anyway. Being from predominantly Gentile origin, the conceptions of freedom from the *Umwelt* would have been well entrenched in their thoughts in varying forms, and Paul’s version of what was uniquely Christian freedom would have fallen heavily on their ears. It would have been solid food for thought.

¹ Beyer, 1965, 597-8; Dunn, 1993², 343.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

Paul describes this freedom as part and parcel of the benefits befalling those of faith in Christ. It is unique to this disposition.¹ This freedom is *firstly*, founded on the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Secondly*, that from which the believer is freed is, in the first instance, the bondage by the flesh, which is characteristic of the present evil age; and in the second instance, law and other elements of the world bent on assisting man to live a meaningful life, but being unsuccessful in dealing with flesh. Paul does not use the expression “freedom from the law” in Galatians. He merely speaks of freedom. It is a more encompassing way of speaking than simply bogging freedom down to being free from law.² The fact that law is so prominent in his discussion on freedom in Galatians is due to the context in which he was reacting. *Thirdly*, to such an extent has the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ liberated the believer, that he is now a new creation together with the rest of the believing community and creation. The hallmark of this believing community is its freedom from the flesh with its unloving and self-serving orientation, and its newfound willingness, through the Spirit, to love. But, since the *parousia* has not yet been realised, it still hopes for the final measure of righteousness. Freedom in Christ had changed everything irre-vocably.

Der Übergang vom Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes zum Gesetz des Geistes und des Lebens ist demnach der Übergang von einer Seinsordnung zur anderen, der Übergang von der hoffnungslosen Unfreiheit in die hoffnungsvolle Freiheit.³

One could conclude that freedom is a specific take on the salvation God provided in Jesus Christ. It is not a side-issue, or even worse, a nice to have. It is indispensable! It is part and parcel of salvation. It is salvation!⁴

4.4.2. *Τῆ ἐλευθερία: dative of instrument or of purpose?*

The possibility of τῆ ἐλευθερία before ἠλευθέρωσεν, making the expression an intensive form in the same way as ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα (Lk.22: 15) and προσευχῆ προσηύξατο (Jas.5:17), to read something like: “Christ has set us completely/ultimately free,” is excluded, because of the use of the definite article.⁵ The remaining question then is: what type of dative is τῆ ἐλευθερία?

4.4.2.1. *Dative of instrument?*

There are commentators of note who regard τῆ ἐλευθερία as a *dative of instrument*,⁶ in which case it would read something to the effect that Christ set us free “by means of freedom” or “with freedom” or “in freedom.” It is argued that Gl. 5:1 and 5:13 are parallel texts. In Gl. 5:13 the use of ἐπ’ before ἐλευθερία is meant to denote destiny or purpose. The argument being that if Paul wanted to denote purpose

¹ Gerhardsson, 1987, 14.

² Jones, 1987, 102.

³ Niederwimmer, 1966, 174.

⁴ Gerhardsson, 1987, 13.

⁵ Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁶ Amongst others Lightfoot, 1890, 202; Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

in Gl. 5:1 he would have used ἐπὶ instead of τῇ as he does in Gl. 5:13. Taken by itself this argument is rather flimsy. Why could Paul not take the liberty of using different forms to denote purpose? It is argued that changes had been made in the textual tradition to make an instrumental reading easier. In this regard it has been suggested that the text read τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡ.¹ Seen this way, it would read: "Through the freedom by which Christ has set us free, stand fast!"

The use of an instrumental dative would obviously enhance the notion of the divine initiative and origin of freedom. It would also underline Paul's notion that the freedom of which he speaks, is radically different from what had been known up to then. However, a dative of instrument does not make enough sense. Why would Paul feel the need in the current context to express Christ's freedom to free? Cognisance should be taken of a variety of ways in which the Greek dative can be used before turning to this option.²

4.4.2.2. *Dative of purpose!*

Most commentators today prefer the *dative of purpose*.³ Moule judges that it cannot be read in a strictly instrumental sense and that it seems to be used in an *emphatic sense*.⁴ Adolf Deissmann is renowned for his discovery that τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ was used as a formula in the "sacral manumission procedures."⁵ According to these procedures a slave could, as we have seen, save his money in order to buy his freedom. However, a slave did not have the right of purchase, because he lacked the basic right to initiate or negotiate a legal contract.⁶ His only recourse was to go to the temple and make his wish known to the priest. He would hand him the money and the priest would arrange for the buying of the slave by the god of that temple. This would give him his freedom, although he would technically be the possession of the ransoming god. What is of interest is the inscription giving public notice of the transaction, namely τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ.⁷ There can be no doubt that the inscription meant to indicate freedom as the purpose of the transaction.

The notion that, according to Gl. 5:1, Christ's advent was for the purpose of freedom for believers, is completely in line with the *praescriptio* stating that He came to deliver us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Freedom was not a mere by-product of or coincidental spin-off from Christ's redemptive work. It was the divinely set intention of his advent. Redemption and deliverance could be described as specific angles on freedom.

¹ Refer to the textual apparatus in Nestle-Alant. Lightfoot, 1890, 202.

² Dunn, 1993², 262.

³ Amongst others H.N. Ridderbos, 1976¹; Bruce, 1982¹; Betz, 1979; R.N. Longenecker, 1990; Dunn, 1993²; Morris, 1996; Witherington, 1998¹.

⁴ Moule, 1953, 44; Jones, 1987, 99.

⁵ Deissmann, 1927, 326-8.

⁶ Witherington, 1998¹, 340.

⁷ Deissmann, 1927, 324.

One is tempted to support this position by referring to a very similar situation in Rm. 8: 24. In Rm. 8: 24 τῆ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν is used. It could be translated with “for hope we were saved.” It is preceded in Rm. 8: 20 by ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι that could be translated as “unto hope.”¹ However the opinions on the matter are even more varied than in Gl. 5:1. As Cranfield writes, τῆ ἐλπίδι (Rm. 8:24)

[I]s probably to be explained neither as equivalent to ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι in v.20, nor as instrumental (whether ἐλπίς be understood as subjective, denoting our hoping, or as objective, denoting that for which we hope), but as a modal dative serving to qualify ἐσώθημεν. Paul’s use of the aorist tense is justified, because the saving action of God has already taken place; but it would be misleading, were it not accompanied by some indication that the final effect of God’s action, namely, our enjoying salvation, still lies in the future: τῆ . . . ἐλπίδι makes this necessary qualification.²

Moule suggests that τῆ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν be read proleptically to mean that we are saved in hope, but not in actuality.³ It seems that the context and operative verbs in Rm. 8 make it impossible to draw a direct parallel to Gl. 5:1. It is best left out of the equation.

We conclude that τῆ ἐλευθερία is best understood as a dative of purpose and emphasis. It is supported by the varied usage of the dative and makes more sense than the instrumental use. Despite advocates to the contrary, Gl. 5:13, which is very much part of the current context (Gl. 5:1-6:10), enhances the notion of purpose in Gl. 5:1. Importantly, contemporaneous inscriptions provide support making it compelling to accept the dative of purpose. Freedom was not merely a spin-off of Christ’s redemptive work. Paul emphasises that it was the divinely set intention of Christ’s advent.

4.4.3. *Paul’s Conclusion: “For freedom Christ has set us free”*

Till now in the discussion on Gl. 5: 1 it has been concluded that Paul’s use of the dative, inclusive of the definite article, was intended to convey the radical uniqueness of the freedom brought about by the advent of Jesus Christ. The freedom he speaks of is only in Christ. Further, it was concluded that Christ came to the world exactly for this purpose. It was divinely intended. We now move on to explain the christological formula in its completeness as it operates in its context at the beginning of the *exhortatio*.

“*For freedom Christ has set us free*” summarises into one formula the entire indicative and imperative of the Christian message of salvation. It describes salvation itself and what it entails. Betz states it very precisely when he says

Christian freedom is the result of Christ’s act of having liberated those who believe in him (the “indicative”), but this result is stated as a goal, purpose, and direction for the life of the Christian (the “imperative”). Thus the sentence sums up the “logic” which relates the argumentative section of the letter (in principle including the whole of 1:6-4:31) with the parenetical section

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 224.

² Cranfield, 1975, 419-20; Käsemann, 1980, 238.

³ Moule, 1953, 45. H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 186 and 189, is basically in agreement with him.

(5:1-6:10). Theologically, Paul states that there can be no existence in freedom unless man is first given the opportunity of freedom, but that the opportunity of freedom is given only as the task for freedom. This task is then defined as the preservation of freedom.¹

Paul is well known for his multi-faceted description of salvation in Christ.² He describes salvation in Galatians in terms of deliverance (ἐξαιρεῖν - Gl. 1:4); God calling (καλεῖν - Gl. 1:6); justification (δικαιοῦν - Gl. 2:16, 17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4); being crucified with Christ and no longer living, but Christ living in the believer (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμα· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός - Gl. 2:19-20); living by faith in the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ - Gl. 2:20); adoption as sons (υἰοθεσία - Gl. 4:5); being sons of God (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε - Gl. 3:26; 4:6, 7); redemption (ἐξαγοράζειν - Gl. 4:5); being in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ - Gl. 5:6); belonging to Christ (οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ - Gl. 5:24); living and walking by the Spirit (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν - Gl. 5:25); being a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15); and others.³ One of his descriptions for salvation is *freedom*. It is significant that, although he applies other descriptions for salvation in Galatians, he chooses to give freedom great prominence. One could say it is his main soteriological metaphor in Galatians, applying it at this critical point of summary, conclusion and *exhortatio*. Just as significant is the fact that amongst Paul's letters it is only in Galatians that he gives this type of prominence to freedom as description of salvation.⁴ In Galatia it was obviously sparked by Paul's indignation with the situation that some Galatians were considering circumcision and, by doing this, giving law and its obligations a central position in their understanding of Christianity and their practice of faith in daily, concrete living. He viewed it as a threat to the very salvation that had been given to them by God in Christ.⁵

Tolmie draws attention to rhetorical techniques in Gl. 5:1 that place an almost excessive emphasis on freedom as metaphor for salvation.⁶ He mentions Paul's use of *repetition* when he uses the notion of freedom in Gl. 4:31 and repeats it twice in Gl. 5:1. This is enhanced by an immediately following *command* in the form of an opposite to freedom, namely slavery.⁷ He also uses *hyperbaton* by placing the notion of freedom more predominantly at the beginning of the sentence. He further uses *anastrophe* by beginning Gl. 5:1 with the last word of the previous sentence (Gl. 4:31). Once again, it is about the notion of freedom. He also uses *kyklos* by beginning and ending the same sentence with the notion of freedom.⁸ Thus, freedom in its multiple applications in Gl. 4:31-5:1, as well as its pivotal position in the letter's structure, is clearly elevated to being the primary metaphor for salvation in

¹ Betz, 1979, 256.

² Kümmel, 1973, 185.

³ Textual references are not done extensively. They merely serve as examples.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 150, writes that "the adoption as sons and the granting of freedom amount to the same."

⁵ Morris, 1996, 153.

⁶ Tolmie, 2004, 161.

⁷ Malan, 1992, 438.

⁸ Tolmie, 2004, 161.

Galatians. Life in Christ is a life in freedom and it has to be preserved from any form of slavery.

Freedom was something given by God in Christ. Only in Christ was this freedom possible. It was obtained by divine initiative and by Christ's putting into practice that which God willed. In the same vein, this obtained status was not to remain but a theory on freedom. It had to be put into practice by believers in as much as Christ had to put into practice that which God willed for the purpose of saving us. Indicative and imperative had to be enjoined in the believer's daily existence. Only by taking up the freedom Christ had obtained and by sharing in his act, could freedom really come to fruition.

In a Pauline sense, "to be free," means to participate in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.¹

If Paul had meant to say that Christ set us free for the purpose of setting us free, it would not only have been unnecessary tautology, but also nothing short of nonsensical. Would Christ have set us free for any other reason than to attain the objective of freedom?² Christ attained what He set out to do. The emphatic use of the dative of purpose only really makes sense if it is understood as an imperative to those who have been freed to live that freedom. In other words, if we were to paraphrase the sentence it could very well read: "Christ set us free with the intention that we exercise our freedom."

Betz makes the very relevant observation that Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit (Gl. 5:22-23) excludes any mention of freedom. Since it takes such a prominent position in the *exhortatio* it would be expected that he would mention it. He does not, because freedom lies at the heart of the fruit of the Spirit. The freedom believers were given in Christ, and which they experienced through the Spirit, is both the basis of the fruit of the Spirit and its result.³ We will be returning to this subject in greater detail in Ch. 6. Suffice it to say that when the Galatians experienced the Spirit of God in all his wonder (Gl. 3:1-5), it was not an experience unrelated to Christ's work of salvation. On the contrary, the Spirit was presented to them, and it can be accepted that they took it for granted, as nothing less than the Spirit of Christ (Paul refers to Him in Gl. 4:6 as the Spirit of God's Son). Furthermore, Paul depicts their experience of the reception of the Spirit in Gl. 3:1-2 very vividly ("before whose eyes") as a portrayal of Christ's crucifixion. Because of Christ's Spirit having been sent to them, they could partake in his redemptive act of liberation; that is, his crucifixion and resurrection. It was because of the Spirit's mission to them that they were able to confess what Paul himself does in Gl. 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Put differently: "For as many of you who have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gl. 3:27).

¹ Betz, 1979, 256.

² Ridderbos, 1976¹, 186.

³ Betz, 1979, 256.

This is such a life changing experience that Paul also refers to the believer's new status as "new creation" (Gl. 6:15). In other words, he has been re-oriented to life. Because of this change he can no longer merely live life as before. Because he has been recreated he lives it differently. Through the Spirit's baptising of the believer into Christ and his salvation the believer is free from the slavery of the elements of this world in all forms.¹ Because of this freedom the believer can produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Why does Paul make these statements at the beginning of his *exhortatio*? It is highly likely that he wants to state a very important ethical point before discussing ethical specifics. Soteriologically speaking, the believers have been set free by Christ. They are no longer under all sorts of slavery, such as flesh, law, elements of the world, sin, unrighteousness, guilt, death and hopelessness. They had been freed! This is the indicative. But it does not end there! It is not only about soteriology. It is not only about how one comes to be saved and freed, namely in Christ. It is not only about having a new status in Christ. It is equally about how those who have been freed should live. They should live their lives in freedom. Their ethical choices have to be taken in freedom and should reflect in their maintenance of their freedom in Christ. Hays has emphasised the profundity of Christ's story as the seedbed from which Paul's exhortation stems.² He very convincingly motivates that the expression ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gl. 2:16) should not be translated as "if not through faith in Jesus Christ," (objective genitive) but as "if not by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" (subjective genitive).³ However, although he acknowledges that Gl. 2:16 is difficult to decide on, he is correct in asserting that this expression and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in the same sentence cannot both be translated in an objective sense without one of them being redundant.⁴ Obviously, the intention is not to downplay the importance of the believer's acceptance of Jesus' salvation through faith. Of this there is clearly enough evidence in Galatians (Gl. 2:17-20). But, in Gl. 2:15-16 Paul is concerned with the ground for justification, not the instrument through which it is partaken in. Regarding these grounds he stresses that it is the subjective faithfulness of Christ and not the human works of law on which justification is founded. In as much as the faithfulness of Christ is the ground for the believer's soteriology, it is equally the basis from which his ethics follow. The faithfulness of Christ in the Christological narrative (Gl. 3-4) is at once the basis of salvation and the enactment of the life-pattern expected of those who are crucified with Him.⁵ In this way indicative and imperative are both wrapped up in Christ's

¹ Refer to my Ch. 4.

² Hays, 1983, 248.

³ Hays, 1983, 157-76. There is no unanimity on this subject. In further support of Hays, read Witherington, 1998¹, 178-82, where he refutes Dunn, 1990², 212 and 1993³, 138-9. Also Hooker, 1989, 321-41; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 87-9; B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 133. Also the earlier work of R.N. Longenecker, 1974, 146-7.

⁴ Hays, 1983, 175.

⁵ Hays, 1983, 248-9.

faithfulness.¹ The narrative sub-structure is the logical link between the parenetical section and the theological arguments of the central section.²

Christ's victory in the topical sequence has won freedom for humanity, but this freedom is neither an end in itself nor the end of the story: it is the necessary precondition which enables those who are redeemed to complete the story by carrying out their own mandate, by becoming active subjects who fulfil God's original purpose by loving one another.³

We conclude that the christological formula in Gl. 5:1 strongly emphasises the Christ event as the advent and decisive, divine act of liberation. He did this not merely to give believers the gift of freedom, but especially that they might actively live in Christian freedom. It is a life that can also be described as being in the Spirit and producing his fruit, as will be discussed in Ch. 6. The emphasis with which Paul expresses it enhances the notion that for Paul the freedom to which Christ set us free was no mean matter. It was not a mere spin-off from the Cross; neither was it a fringe benefit, as it were, to be applied when and as needed according to human discretion. It was salvation itself! It was the Gospel truthfully described! Not only had it to be protected, it had to be treasured and, above all, it had to be lived. Anything less than this would be a compromise rendering the Cross useless to man (Gl. 5:2-4). So dearly was it to be treasured and fervently lived that one would even bear the marks of Christ for doing it (Gl. 5:11; 6:12, 17).

5. THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPERATIVE: DO NOT SUBMIT TO SLAVERY!

On the verge of moving from Paul's soteriological to his ethical section, a few cautionary notes on hermeneutics are called for, although the full value of such a cautionary note might only be realised in the next chapter. There is a real danger of coming to a different ethical conclusion or application on christological freedom than Paul, because of preconceived positions having to be justified, or harmonised with Paul's in some way or another. The following are a few obvious problematic positions.

- *Problem 1.* The fear that Paul's compelling arguments against legalism, and therefore his objections to law, might lead to amoralism and libertinism. In other words, it is feared that the soteriological rejection of law, if followed through onto the field of ethics, would not only leave an ethical void, but lead to amoralism and libertinism, which obviously is not in tandem with the teaching of either Jesus or Paul. It will be argued that one should not regard anomism and libertinism as synonymous. Whilst libertinism implies freedom to do as one wishes, including amoralism and immorality, anomism need not at all lean towards amoralism. For instance, and it will be argued that Paul follows this line in Galatians, an anomistic ethic is one that is not conducted along nomistic lines. It finds its guidance from another source

¹ Hays, 1983, 261.

² Hays, 1983, 264.

³ Hays, 1983, 261.

than law. Therefore one should not necessarily fear the logical movement from an anomistic soteriology to an anomistic ethic.

- *Problem 2.* On the same plane as the first, is the notion that freedom be understood only as a soteriological concept. With regard to ethics freedom no longer holds. I hold that freedom involves more than merely freedom from law. When the broader picture of freedom from the flesh and sin is taken into account, together with the guidance of the Spirit in the new creation, freedom ceases to be a threat to morality.
- *Problem 3.* The fear that the removal of law in its totality from Christian ethics will cheapen faith. It is argued by some that law should be retained in some form in order to give substance to faith. The question is whether law is necessary for this? Paul rejects law as a soteriological addition to faith. There could be no synergism with regard to salvation. If salvation may not be understood in terms of synergism, why should ethics be comfortable with a synergistic effort between faith and law in some form?
- *Problem 4.* Paul's perceived positive view on law in Romans, as opposed to a negative view in Galatians, is a heavy-duty problem and presumably not totally unrelated to the above. Far too often it is accepted that Romans has priority over Galatians: be that because of development in Paul's thought and a softening in his approach from Galatians to Romans; a change of mind; or changed circumstances. For some reason, it seems that on the issue of law many scholars accept Romans' priority over Galatians. Paul's very clear reasoning and uncompromising stance in Galatians at a very critical time in the founding days of the Gentile church should not be blunted or softened under duress of the letter to the Romans. The Galatians did not have the "luxury" of the letters to the Romans and the Corinthians. One should not approach Galatians with a view to harmonise it with Romans. One should rather allow each letter to speak for itself in terms of the occasion it hoped to address.¹

This thesis will aim to lend Galatians the opportunity to speak for itself. Paul's perceived different reasoning in the other letters will be explained from this vantage point.

5.1. "Stand firm." Defining an imperative against its indicative

Gl. 5:1 expresses a profound sense of urgency. We noted Paul's enigmatic, but effective use of the dative in Gl. 5:1a. After having debated the fulfilment of God's

¹ I find it strange that so many scholars lend priority to Romans and then try to harmonise Galatians with it, whilst few even consider doing it the other way around. After all, if Paul wrote his letter on the eve of the Jerusalem council and with the express view of dealing with the issue of law, why should Romans dictate the outcome of a reading of Galatians?

promises to Abraham in the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus, and that those who are of faith are of the free one (Gl. 4:21-31); and after concluding that they as believers were thus free (Gl. 4:31), Paul bursts out in a confession of Christ having come expressly to free the believers from the present evil age in order for them to be part of the new creation. In the same breath he adds: “Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gl. 5:1b - *στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.*)

The use of οὖν (“therefore”) is extremely important. In Gl. 5:1a he stated the essence of the Christological-soteriological indicative in terms of freedom; in other words, that which Christ had done according to the promise and will of God. Now, because of this Christological-soteriological indicative, the onus was on the believers to react positively by standing firm in preserving that very freedom in their daily existence and not reverting in any way to a yoke of slavery of any kind (circumcision being the one at hand in Galatians).¹

The imperative *στήκετε* (“stand firm”) sums up the ethical consequences of the liberation through Christ as Paul had defined it in v1a. It should be understood as saying: “stand firmly in that freedom, and preserve that freedom.” If Christ has brought the Christian freedom, this freedom exists only if it is lived by those who have been enabled to exist in it.²

Betz states that Christian ethics has the task of preserving its freedom. This implies that Paul does not hold the Jewish notion of ethics, i.e. the prevention of transgression and fulfilment of Torah requirements. There is no longer a law. Christ is the end of law. Therefore, equally, there is no longer transgression against law.³ Paul is equally averse to the Hellenistic notion of ethics bent on the improvement of human raw material by way of training and the gradual mastering of certain virtues. What was needed could not be attained by human endeavour. Christ came in order to achieve it for the believer. This salvation and freedom obtained by Christ, has to be preserved by exercising it.⁴ One either stands firm (*στήκετε*) in one’s ascribed freedom or one allows oneself to be yoked into slavery (*ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε*) in daily ethical living. There is no other position.

What does Paul have in mind with *ζυγῷ δουλείας* (“yoke of slavery”)? Was it always seen as a burdensome yoke? Was Paul not re-interpreting a situation he himself in his pre-Christian life did not regard as a burden? Obviously, Paul does not share the positive experience of the yoke of *Torah* any longer. He even bundles *Torah* and *στοιχεῖα* together. The obvious reason is that he, after being realigned with God through faith in Jesus Christ, no longer defines the relationship with God in terms of *Torah*, but in terms of faith in Christ and the new-found freedom. Paul

¹ Bauer, 1979, 767-8, advises that “in freedom” should be added or implied with *στήκετε*. See also Grundmann, 1971, 646-53 stressing the profound sense of steadfastness, foundation and authority. The latter was appropriately associated with the law (649).

² Betz, 1979, 257.

³ Betz, 1979, 257; Gerhardsson, 1987, 16.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 257-8.

probably meant that since the advent of Christ *Torah* could no longer be viewed in any other way than as a yoke of slavery.

Betz notes that Paul had mainly two modes in mind in which this yoke of slavery could present itself. Firstly, the yoke of *Torah* with which he deals immediately following his remark (Gl. 5:2-12). Secondly, the corruption of the flesh with which he deals in Gl. 5:13-24. Betz mentions in passing that Paul intended to imply *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* by his use of *πάλιν* (“again”). The Galatians could obviously not be subjected to the *Torah* *again*, because they had not been subjected to it at all in their pre-Christian days when they were enslaved by the *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* (Gl. 4:1-10).¹ This seems correct. However, caution is called for. One should not think of flesh and law as two opposing entities, *Torah* being a yoke of slavery from the conservative right and *σάρξ* a yoke from the libertarian left, with freedom in Christ to be found in a balancing act between the two. In other words, in Christ you are free from the law, but don’t go overboard! Remember the moral laws. This would actually compromise Christian freedom dramatically.² It has been argued up to now that the primary threat to mankind as a whole is *σάρξ*. The present evil age (Gl. 1:4) is characterised by a life in the flesh – a life of dependence on man in his transitoriness, corruptibility and corruption. The *στοιχεῖα*, seen from a more positive angle,³ were largely a human way of dealing with *σάρξ* and creating some kind of order in life. *Torah*, on the other hand was God’s very special gift to Israel – albeit a temporary emergency measure – to deal with *σάρξ* till Christ came (Gl. 3:23-24).

Torah (obviously the *στοιχεῖα* in a positive sense too) would never deal successfully with *σάρξ* in all respects. Yes, *Torah* provided guidelines and remedies, but it would never change man’s heart to seek only God’s will. Christ would be the only one to deal effectively with *σάρξ*, indeed vanquishing it. Thus, when Paul deals with the threat to freedom from the side of flesh (Gl. 5:13-24), he actually deals with the fullness of the onslaught of the present evil age (or world) to which Paul confesses that he had died through being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). When dealing with the threat of freedom by *Torah*, he deals with a very specific manifestation of the threat by *σάρξ* after the advent of Christ and in the Christian community, but also as seen within Judaism. Because of the situation in Galatia, Paul was forced to give great prominence to *Torah*. This he also did effectively up to now (Gl. 2:15-4:31). Resorting to *Torah* would be nothing short of relying on a mechanism

¹ Betz, 1979, 258. Betz provides no motivation on Paul’s part for not dealing with the *στοιχεῖα*, but only with law and flesh. In terms of Betz’ choice it could probably be argued that the *στοιχεῖα* did not really pose a threat to the Galatians. The debate was not about *στοιχεῖα*, but about the Galatians wanting to observe law requirements to which Paul, in the course of the debate, refers as *στοιχεῖα*.

² This is definitely not Betz’ position. He could be described as a champion for Christian freedom as radically different from any other position on freedom (1979, 256-8). He would especially be opposed to any description of Christian freedom being defined primarily in terms of its position to *Torah* or flesh. Unfortunately there are other scholars who, for fear of a libertarian, amoral position, choose to redefine freedom in terms of *Torah*. It will be indicated that Dunn is of this school.

³ Obviously, Paul had a heavier emphasis on the negative aspects as discussed in Ch. 4.

that had been proven ineffective against flesh, and, in fact, had become a divisive and derogatory instrument in the hands of flesh. This would boil down to willingly being bound down under the yoke of slavery, which is characteristic of the present evil age and a reversion from being a new creation.

5.2. Reverting to slavery to law is absurd and fatal! (Gl.5: 2-12)

Once again, just as law is only the point of departure in dealing with a much bigger issue, namely *σάρξ*, circumcision is merely Paul's point of departure in dealing with the whole of law as a yoke of slavery from the *σάρξ* stable. Paul makes the connection between law and circumcision very clear in Gl. 5:3. In very forceful language he states:

"I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law" (μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι)

In keeping with his profound sense of urgency in Gl. 5:1, Paul uses the rhetoric usually associated with the making of oaths. Although Paul uses *μαρτύρομαι* sparingly, it is spread widely across the whole range of his correspondence.¹ He speaks with authority,² not as an apostle, but also as a former Pharisee of the rigid school. In line with this notion there is also the very real possibility of Paul alluding to revelation and divine disclosure.³ Obviously, there is the danger of illegitimate totality transfer, but given Paul's heavy emphasis on apocalyptic in Galatians, it is probably his intention. All things being equal, however one understands it, Paul's urgency (almost desperately so) is underlined.

Paul is exceedingly uncompromising with regard to circumcision, and implicitly, also with regard to law. He himself, having discussed the demise of law earlier on in Gl. 2:15-4:31 and now returning to the initial controversy on circumcision, makes the connection between circumcision and law quite clear in Gl. 5:3. Circumcision binds the circumcised to the whole law (*ὅλον τὸν νόμον*). There is no half measure. The one implied the other and both had become obsolete.

From his own ("Pharisaic") point of view Paul reminds the new "converts to Judaism" of what they are getting themselves into: that receiving circumcision makes sense only if they take up the yoke of the Torah seriously, i.e., observe all its requirements, in order to be acceptable to God at the Last Judgement. "Doing" the whole Torah, means doing every one of the requirements, because the transgression of even one may endanger the whole effort.⁴

¹ Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 8:3; Gl. 4:15 and Col. 4:13. In Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; 1 Th. 2:5, 10 and Gl. 1:20 Paul uses *Θεὸς μάρτυς* ("God is my witness") or similar forms.

² Stählin, 1962, 115-43. Strathmann, 1967, 491, draws attention to the fact that Paul, as in the above cases, in addition to *μαρτυρέω/μάρτυς*, often calls God in as witness. This obviously enhances the notions of oath swearing and authority.

³ Coenen, 1978, 1040-3 stresses Paul's use of the word-group as very much in keeping with that of the LXX (especially in Ex., Lv., Nm. and 1 and 2 Chr.) with God revealing his will and expecting them to observe it. Equally, the LXX uses it as a legal term. He also stresses John's similar use of the terms (1044-7).

⁴ Betz, 1979, 261. K.G. Kuhn, 1968, 739, also emphasises that this would be Paul's position, given the fact that even though they were formerly Gentiles, even proselytised Jews were required to keep the whole Jewish Law. So also Esser, 1976, 444.

Dunn observes that it is highly unlikely that the agitators in Galatia required only circumcision and downplayed the necessity for further law-observance. He argues that such a position would hardly be thinkable for a society drenched in a “covenantal nomistic mind-set”. Within the policy of “gradualism” the proselyte would usually have complied with law-observance to such an extent that circumcision would be the last demand to be fulfilled towards full proselyte status. Circumcision was about accepting the whole Jewish way of life and its identity.¹ What can certainly be accepted is that it is impossible for Paul to ponder a position in which only part of the law is to be observed. Against the background of his indiscriminate use of the term “law” in Gl. 2:15-4:31, and his unspecified use of it in Gl. 5:3, there is reason enough to accept that Paul had the entire law in mind, inclusive of ethnic boundary markers, cultic requirements and moral laws.

Paul was so serious and uncompromising on the matter that he clearly stated that if a believer were to opt for circumcision Christ would no longer be of any benefit to that person (Gl. 5:2). He would be severed from Christ (κατηργήθητε ἀπο χριστοῦ - Gl. 5:4), which is described as Christ’s salvific work being rendered inoperative in favour of law.² Is this only Pauline rhetoric, or is it really the consequence of the opposition’s stance? Betz is correct in assuming that the opponents probably did not consider circumcision and other law-observance as apostasy. If that were the case it would boil down to reverting to Judaism, which was unthinkable.³ On the other hand, one should not play Paul’s words down as mere rhetoric. There is logic in his reasoning. Christians of Jewish decent could continue living a Jewish life-style, because by accepting Christ they had acknowledged that Judaism could not provide them with salvation. They would, should they opt for carrying on living according to that life-style, not jeopardise their faith, because they attached no salvific function to that life-style, even though it is characterised by law-observance. Obviously, this implies that it should not be regarded as obligatory, and that they were in no way to revert to an ethic of “works of law”. The Gentile’s position was different. By accepting Christ and then supplementing Him with a Jewish life-style implied that salvation in Christ and by grace was not sufficient. Such a viewpoint would render grace no longer to be grace, and Christ no longer the sole saviour of mankind.⁴ Either Christ is the only salvation, or He is absolutely not the Saviour. Blemishing salvation in Christ with any other entity would imply severance and apostasy, even though unintentional and well meant.

¹ Dunn, 1993², 266-7. Although Dunn, more than is accepted in this thesis, stresses Jewish identity and law as identity marker as main cause of division between Jewish and Gentile Christians, at issue here is the fact that he supports the notion that in circumcision the whole of law is implied.

² Delling, 1964¹, 453.

³ This is obviously beyond consideration. It would imply that the opponents, accepting that they were Jewish Christians, would not have made any significant move from Judaism. At the most, this would diminish Christ to merely (one) of their most revered rabbi(s).

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 226; 1964, 245-67; also Betz, 1979, 261.

The Judaizers must have assured the Galatians that in accepting supervision for their lives from the prescriptions of the Mosaic law they were not forsaking Christ or renouncing grace, but rather were completing their commitment to both. Paul, however, tells them just the opposite: commitment to Christ and commitment to prescriptions to righteousness, whether that righteousness is understood in forensic terms (i.e., “justification”) or ethical terms (i.e., “lifestyle” and expression), are mutually exclusive; experientially, the one destroys the other.¹

Consequently, to make circumcision necessary in addition, was so to shift the focus from Christ as to abandon that solid foundation, so to modify the unconditional character of the grace expressed in the gospel, as to nullify the benefit of Christ completely.²

It would be about making a drastic choice between law and faith (Gl. 5:6). It would hinder him from “obeying the truth” (Gl. 5:7). He would be deflecting to a belief that was not “from him who calls you” (Gl. 5:8), but from a dangerous influence (Gl. 5:9). Such a person would be under God’s judgement (Gl. 5:10), because of the removal of the cross’ σκάνδαλον (Gl. 5:11).

From a structural point of view, one should see “stand firm” (στήκετε - Gl. 5:1) in juxtaposition to “they who unsettle you” (ἀναστατώω - Gl. 5:12a), involving the whole matter of circumcision and law-observance as detrimental to and destructive of faith and the gospel. In his fiery encouragement and exhortation of the Galatians to stand firm, he equally heavy-handedly casts judgement on those who advocate circumcision as unsettling the Galatians’ firm position in Christ. In fact, he adds that he wishes they would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:12b). Most modern scholars understand Paul as having castration in mind. Obviously, Paul did not mean this literally. However, should it be understood as a rhetorical mechanism to ridicule and discredit the opponents,³ or as a curse? We cannot be sure. What is certain is that Paul is disgusted and disturbed about the opponents’ position. Wrapping up his arguments, he does not withhold himself from being scathing. For Paul this was no trivial matter. The truth of the gospel and the Galatians’ salvation depended on the position they took on circumcision and law.

Could “castration” be more significant than it seems? Does he mean to reflect the end result of circumcision and a continued life under law as fruitless? Could he even be reflecting the absurdity of considering this position? I am of the opinion that this is the direction in which to look. Emasculation was viewed extremely negatively in Judaism, being regarded as an offence against God, the covenant and true worship.⁴ In line with this position, Paul being a former Pharisee probably had a negative perception of emasculation. He climaxes his argument by logically moving from circumcision to castration. Just as he earlier stated that circumcision lead to having to stick to all of the Torah, he now says that if one wanted to go all the way on this track, one might as well castrate oneself. The result would be the same as in the

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 228.

² Dunn, 1993², 265. It must be interjected at this point though, that Dunn lays heavier emphasis on law as identity marker than this thesis is willing to accept. It will, however receive due attention in due course.

³ Betz, 1979, 270, refers to these words of Paul as a “bloody joke” and sarcasm. This is doubtful. Paul was all but in a mood for joking, not even in a crude way.

⁴ Stählin, 1965, 854.

case of law-observance. One would fall from grace. God abhors emasculation¹ as much as the practice of people cutting themselves from Christ and grace by seeking extra help from law-observance. Castration would be a radical surpassing of circumcision, leading to legalism (in whatever varying degree) contradicting the true meaning of law, since it incurs the verdict of Dt. 23:2. This is the very point that Paul wished to make. His opponents were in conflict with the will of God.² Their efforts would be fruitless in terms of doing God's will. Circumcision is as unable to provide spiritual blessing as castration is to provide the physical fruit of progeny. As castration leads to physical fruitlessness, circumcision leads to spiritual fruitlessness. In this sense there might even be an antithetical connection between the fruitlessness of circumcision and the fruitfulness of a life in the Spirit. Circumcision leads to severance from Christ and spiritual barrenness, whilst a life of being crucified with Christ, and therefore living in the Spirit, leads to the bearing of the fruit of the Spirit. Scholars like Ramsay rejected translations referring to castration or emasculation on the grounds that Paul would not have used such foul language.³

Yet as insulting and disgusting as it may seem, Paul's comment should be understood as a sarcastic way of characterizing the Judaizers and his attitude towards them...Indeed it is the crudest and rudest of all Paul's extant statements, which his amanuensis did not try to tone down...Underlying the sarcasm and crudity of the comment, however, is Paul's understanding of circumcision as purely a physical act without religious significance...⁴

6. CONCLUSION: FREEDOM AS A TOTALLY NEW BALL GAME!

We started off with a structural orientation emphasising the tremendous importance of the largely parenetical Gl. 5:1-6:17. We found it would be utterly erroneous to regard the autobiographical (Gl. 1:11-2:21) and theological arguments (Gl. 3:1-4:31) as in disjunction to the ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:17). Paul wrote one letter with one overall argument.

i) *Gl. 5:1-12 pivotal in Paul's movement from theology to ethics of freedom*

There can be no integrity in Paul's theological arguments if they do not translate into ethics. Equally, ethics without a theological foundation is without motivation and direction. Paul is renowned for never separating the theological indicative from its ethical imperative. His ethic is the practical concretising of the existentially experienced salvation through faith in Christ. Paul deals with one subject throughout the letter: the believer's deliverance by Christ from the present evil age, or as he formulates it in Gl. 5:1, his freedom in Christ, and how it relates to his daily living or ethos. The parenetical section is not an addendum aimed at a libertinistic threat. It is the culmination and climax of his argument.

¹ That is, in terms of Judaism.

² Stählin, 1965, 854-5.

³ Ramsay, 1900, 438-40.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 234. Morris, 1996, 162 also warns against softening the expression.

It was also determined that Gl. 5:1-12 is a transitional section concluding the preceding theological arguments, but also introducing the ethical section proper (Gl. 5:13-6:10), following onto the former. Because Gl. 5:1 is so dominant in this section, it stresses the pivotal role of Gl. 5:1 in the argument as a whole. Paul summarises the whole soteriology of the theological section in the notion of freedom. Equally important, he also characterises the accompanying ethic as one of freedom. Christ set the believer free in order that he should be free, and obviously, that he should live freely. This notion of an ethic born from freedom is enhanced by Paul's return to his theological arguments in Gl. 6:11-17, where he reiterates the conclusions of Gl. 5:1-12. He stresses that ethics is not about law (Gl. 5:3, 6; 6:13a, 15), but about allegiance to the cross (Gl. 5:11; 6:12), faith working through love (Gl. 5:6) and being a new creation (Gl. 6:15). In other words, his ethic is enveloped in the christological-soteriological indicative. Freedom in Christ is as essential to ethics as it is to soteriology. Paul's movement from the indicative of deliverance from the present evil age to the indicative of the freedom of the new creation implies the imperative of an ethic of freedom, in opposition to one of bondage and slavery.

ii) *Freedom to move from slavery to the present evil age to slavery of Christ*

We then moved on to a brief discussion of the metaphor of slavery, determining that Paul used it both negatively and positively. Negatively speaking, he used the metaphor to illustrate man's bondage in the present evil age. Man's corruption had led to his being dominated by flesh to such an extent that he could only be freed from this domination from outside his being, indeed, by divine intervention. It was so intense that even Yahweh's gift of *Torah* could not help man to fulfil the obligation to love the neighbour. In fact, the *Torah* itself became a yoke of slavery in flesh's hands. Another aspect emerges from the negative use of slavery. Israel, because of the elaborate expansions on law, was robbed of an accompanying acceptance of responsibility for their ethical choices. It could simply be read from the codices. The ordinary Jew need not have taken responsibility for determining God's will in a given situation. He had merely to take the necessary laws into account and obey them. Lastly, because law emphasised dedicated Jews' plight before Yahweh, it was experienced as a yoke or burden. Paul refers to this burden as a yoke of slavery in order to emphasise the curse of living under law.

Positively, Paul uses the term to indicate the very special relationship between himself and God, referring to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Gl. 1:10). He also uses it in reference to believers in their relationships to one another. He admonishes them to be slaves of one another in loving service (Gl. 5:13). Service to God and neighbour was part and parcel of being part of the new aeon. It was not a matter of option. Neither was it a matter of involuntary service. It was about a fulfilling relationship in which the Owner took to the slave like an own son (Gl. 4:4-7) and the latter felt privileged to serve.

Against this background, freedom should not be understood as unbridled freedom of choice. It is about being free from the present evil age with flesh and law as en-

slavers, to freely serve a new Owner. We have argued that freedom is another description for salvation and the believer's newfound status in life.

iii) *Freedom: delivered from the present evil age to live as new creation*

Paul emphasises that salvation is about being free from the present evil age and its enslaving powers through Christ Jesus. He emphasises that it is not through law, but through faith in Christ and by the quickening of the Spirit. The present evil age with the power of the flesh has lost its hold on the believer. The believer is now under the guidance and enablement of the Spirit and able to live to God's glory.

In as much as the believer was delivered from the present evil age without the aid of law, but by faith in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit, his life as a believer is also lived without law and through the Spirit. The believer is a new creation. The Spirit lives in him and quickens his heart to seek and do the will of God. The believer has been changed by the new relationship. No longer being bound by flesh he can do the will of God as conveyed by the Spirit.

In conclusion, then, soteriologically speaking, salvation is equal to freedom in Christ. Ethically speaking, freedom in Christ is equal to walking in step with the Spirit. For this purpose Christ came, according to God's will, and therefore the Christian should live in this freedom through the Spirit.

CHAPTER 6

NEW CREATION'S NEW ETHIC: WALK BY THE SPIRIT!

Gl. 5:13-6:10 is a much debated section. Possibly most of the discomfort with this section and many of the proposed intricate solutions are born from a hermeneutical distortion. In Ch. 1 it was illustrated that the superimposition of ancient rhetorical models onto Galatians can complicate the reading of Gl. 5:13-6:10 as an integral part of Paul's entire argument. In Ch. 5 the point was made that many approach Galatians via Romans' seemingly more positive stance on law, and immediately work from the assumption that Paul only rejected part of the law, or a certain attitude towards law, but that he still regarded law very much as part of Christian life. A distinction is often made between law's soteriological and ethical functions. Some argue that the soteriological function of law has been abolished, but – given some distinctions and exclusions – not the ethical function. The issue is sometimes clouded by those who do not define what they mean by the validity of law, giving the impression that by law they actually mean morality or high Christian morals, or some form of OT law as a canon within a canon. I contend that, although Paul advocated and pursued high Christian morals, he did not equate law and morality, and did not support the introduction of a reduced or adapted OT canonical law.

One will be forgiven for deducing from the way freedom is dealt with in much of Christian scholarship, fellowship and daily societal interaction that, although it has been obtained in Christ, one dare not practice it for fear of succumbing to flesh and not doing God's will. In this respect Gl. 5:13 is sometimes wrongfully quoted. More often than not it leads to Christians reverting to some form of external code, usually historically chiselled in stone, to replace Mosaic law with an equally expanded list of do's and don'ts. It must be reiterated that there is much significance in the fact that Paul introduces his ethical section proper with the reminder that believers are called to freedom (Gl. 5:13).¹ It is like a banner spread over his exhortative section: "Remember your freedom! Practice it!"

Paul was not caught unawares by the implications of his argument against law, reaching Gl. 5:12 suddenly realising the believer's ethical flank had been left open to the threat of *σάρξ*, and then forced to add Gl. 5:13-6:10 on second thoughts as a cautionary against flesh. His letter is an integral unit in which *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* fulfil a primary role throughout his arguments. We have determined that Paul was presented with a problem concerning circumcision and dietary and calendar laws. To his mind the implementation of any form of law threatened a much bigger picture with ruin. He was concerned that the Galatians failed to understand the *grandeur of the new dispensation* or profundity of the *radical change* brought about to the world and lives of believers by the Christ event. Therefore, as early as his introduction, Paul makes two extremely significant remarks. *Firstly*, Christ's resurrection introduced the arrival of the long awaited apocalyptic

¹ Jones, 1987, 102.

new aeon – the time of the fulfilment of God's promises. Israel's plight would be answered with God's solution: the time when He would engrave his will in their hearts (Jr. 31:33-34; Ezk. 36:24-32) and pour his Spirit on them (Jl. 2:28-29). *Secondly*, his soteriological mission amounted to his giving of Himself "to deliver us (ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς) from the present evil age." He portrays Christ's advent as the hinge opening the door from one aeon ("present evil age" of plight) to the next, the age of salvation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15).

Soteriology in Galatians is initially, and this sets the tone, portrayed as something more profound than only divine justification (Gl. 3:11) or redemption from the curse of law (Gl. 3:13). It is about deliverance from an age dominated by sin as a supra-human force, influencing man to act against God's will, even to the point of slavery. It even proved law ineffective. In fact, law became slave to flesh. Paul wanted them to understand that a totally new situation had arrived. Salvation could not be obtained by law observance – neither legalistically, nor synergistically – but by being crucified with Christ and having a new life in Him (Gl. 2:19-20). Equally, ethics in the new dispensation could not be defined in terms of law. The immediate question Paul could expect in reaction to his rejection of law as ethical standard was probably something to the effect: "So, if law has been done away with, how are we to be guided morally in this new aeon?" Paul replied by implicitly acknowledging that, although σάρξ had been dealt with in Christ crucified and belonged to a bygone era, that era, although replaced in his advent, had not yet been displaced and was identifiable in the *works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19-21). Its sphere of influence was still real. However, in Christ it could now be withstood and life according to the Spirit could be chosen.

Paul's ethics is solidly based on his theology and, especially in Galatians, his soteriology. No longer is the moral life of a believer determined by law, but by being in Christ and walking in the Spirit whose fruit he bears. No longer is his morality measured by an external code, but by whether it portrays the loving service Christ portrayed through his cross.¹ The restraints and limitations of law make way for a creative ethic guided by the Spirit. Believers are given scope and responsibility to find their ethical way characterised by love, guided by the Spirit, and assisted by the community of faith, between the theological beacons presented in Gl. 1:4 (*deliverance* from the present evil age), Gl. 2:20 (*crucifixion* with Christ), Gl. 5:1 (*freedom in Christ*), and Gl. 6:15 (*new creation*).

1. CALLED TO FREEDOM, BUT NOT OF THE FLESHLY KIND

1.1. Flesh and law are not opposites

Paul, as we have seen in Part II, does not contrast flesh (σάρξ) and law (νόμος). In fact, it was argued that law, despite Yahweh's intentions, is actually employed by flesh. They are not in opposition, but on the same side: bed

¹ Niederwimmer, 1966, 196, emphasises that the believer is not partially free from sin and law, but fully so.

mates as it were! All things being equal, in Gl. 5:13-6:10 Paul portrays these two as the common enemy of the Spirit. This is emphasised for two reasons.

Firstly, the reader of Galatians should be wary of thinking in terms of two groups in opposition to Paul's gospel. If this was the case and Paul was addressing the two positions in chronological order, it would be in direct conflict with the close relation he draws between the two. One needs mention only Gl. 4:21-31 where Paul explicitly aligns being *under law* (ὕπὸ νόμον - Gl. 4:21) with being born *according to flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα - Gl. 4:23, 29) and *in slavery* (Gl. 4:22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31). Equally, he aligns the three in direct opposition to being born *according to the Spirit* (κατὰ πνεῦμα - Gl. 4:29), *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας - Gl. 4:23, 28) and *in freedom* (Gl. 4:22, 23, 26, 30, 31). The same can be said of Gl. 5:16-17 where Spirit and flesh are opposed, and Gl. 5:18, immediately following, where Spirit and law are opposed. In the latter case Paul states: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law." The very reason for their not being under law was that they were no longer under flesh's slavery, due to the Spirit by whom they now walked.

Secondly, if one were to assume that in Gl. 5 Paul turns away from law to address the flesh, whether there was an onslaught from a different party, or whether Paul feared the Galatians would allow the moral pendulum to swing from the ultra-right position of law-observance, through the so-called point of perfect equilibrium to the ultra-left amoral position, one would be in danger of considerably weakening Paul's argumentative section (Gl. 1:11-4:31). In the argumentative section he refuted law-observance. He had died to the law by being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). Christ came to redeem those under the law (Gl. 3:13). He came to deliver us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Law had come 430 years after faith and only for the interim period up to the advent of Christ (Gl. 3:15-20). With the advent of Christ and his Spirit the new age of freedom had dawned on believers (Gl. 5:1). If Gl. 5:13-6:10 were to be read as a new theme, unconnected or loosely connected to the foregoing, one could get the impression that in the absence of law a new enemy, flesh, had come onto the scene. By implication, the reintroduction of a law or statute or two would help against any licentiousness under duress of the flesh. This is tantamount to Paul advocating an ethical position around the point of equilibrium between law-observance and freedom. This would actually place freedom itself in the balance and under threat of not being lived for fear of sinning.

Gl. 5:13-6:10 is not a cautionary note against living one's freedom in Christ. To the contrary, Paul refers to it as a vocation (Gl. 5:13). Strictly speaking, it is not a warning against opening one's flanks for flesh to freely lure one into licentiousness. It is primarily concerned with introducing the Spirit as the One enabling believers to live freely. It is about the role of the Spirit in Christians' lives. It is not about filling a void left by law's abolition. In any case, there was a lack of evidence that law was at all successful in dealing with the self-same flesh before or after the Christ event. It was positively about how those in Christ, with the Spirit in their hearts (Gl. 4:6), were to deal with the now crucified flesh.

In short, the flesh–law alignment must not be severed, least of all in the ethical section. After stating: “For freedom Christ set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gl. 5:1), he elaborates on how to do this (Gl. 5:13-24). One stands firm in Christological freedom by walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16) and producing his fruit, not by reintroducing law.¹

1.2. Called to freedom

After briefly digressing (Gl. 5:2-12), Paul continues with the freedom theme in Gl. 5:13.² With a little imagination, one could visualise the multi-valenced, enslaving *present evil age* occupying the stage till the dawning of the advent of Christ and his Spirit. Christ dealt with the old age in the fullness of time, replacing it with new creation. Paul argued this at length in his argumentative section. In Gl. 5:1 he bursts onto the stage announcing that freedom in Christ now fills centre-stage. In Gl. 5:2-12, knowing there were Judaisers encoring law to reappear on stage to play some part on the stage of new creation in conjunction with freedom, he chidingly turns to the audience. There is only place for Christian freedom on stage. Re-calling the past would be tantamount to rejecting the new player on the stage. It would be severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). In terms of salvation and ethics it would be useless, equal to mere castration (Gl. 5:12). It would reintroduce hopelessness (Gl. 5:5) and render the cross futile (Gl. 5:11). He once again focuses the audience’s attention on freedom (Gl. 5:13).

The second time around is quite similar to the first, but also markedly different. It is *similar* in mood and intention and equally indicative of freedom as soteriological and ethical sum total of God’s intention with the Christ event – freedom in Christ. It was not merely a by-product of the Christ event. It was his purpose that man be free in Christ. It is exactly this purpose that is again accentuated by his use of *καλεῖν*. In Gl. 1:6 he refers to God as the one by whose initiative they had come to faith in Christ as “him who called you” (τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς).³ This is reiterated in Gl. 5:8 (τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς). With regard to his own coming to faith and receiving his calling to preach to the Gentiles (Gl. 1:15),⁴ he also refers to God as “he who...had called me” (καλέσας). Paul undoubtedly regards the believer’s coming to faith as God’s initiative and vocation for him.⁵ Equally, when he refers to freedom as something to which the believer is called, and without specifying when it happens, one must assume that it is the very same thing described from a different perspective. Freedom is not an optional extra following on faith. Not only is it part and parcel of the believer’s coming to and living in faith, it is the sum of salvation. Freedom in Christ summarises the whole soteriology. So, once again Paul empha-

¹ Loubser, 1994, 169.

² Betz, 1979, 272; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 238-9, correctly indicate that one should not regard γὰρ as connecting Gl. 5:13 with the preceding verses, but rather with the theme of freedom introduced in Gl. 5:1.

³ Morris, 1996, 163-4.

⁴ Refer back to §4.1.1. and §4.1.2. in Ch. 2.

⁵ Coenen, 1975, 275-6; Schmidt, 1965, 489.

sises freedom as a purpose for the Christian.¹ It is an indicative that must be translated into an imperative and concretised in as much as faith answers to God's call to salvation in Christ. Freedom is *Gabe und Aufgabe*, a gift and a responsibility.

God did not take them out of their pre-Christian bondage, of whatever sort it was, simply to entangle them in another sort of bondage. It matters a great deal to Paul that Christians are freed people. He is not saying that a certain measure of liberty was grudgingly accorded believers. He is saying that freedom is of the essence of being Christian; it is the fundamental basis of all Christian living...²

For all its similarities, it also *differs* from the first exclamation on freedom (Gl. 5:1). *Firstly*, Paul's arguments up to Gl. 4:31 were heavily painted in terms of circumcision and law, taking his departure from the point at which the debate presented itself. This is confirmed by his quick, wrapping-up remarks on law and circumcision in Gl. 5:2-12, just after presenting the believer as free in Christ (Gl. 5:1). But, as we have argued in Ch. 5, Gl. 5:1-12 is transitional, summarising the argument up to there, as well as introducing Gl. 5:13-6:10. The latter is nothing less than an application of freedom from the flesh, since he had now elaborately dealt with freedom from the law. Bear in mind that Paul introduced the letter with the notion of deliverance from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4) dominated by slavery under sin and flesh. This was aggravated by flesh's *secundi*, i.e. law and the elements of the world. When Paul returns to the believer's status of and call to freedom he is not addressing a new enemy from the left as opposed to law as a threat from the right. He is merely returning to the root of man's problem, his being a slave to flesh. He leads the reader past the immediate danger of being re-enslaved to law, to the more fundamental danger, inclusive of the immediate one, of being re-enslaved by flesh. Law was no longer applicable. Believers were no longer and could no longer be slaves to it. As an entity and way of thinking and doing it had become irrelevant.

The problem was, sin and flesh had not stopped operations. Thus, Paul's focus turns to flesh, not as a new threat in the absence of law, but as the actual threat even in the time when law was applicable.³ In fact, turning to flesh he turns to that which "forced"⁴ Yahweh's hand to introduce law in the first place. It is interesting that, with the exception of two references to law (Gl. 5:14, 23) the concepts Paul employs were used throughout the Hellenistic world and in most religions and philosophies. Obviously the meanings and conceptual frameworks were not identical, but the terminology provided his readers with a broader horizon than the strictly Jewish concepts of the opponents. Equally interesting, this is especially true of Paul's list of virtues. I am not arguing that they were strictly Hellenistic or that they were of Hellenistic origin; certainly not! What

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 240.

² Morris, 1996, 164.

³ One is reminded of the remarks by Pretorius, 1992, 443: "[W]hereas the main antithesis developed in the first part of Galatians (Chs 1-4) is that between law and Spirit, the other big antithesis, in the second part of Galatians (Chs 5-6) is that between flesh and Spirit. Though the flesh controversy is already heralded in the first part (3:3) and the law controversy still echoes in the second part (5:14, 18, 23)."

⁴ It is placed in inverted commas, because Yahweh cannot be forced to do anything. It was his love for sinners and their inability to serve Him properly that created the urge in Him to bless man with the law in the OT.

is undeniable, however, is that these terms were, unlike Torah, not strictly Jewish so that a wider audience could identify with it. It seems reasonable, especially if we consider the fact that Paul was trying to reframe the Galatians' symbolic universe, as argued in my Ch. 2, that Paul, at this point of parenthesis, broke through the old mould and started forming a new way of thinking.

Secondly, Paul's exclamation on freedom in Gl. 5:1 was immediately followed by an exhortation to stand firm in that freedom and not to submit again to a yoke of slavery. Slavery was the negative characteristic of the old age under domination of sin and flesh. Christ had dealt with it and it was not to be revived. On the other hand, in Gl. 5:13, after reaffirming the believer's freedom as a vocation and purpose in life, Paul calls on them to be slaves to one another in love. He uses the very same metaphor to make two diametrically different points. In the first case he warns against the yoke of slavery from the side of the present evil age. The context is that from which man had been freed and which formerly deprived him of life. In the second case he turns away from that to which they were formerly enslaved and from which they had been freed to that with a view to which they were freed. They had been set free to love and serve one another. Paul touched on this subject in the previous section as well (Gl. 5:6). The one is about having no life at all, and the other is about experiencing life in the giving and receiving of loving service.¹

The freedom that Christians have been called to is new life in Christ: a life of selfless and other-directedness, which automatically places them at the disposal of others. A community of Christians, therefore, is ideally made up of persons "enslaved" to each other, but even if some relationships are not fully reciprocal the attitude should be maintained.²

It should be clear that Gl. 5:1-12, being a transitional section, is more focused on the believer's freedom from multiform slavery and only touches on love as its goal (Gl. 5:6). Gl. 5:13-24 is focused on that towards which the believer has been freed, employing the metaphor of flesh only to define more clearly the goal to which he is called. Thus, in Gl. 5:13-24 Paul moves to ethically more positive terrain, defining how Christian ethics works in the paradigm of freedom.³ It is also significant that Paul does not at this crucial point warn the Galatians against "lawlessness". He specifically speaks of "opportunity for the flesh." There might be a hint behind this use, namely that law is no longer in the picture – not even when speaking of sin. Not even sin is any longer defined by law! Everything boils down to the flesh-Spirit opposition.⁴

¹ Carter, 1997, 62, is quite right, remarking that the reciprocity involved in "become slaves to one another" should not compromise the radicalism of being a slave to others, as if the lack of reciprocity on the other party's side makes it less obligatory upon the believer to serve that party. I do, however disagree with her on her criticism of Betz, 1979, 274. She suggests that Betz emphasises the reciprocity at the cost of unblemished service. My observation is that Betz emphasises reciprocity in contrast to the slavery of the former state before the Christ event. He does not do it with a view to adding a qualification as to how far that slavery should go in the sight of adverse relations. In fact, he writes: "Love is voluntary and reciprocal, but it involves commitments to be maintained even under difficult and strained circumstances."

² Carter, 1997, 63.

³ Jones, 1987, 102f.

⁴ Read Fee, 1994¹, 205-6.

1.3. Flesh has been crucified, remember!

In our current section (Gl. 5:13-24) a few interesting observations relating to structure can be made (*fig. 6.1*). The main subject matter and theme of the section is in Gl. 5:13a (“You were called to freedom, brothers!”), followed by the call on believers in Gl. 5:13b (B) not to use freedom as an *opportunity for the flesh*. It is revisited in Gl. 5:24 (*B) stating: “those who belong to Christ Jesus have *crucified the flesh* with its passions and desires.” Read as a chiasmus revolving around flesh, these two seem to say that believers should not fear even the possibility of flesh leading them into licentious freedom, as if flesh were on a par with the Spirit. In their belonging to Christ and being crucified with Him, flesh had also been crucified. In fact, Paul emphasises flesh’s impotence, adding it had been crucified “with its passions and desires” (Gl. 5:24). He frames the ethical Spirit-flesh dualism and the call to loving service with flesh’s defeat by Christ’s cross. The believer is not dealing with two equals. Flesh has already been crucified.

But, is Paul not being naive? Did he regard flesh as inoperative in Christians? Evidently not! In the centre of this chiasmus (Gl. 5:17) he clearly states flesh and Spirit’s opposition, speaking in a much personified way of flesh and Spirit desiring the opposite of each other and preventing believers from doing what they want. Clearly, flesh desires to frustrate the believer ethically. There is always the danger of succumbing to its allure. However, he follows by placing a positive frame around this picture of flesh and Spirit’s opposition, calling on believers in Gl. 5:16 (E₁ and E₂) to walk by the Spirit and not to gratify flesh’s desires. With $\Lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon$ he indicates the absolute importance of the following statement.¹ At the other end of the frame (Gl. 5:18-**E₁* and **E₂*) he restates the notion, although differently. He replaces the desires of the flesh (E₂) with being under law (**E₂*). Clearly, he underlines the alignment of flesh and law, not as opponents of each other, but as allies in opposition to the Spirit. But E₁ and **E₁* are more important. Firstly, he calls on them to “walk by the Spirit” ($\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$), an imperative defining the Christian way of life.² Gl. 5:18 (**E₁*), although on the same topic, has a slightly different angle, reading: “But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.” The use of the connectors $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}$ to introduce the conditional clause is significant. Moule states that if the *protasis* is a present condition in the indicative mood, as in this case, it refers to a matter of certainty,³ an existing condition. Paul is *not* saying *if they were to be led* by the Spirit they would not be under law, but actually, *because they are led* by the Spirit, they are not under law. Thus, in E₁ he calls on them to live according to the status they already have according to **E₁*. The sum effect of this frame is to state, al-

¹ Betz, 1979, 277.

² Betz, 1979, 277.

³ Moule, 1953, 150. In the case of a subjunctive mood it would point to a matter of uncertainty or hypothesis.

though there is conflict between flesh and Spirit, with no need to be naïve about it, that the secret to withstanding flesh is to be led by the Spirit.

Immediately around this frame holding the secret to Christian living, Paul places another, i.e. Gl. 5:15 (D) and Gl. 5: 19-21 (*D₁, *D₂, *D₃ and *D₄). He parallels the Galatians' current in-fighting (Gl. 5:15) with the works of flesh (Gl. 5:19-21), in absolute contrast to a life according to the Spirit. Immediately around this frame is another. In opposition to a life without love and according to flesh, he emphasises the sought after life of love. Gl. 5:13c-14 (C₁ and C₂) is explicit about this. Parallel to this runs the *fruit of the Spirit* in Gl. 5:22-23 (*C₃, *C₂ and *C₁). Love being the principal element of the *fruit of the Spirit*, it is quite feasible to regard these verses as parallels. The diagrams below might be helpful.

13a	A	*Υμεις γαρ επ' ελευθερία εκλήθητε, αδελφοί·
13b	B	μόνον μη την ελευθεριαν εις αφορμην τη σαρκί,
13c	C ₁	αλλά δια της ἀγάπης δουλεύετε αλληλοις.
14	C ₂	ὁ γαρ πας νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπληρωται, ἐν τῷ *Αγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.”
15	D	εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.
16	E ₁	λέγω δέ, <u>πνεύματι</u> περιπατεῖτε
	E ₂	καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν <u>σαρκός</u> οὐ μὴ τελήσητε.
17	F ₁	ἡ γὰρ <u>σὰρξ</u> ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ <u>πνεύματος</u> , τὸ δὲ <u>πνεῦμα</u> κατὰ τῆς <u>σαρκός</u> :
	F ₂	ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.
18	*E ₁	εἰ δὲ <u>πνεύματι</u> ἄγεσθε,
	*E ₂	οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον.
19a	*D ₁	φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς <u>σαρκός</u> ,
19b	*D ₂	ἄτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία,
- 21a		ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις,
21b	*D ₃	ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον
	*D ₄	ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.
22a	*C ₁	Ὁ δὲ <u>καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος</u> ἐστιν
22b-3a	*C ₂	ἀγάπη , χαρὰ, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραύτης, ἐγκράτεια
23b	*C ₃	κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἐστιν νόμος.
24	*B	οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] <u>τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.</u>

Fig. 6.1.

13a. You were called to freedom

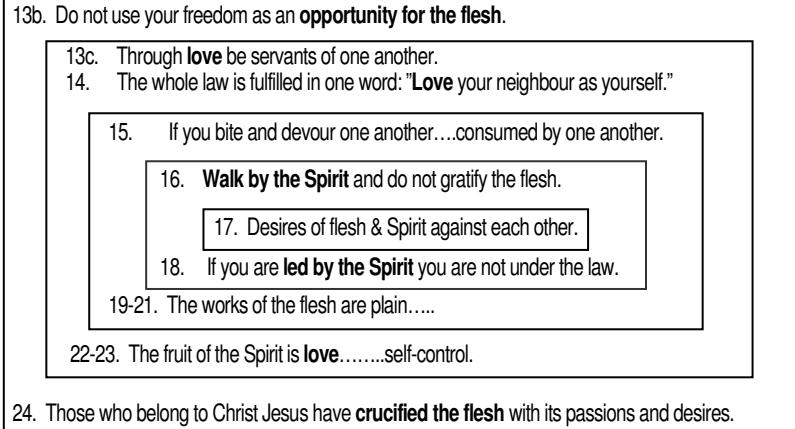


Fig. 6.2.

In sum, Paul accepts that flesh and Spirit are in actual fact in conflict with each other. Believers were not to live in a fool's paradise. They were already free and delivered from the present evil age, but the present evil age had not yet been removed from the world in which they lived. It was, therefore, a matter of waiting in hope of righteousness (Gl. 5:5). The time of reaping (Gl. 6:7-9) had not yet come. However, to succumb to flesh was totally unnecessary and unwarranted, because it had been crucified and the Spirit had been given for the believer to walk by.

He acknowledges flesh's desire to frustrate the believer. Vastly important though, is that it no longer has the dominant role it used to have in the believer's pre-Christian life. It is also in no way on a par with the Spirit. The believer is no longer helplessly exposed to flesh. Now that he belongs to Christ, not only has flesh been crucified (Gl. 5:24), but the Spirit has become the major *Persona* and guiding influence in his/her life. The new life in Christ is portrayed as one that began with the Spirit who worked miraculously in their lives (Gl. 3:3-5). The Spirit of the Son lives in believers. Through Him they call to God: "ἄββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). Through Him they came to have a new life, and through his guidance they live this life (Gl. 5:25).

One should not think of Gl. 5:13-24 as reflecting an ethical battle between two equals for the winning over of a helpless person, within the believer. Rather, it reflects the responsibility of the believer not to do as flesh desires, because he actually has no need to do so. One must guard against thinking in terms of the battle between Spirit and flesh as one "which inevitably results in flesh frustrating the Spirit-inspired wishes of the believer."¹ Neither are they in stalemate with regard to

¹ Barclay, 1988, 113.

each other.¹ I agree with Barclay that Gl. 5:17, referring to the Spirit-flesh conflict as “to prevent you from doing as you wish” (ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε), does not mean that the believer is a pawn in the hands of two opposing and imposing entities. Rather, it stresses the believer’s responsibility to associate freely with the Spirit and not to be dominated by flesh.²

Thus our study of ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit’ takes us to the heart of Paul’s ethics in a particularly direct way. It reveals the situation of believers transformed by the power of the new age and enlisted in the service of the Lord and yet required to live out that service in the midst of the lures and temptations of the old age by a constant renewal of their obedience to the truth in faith.³

The believer is in a profoundly different position from his position in the old aeon, when he was naturally inclined to domination by flesh. Now, being a new creation, flesh having been crucified, he enjoys the indwelling of the Spirit orientating him to the Father’s will (Gl. 1:4; 4:6). He has no reason to succumb to flesh’s lures.

2. THE SECRET OF LIVING FREE: WALK BY THE SPIRIT!

It will be argued in this section that Christian ethics operates under the guidance of the Spirit. In Ch. 5 it was argued that the Christian is not oriented to law, but to Christ and his cross. How should the accompanying ethic be shaped and practised? In as much as the foundation, norm and purpose of Christian ethics can be described as loving service of the kind that befell believers in Christ Jesus, and which does not come naturally, the Spirit of Christ is the one who motivates and enables the believer to perform the deeds of love and service to which we are called. One could describe Christian ethics as christologically founded and pneumatologically implemented.

It is this overwhelming presence of Christ, the crucified and resurrected Lord, his Spirit, “the fruit of the Spirit,” which prevents the intentions of the flesh from accomplishing the “works of the flesh” (cf. 5:16, 19-21a).⁴

2.1. Walk by the Spirit

Paul uses three similar sounding expressions to describe the relationship between the Spirit and the new life in Christ in which the Christian partakes. He uses πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε (“walk by the Spirit” - Gl. 5:16) and follows with εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν (“If we *live* by the Spirit, let us also *keep in step with* the Spirit” - Gl. 5:25). Although the latter references are part of the pericope with which we will deal specifically in Ch. 7, it will be enlightening to attend to it at this stage. After all, Paul uses them so quickly in succession that one gets the impression that a difference in meaning of some kind was intended. It is almost inconceivable that Paul would have meant nothing by the

¹ Barclay, 1988, 114.

² Barclay, 1988, 115.

³ Barclay, 1988, 215.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 289.

differences between περιπατεῖτε and στοιχῶμεν, although many translations seem to equate them. I cannot agree with Longenecker that these three expressions, together with εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε (“since you are led by the Spirit” - Gl. 5:18) are synonymous.¹ The mere use of two of these expressions in one sentence (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν - Gl. 5:25) makes the possibility of synonymy slim.

2.1.1. Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι

One could describe this as a soteriological expression reminiscent of Gl. 3:3-5 where Paul refers to the Galatians’ coming to faith as an act of the Spirit. Their new life began with the Spirit. Through the Spirit of the Son sent into their hearts, the Galatians themselves became sons of God and call to him, through the same Spirit: “Abba! Father!” (Gl. 4:5-7).² Although Paul had not, at that stage, used the term “new creation” (Gl. 6:15), he had implied it with his reference to the receiving of the promise of the Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus (Gl. 3:14). As we have seen, the OT promised new life in which God’s Spirit would play a major role. Paul refers to that new pneumatological life as new creation. Without much ado we can accept that εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι is a pneumatological-soteriological reference signifying new life through the Christ event as existentially realised in the believer through the activity of the Spirit.³ In other words, it is a phrase heavily emphasising the new status of the believer. He has new life through the Spirit. It is a summary of the soteriological indicative of the Christian life.⁴ By using εἰ (“if”) followed by the indicative ζῶμεν Paul once more confirms life in the Spirit as part and parcel of being a Christian. It is a certainty (“if, as indeed we do”) and not an optional extra.⁵

2.1.2. Πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε

In this expression a different nuance is intended. For a start, it is an imperative. As Betz puts it: “The term expresses the view that human life is essentially a ‘way of life’.”⁶ It is not only about an indicative ascribing a certain status, i.e. living by the Spirit or being introduced to a new life by the Spirit. It is equally about a certain way of life in accordance with the guidance of the Spirit. It is about being governed by the Spirit in one’s daily enactment of faith.⁷ For this reason one could probably

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 244.

² Schrenk and Quell, 1967, 1006, stress that Paul’s use of Ἀββα is more than a liturgical formula. It refers to adoption as son of God. It is about “joyous assurance” in contrast to the position of the slave. The Ἀββα cry is the opposite of nomism. Through his Spirit, Christ has created a Father-son relationship between God and the believer.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1994, 189, stresses the close association between Christ and the Spirit, so that it is possible to speak of a “change in soteriological order from, (1) the reception of the Spirit to being a child of God as in 3:2-5, 14b and 26, to (2) being a child of God as the basis for receiving the Spirit, as here in 4:6.” Also Hansen, 1997, 224.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 293.

⁵ Moule, 1953, 150; Morris, 1996, 176. Witherington, 1998¹, 412, suggests “since” instead of “if”. This is sound.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 277.

⁷ Ebel, 1978, 944.

equate πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε with its chiasmic double in Gl. 5:18 (πνεύματι ἄγεσθε – “to be led by the Spirit”).¹ It is about letting the Spirit determine one’s conduct.²

“Walk” has a Jewish background. Dunn stresses that it is totally untypical of Hellenism, but typically Jewish. He traces it to OT usage (Ex. 18:20; Dt. 13:4-5; Ps. 86:11; Is. 33:15; also 1QS 3:18-4:26).³ The Hebrew root הלך from which *halakah* (“legal ruling”), is derived, is the operative OT word.⁴ “To walk according to the statutes of Law” (Ex. 16:4; Lv. 18:4; Ezk. 5:6-7) was the Jewish way of referring to the conduct expected of God’s people. By using the OT way of referring to proper conduct, Paul seems to deliberately contrast walking in the Spirit with law, by way of allusion.⁵ It is quite significant that Paul does this, because his main aim, judging from the apodosis, was to explain that the Spirit was the One through whom they were to deal with the flesh. Speaking in the old jargon of law, he was probably, by way of implication, restating law’s inability to deal with flesh. This is especially enhanced by his categorical statement in Gl. 5:18 that the Spirit makes law unnecessary. In this case he uses the parallel phrase to πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, namely πνεύματι ἄγεσθε.

[T]hose who had been given the Spirit thus also knew the eschatological experience looked for in Jer. xxxi.33-4 – an immediate knowledge of God, an enabling to know what God’s will was in particular instances. This is the basis of a charismatic ethic, depending more on inward apprehension of what is the appropriate conduct than on rule book or tradition.⁶

It is also a metaphor denoting progress along a taken road towards a given destination, denoted by the Spirit. Morris stresses that the use of the present imperative has the force of “keep walking in the Spirit.” Being in Christ and having begun in the Spirit, Paul accepts that they are walking in the Spirit.⁷

Paul constantly speaks of what the Spirit does, so that believers are ‘led’ by the Spirit (5:18), he refers to ‘the fruit’ of the Spirit (5:22), and of ‘reaping life eternal’ from ‘sowing to the Spirit’ (6:8). The apostle is telling his readers what the Spirit does in them, not what they themselves can accomplish if only they try hard enough.⁸

So, at this point we can reiterate that Paul does not change from a soteriological to an ethical course. He is merely taking the course he started travelling in his soteriology, to its ethical consequence. As much as the Spirit is the One by whom the believer lives soteriologically speaking, He is equally the One through whom the believer expresses his pneumatologically given life in a pneumatological ethos.⁹

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 245.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 243.

³ Dunn, 1993², 295. See also Bertram & Seesemann, 1967, 941-3. Ebel, 1978, 943-4, also provides evidence from Qumran.

⁴ Helfmeyer, 1977, 415-33. Lull, 1980, 121-3.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 393.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 296.

⁷ Morris, 1996, 168; Lull, 1980, 154-61.

⁸ Morris, 1996, 168. Fee, 1994¹, 204: “Having begun by the Spirit, one comes to completion by the Spirit (cf. 3:3).”

⁹ Schreiner, 2001, 263, writes: “The Spirit who grants new life strengthens believers so that they live in a way that is pleasing to God. Both the commencement and the continuance of the Christian life are animated by the Holy Spirit.”

2.1.3. Πνεύματι στοιχώμεν

Although this phrase is essentially the same as the above πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, I believe Paul intentionally chose a new phrase to introduce a nuance.¹ Once again he emphasises the indicative and imperative of faith. What makes it more significant is that they are combined in one sentence. Paul thus says that the indicative to live by the Spirit is inseparable from the imperative to be obedient to the Spirit. Christian life is not an idle waiting on the Spirit to provide the fruit, but an active struggle in which the Christian makes manifest that fruit which the Spirit provides.

Returning to Paul's use of στοιξέω, it should be remembered that he previously referred to believers formerly having been enslaved to the *elements of the world* (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου - Gl. 4:3, 9). They were dictated to by and lived according to these elements typical of the present evil age; dictates as to how to order and live their lives in the age dominated by flesh. Paul is probably alluding to these elements according to which they lived – inclusive of law, as we saw in Ch. 4 – to once again point to the radical switch from the flesh to the Spirit. They were not to think in terms of the old paradigm in any way. They had to listen to and follow only the Spirit. The term is also reintroduced in Gl. 6:16. It is a military term meaning “to be drawn up in a line” in order to follow the leader.² This was used in Hellenism with regard to following certain philosophers and their teachings.³ It could mean that just as he used the Jewish way of speaking about ethics by referring to “walking by the Spirit” he now uses Hellenistic terminology to drive the point home with his largely Hellenistic audience. Be that as it may, if Paul was using the verb in its military sense, it would mean that the Galatians were all to fall in line and follow the Spirit.⁴ They were to conform to the ethical leadership provided by the Spirit. This fits the context extremely well, because, as we shall argue in Ch. 7, Paul places profound emphasis on the community of faith corporately and harmoniously acting in accordance with the Spirit's lead (Gl. 5:26-6:10). It could, by way of allusion, already be introducing this ethic of walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16) to the corporate context in which they were not to follow the Spirit simply as each saw fit, but in unison.

The overtones then are that if the Galatians want to place themselves under a sort of martial law, all they really need to do is stay in step with the Spirit and they will receive all the guidance and discipline they need.⁵

The Spirit which effects this disregard of self is in no sense legal, still less legalistic; yet in its effect it is entirely moral.⁶

The pneumatological ethic of freedom in no way resembles licentiousness or *laissez faire* anarchy. It was about a well-ordered life in the absence of the dictates of law, equally not according to a form of natural ethics (*elements of the*

¹ Betz, 1979, 293.

² Betz, 1979, 294.

³ Delling, 1971, 667.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 294.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 413.

⁶ Barrett, 1985, 77.

world), but according to the divine and loving inner guidance of the Spirit through whom new creation came about in the advent of Christ.

2.2. The fruit of the Spirit

It is not within the scope of this study to pay detailed attention to the different elements of the *fruit of the Spirit* (ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος). We are more concerned with how pneumatological ethics works than with every virtue Paul lists in Galatians. How does the Spirit impact on the individual believer and community? In what way is Christian ethics different from that of Judaism and all the pagan religions and philosophies of the time? Was the content of the Christian ethos different, and if so, in what respect? Was the difference in content the main issue, or was it rather about how it operated.

2.2.1. *Living the life He makes possible*

The Christian ethic differs as radically from any other ethic as Christian faith and soteriology differ from other religions. Christian soteriology is about God taking the initiative and providing believers with salvation through grace alone, leaving no room for self-aggrandisement. This salvation he actualises in the life of believers by his Spirit endowing them with faith in Jesus Christ. It is no different in Christian ethics. It is equally about Christ living in the crucified man through the gracious guidance of the Spirit, and equally without self-aggrandisement. The effortless way in which Paul moves from his theological to his ethical arguments is witness to this. Reading Gl. 4:21-31 one is still aware of the heavy theological element in Paul's argument. One senses that whilst Gl. 5:1 summarises the theological section, it also turns the line of argument to ethics. This is actually true of the whole pericope (Gl. 5:1-12). When reaching Gl. 5:13 one almost suddenly realises that one is in the ethical section boots and all after already having entered it at Gl. 5:1. He does not give the impression that at a certain point theology ends and ethics takes over and that ethics is a totally different ball game. It will be argued that Paul's soteriology of freedom through Christ determines his ethic of living in that freedom under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of the Son.

2.2.1.1. *The fruit of the Spirit as inevitable result of faith in Christ Jesus*

With the term *fruit* Paul says it all. It was not about ethically encoded guidance from outside the believer's being, as in Judaism. Gone were the days that Torah in any form would command believing sinners without providing them with the ability to do as it commanded and heaping guilt upon guilt to be dealt with via the sacrificial system. It was now about an ethic that was as much a solution to man's ethical plight, as its soteriology provides new life. It was about living the new life according to God's promise in which the Spirit would deal with and guide the believer from his inner being. On the other hand, it would also be incomparable to the ethics of pagan religions and philosophies. It would not be about a human endeavour to improve life by arduously striving to live detached from emotion and what was regarded as mundane, and reaching to obtain a

certain level of virtuous living, to be termed freedom. It was about the Christian being endowed with a new character, determining his new ethic.¹

It is evident that Paul wished to create a clear contrast between the notions of *works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19) and *fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22). It is also highly probable that Paul, having moved on from his arguments against law and now focusing on the real problem, namely flesh, actually implied the *works of the law* and grouped them together with the *works of the flesh*. There are a few reasons for this assumption. He made abundant use of *works of law* in his argumentative section where life according to law featured prominently and was in the frontline of attack against his gospel. He now moves on to deal with the root problem of all morality, namely flesh, and refers to all deeds done according to the flesh as *works of the flesh*.

In Gl. 2:16 he refers to *works of law* thrice, stating that justification could only be through faith in Christ and not "by works of law" (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) and adds that all who rely on *works of law* are under a curse (Gl. 3:10). Does he not say exactly the same of works of flesh when he states that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21)? Not being part of God's kingdom, especially in apocalyptic sense, is equal to being separated from God and thus not being in the realm of salvation. Seeing Paul's words against the background of Jesus' parables on the kingdom,² this implies being under God's judgement and, therefore, curse.³

There is the added possibility that Gl. 5:14-15 is revisited in Gl. 5:19-23. In Gl. 5:14 Paul states that the whole law is fulfilled in the love command. When we read of the *fruit of the Spirit*, starting with love, ending with self-control and mentioning all the other elements as ways in which the first element is concretised, it rings a bell reminding us of Gl. 5:14. Equally, although not all the *works of flesh*, but definitely a few very obvious ones come to mind when one reads Paul's hyperbole concerning the Galatians biting and devouring one another (Gl. 5:14). The implication is that their in-fighting with regard to *works of law* led them to doing some of the *works of the flesh*, e.g. enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness and envy.

In Gl. 3:2 and 5 he ascribes their receiving of the Spirit and accompanying miracles to faith and not to *works of law*. Thus, speaking of *fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22) in opposition to *works of flesh* he refers to something as equally unattainable through law as through flesh, placing them in the same company.

It would be stretching the argument too far to assert that Paul equates *works of flesh* and the *works of the law*. They are most definitely two separate entities.

¹ Dockery, 1993, 317. Hansen, 1999, 210-1.

² Amongst others at Mt. 24-25; Mk. 13; Lk. 12:35-48; 13:6-9, 22-30; 14:15-24.

³ This being quite obvious, reference is made of discussions in this regard in Klappert, 1976, 382-9. R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 258, makes mention of Paul's remark on inheriting the kingdom as reflective of earlier Christian teaching.

However, it seems that Paul, at least by way of analogy, groups these two together and that the *works of the law* should be understood as included in his denouncement of the *works of the flesh*. This is even more obvious, considering how Paul regards the law as one of the elements of the world (Gl. 4:3).

Why is this important in the current argument? In the end both of them are driven by human effort. Successes occur here and there in the wider spectrum of ethical behaviour, but in the long run human effort and achievement cannot deal with flesh and succumbs to flesh's lures. In contrast to these works the Spirit produces a fruit in the believer that is otherwise humanly impossible.¹ Being crucified with Christ and Christ now living in him (Gl. 2:20); being dead to the law (Gl. 3:19); being crucified to the world and the world to him (Gl. 6:14); having the Spirit who does miracles (Gl. 3:5) living in him and through whom he has the intimate relationship with God in which he may call "ἄββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6); and, in summary, being a new creation (Gl. 6:15), the believer no longer needs to experience ethics as a never ending struggle that moreover ends in defeat, guilt and curse. There is a profound element of spontaneity in the pneumatological ethic - something effortless! Although, at this stage it must be added that it needs explaining, to which we will return later.

Paul wishes to stress that in those who have been received into the body of Christ, in whom the Spirit of Christ is active and who have a share in the gifts of this living fellowship, the outworking – the fruit – appears naturally, because it is not something manufactured.²

True Christian freedom, therefore, is the experience of this subjective restoration of the image of God through union with Christ so that the objective revelation of God's holiness and righteousness in the person of Christ can be expressed in ethical conduct.³

2.2.1.2. *The fruit of the Spirit as a gift of grace excluding achievement*

The point having been made that the Spirit works in the believer producing fruit acceptable to God and that the believer does not produce good works as an achievement of his own accord, the question arises as to the nature of this divine gift. One must steer clear of the notion that the mentioned virtues are given to the believer as a possession which he/she can merely call upon at random and manifest automatically.⁴ Paul is not saying that the listed virtues are given to believers as "finished products," so to say. He says that the Spirit is in them and that by walking according to the Spirit through whom they live, He leads them and makes them aware of God's will, so that, if they are obedient, these virtues will manifest in their lives. It happens neither automatically nor at gunpoint. Referring to Gl. 5:22 and Rm. 1:16 Deidun puts it well.

What the imperative demands of the Christian is, in essence, only what the Gospel itself demanded of him at the time of his initial believing: docile obedience. For the Gospel itself is δύναμις θεοῦ ... παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι: the present participle indicates the 'yes' by which

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 259; Matera, 1996, 172. Esler, 1998, 226-7, stresses the fact that the believer had access to the best law could provide and more, i.e. love, via a different route, namely the Spirit.

² Hensel, 1975, 723.

³ Hansen, 1999, 212-3.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 286-7.

the Christian, at the time of his conversion and throughout his life of faith, receives God's δύνάμις as the source of his own dynamism in faith and love. A man's salvation...is conditional upon his willingness to be saved.... Even a gift that is already bestowed is conditioned by the recipient's willingness to retain it.

The believer's active involvement is never taken out of the equation. It is about the Spirit enabling believers to produce these qualities and associated deeds that they do not have the capacity for doing. Their responsibility was not to look at the list and then strive to fulfil it, but rather to live and walk according to the Spirit and in the process experience how the Spirit produces such and other virtuous behaviour. The Christian's life is about surrendering to God's work in Christ which He does in us through the Spirit of the Son.²

2.2.2. **What law could not do, it can now only applaud.**

While discussing the Christian ethic as one in which the Spirit provides both the guidance and ability to live an ethic of love born from the relationship with Christ; and focussing attention to the Spirit as the real and only appropriate antidote to flesh's desires, he goes to the trouble of once again mentioning the Christian's not being under law (Gl. 5:18) and law's obsolescence (Gl. 5:23). In fact, he frames the lists of vices and virtues with these remarks. Law could not deal with flesh. The Spirit having been provided, the Christian is now in a position to deal with flesh. Law having had the function of dealing with flesh in the old dispensation and failing, now no longer had a role to play in the Christian's ethical decisions. What law could not accomplish, the Spirit was now doing.³ Law had thus become obsolete. Ironically, the only positive thing law was able to do was to underline man's guilt and emphasise his being under a curse (Gl. 3:5). It could not bring about faith or help man to live according to the promise. In fact, because it rested on man's endeavours Paul referred to it as *works of law* and aligned it with works of flesh. However, Paul did not leave it at that. In case anyone were to wonder about the integrity of the *fruit of the Spirit*, he adds that there is no law against such (Gl. 5:23). By implication, law in its entirety has to applaud the *fruit of the Spirit*. What law could not do, law has to applaud the Spirit for having produced in the believer. Law had become superfluous and obsolete.

It is notable that Paul uses the phrase: "there is *no law*" (οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). It seems as though Paul might have any ethical system in view and not only Jewish law. The qualities the Spirit works in the believer are above all reproach from any possible source and can only be applauded in any company.

Another point of interest is that Paul, by distinguishing these qualities from law, actually implies that the moral qualities expected of Christians were not in

¹ Deidun, 1981, 82.

² Bornkamm, 1966, 48, stresses the relation between indicative and imperative very well: "...die Dringlichkeit des Imperativs ist erst recht dadurch begründet, dass die Entscheidung gefallen ist: wir sind von der Sünde befreit ... Was die Glaubenden zu tun haben, ist sehr schlicht und einfach das παραστάνειν, das Sich selbst .. Gott überlassen."

³ Westerholm, 1997, 162-4. Bruce, 1984, 63, also indicates that Paul had realised the inadequacy of law, or any external law-code.

themselves a new law.¹ Frankly, these qualities could not be regulated by any kind of law code without being compromised. For instance, how does one enforce love? Does it not, by implication, cease to be love if it is forced to act? Was this not the problem in the old evil age? Flesh could not produce love and law could not force people to love, because love is a quality born from the heart by the movement of the Spirit.

The (somewhat unexpected) mention of the Law in v. 23b – in itself an ironical statement of the obvious – is intended to remind the Galatians that agapê (in all its multiform manifestations) belongs to a sphere in which the Law is simply irrelevant – and not just in the sense that the Law contains no statutory prohibition of agapê, but in the deeper sense that the Christian now lives no longer on the basis of human $\pi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\upsilon$, but in the power of the Spirit. Not man, but God himself, is the source of the Christian's activity.²

There is no deduction to be made from Paul's utterances in Galatians other than that the law no longer had a necessary function within Christianity. It had lost its soteriological function and, equally, its ethical function. Although Paul, as a former Jew and as an advocate for the fact that Christianity stemmed from Judaism and could never be seen loose from that relationship (Rm. 11), was positive regarding law's divine and necessary function in the old dispensation; and although he would often quote from these obligations in his correspondence, he rejected the necessity of law as an external requirement for guidance in Christian living. Law had now been replaced by the inward activity of the indwelling Spirit of God (Gl. 5:18). The moral demand on the believer was now based on the authority of the crucified and risen Christ (Gl. 2:20).

At this stage it should be stressed that the implication of this notion is not that there would of necessity not be a material continuity between Mosaic moral demands and the moral demands of the Spirit based on love.³ We will indicate later how Paul himself called upon former Mosaic commands when dealing with the ethics of a specific congregation. However, one should equally stress that Paul did not do this as if Mosaic law provided this enlightenment. These demands were obviously so in accordance with what Yahweh meant with love that it was required of believers to abide by them as far back even as Moses, as a matter of *spiritual commonsense*.

3. THE NORM AND PURPOSE OF FREEDOM: LOVING SERVICE!

3.1. Less is more. No longer doing law, but fulfilling it!

In Judaism there was no question about what was morally acceptable or not. Law was available, undisputable and bigger than life. There were discussions about interpretation and even different rabbinical schools of thought. But, truth be told, no Jew doubted the validity of law as moral standard. It was their claim to fame as nation. God had graciously given them the law. They would follow its requirements scrupulously. They could argue that in terms of law's requirements they did well in the Second Temple period, distinguishing themselves

¹ Betz, 1979, 288.

² Deidun, 1981, 118.

³ Deidun, 1981, 154.

morally. Those who became Christians from Judaism would have argued that law served them well in the past and would do so still.

The question is: did their moral standing in terms of law's obligations meet with law's intention, i.e. were their morals born of and borne in love? Was it initiated from and carried out in love? It was possible to do the right thing, but for the wrong reasons, or with a heart as cold as stone. Law could not change hearts. Law could not enforce love. In fact, the ground for law's existence was essentially that society lacked love. It had to enforce on society that which was not common cause, and eradicate that which was. Law was needed to provide society with what it lacked and did not seek of itself. We have seen in Ch. 4 that law underlined Israel's plight before God. It was this plight that inspired prophets to speak of an eschatological future in which God would place his Spirit in men and write his words upon their hearts. It was the same plight that initiated apocalyptic writings about a better future for Israel to hope for.

In Gl. 5:14 Paul very clearly reminds the readers of the ethical maxim well-known in Judaism (Lv. 19:18) and reiterated by Christ (Mt. 19:19; 22:39; Mk. 12:31) as the maxim according to which one should live in relation to others:

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."¹

This was probably in stark contrast to what they were experiencing at that stage of the Galatian polemic. Paul probably made use of hyperbole in Gl. 5:15,² but using it immediately after the aforementioned maxim indicated that he probably meant to illustrate exactly this point. Despite the implied pursuit of law-observance via circumcision, diet and calendar, the Galatians were probably at odds with one another and illustrated how inadequate law was in fulfilling its own goal, namely to enhance love towards one another. He hints at this possibility again in Gl. 5:26. If anyone were to consider accusing Paul's stance on Christian freedom from law as an opportunity for the flesh and as morally bankrupt, Paul could equally reciprocate and probably did, by implication. Judaism had proven that moral bankruptcy was possible and rife in the midst of, and sometimes even via, law. They aimed to do the law, but grievously failed to fulfil it in love. However, steering clear of such a direct accusation and the possibility of dignifying such a position, Paul resorts to positive argumentative territory. He sets the Christian moral goal as the fulfilment of law's intention. What law could not attain because of its inability to deal with flesh, believers, without the stipulations of law, would now pursue by living according to the guidance of the Spirit (Gl. 5:16-18, 22f.).

3.2. An ethic of loving service to one another

¹ Deidun, 1981, 143, draws attention to the fact that this sole demand of love for the neighbour in no way implies or weakens the fundamental demand to love God (Dt. 6:5). One should rather regard the two at different levels. Love for God is fundamental and implied in faith. One believes in God, because one loves Him in response to his overwhelming love. The love of the neighbour is also wholly impossible if the subject of that love is not authentically surrendered to God.

² Betz, 1979, 277.

Although this subject will be revisited in Ch. 7, it needs to be given some prominence currently. Paul makes four statements concerning love. *Firstly*, in Gl. 2:20 he refers to the life he lives in the flesh as lived “by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἔμοῦ). This is extremely important. It refers to the basis of Christian faith, salvation and ethics. Paul states that at the heart of Christian belief, the foundation on which it is founded and according to which it is lived lies the divine initiative, drenched in the love of the Son of God who gave Himself unto death on the cross for the sake of delivering sinners. This was not only the ultimate token of love and most profound example of self-sacrificing service, but also the basis and motive of Paul’s and all Christians’ love and service. Faith was founded in this loving sacrifice, and ethics would equally flow forth from it. The faithfulness of Christ is the ground of salvation.¹

Secondly, Paul is clear in Gl. 5:6 that the main issue of faith in Christ is far removed from the debate on circumcision. It is much rather about “faith working through love” (ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη). By juxtaposing circumcision with love Paul enhances the importance for the Christian to love. If circumcision was the most prominent mark of the true Jew,² the believer in Christ would be identified by his/her faith characteristically translating into love. It is interesting that Paul speaks of neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (or non-circumcision). Could it be that by juxtaposing these opposites Paul is indicating that the whole issue, wherever it leads to, actually boils down to nothing – a non-event as it were? On the other hand, believers in Christ wish to translate their faith into love, because it is essential to faith in Christ.

The two concepts come together because they are the two sides of the same orientation of a man. Faith denotes the attitude of openness or simple trust on the basis of which alone he can relate truly to God. Love denotes the generous self-giving which follows from it. Faith is a disposition of the whole person, love the moral impulse to which it gives rise; for to respond to God’s love in simple trust must impel a man to be open to his neighbours’ needs. Open self-giving must characterize a man in both dimensions – towards God and towards others.³

It is neither an optional extra nor a territorial hassle. Unquestionably, it comes with the territory, but love being what it is, makes it impossible for the one who loves to regard it as optional or as a hassle. It is simply the logical and “natural”⁴ thing to do.

Thirdly, in Gl. 5:13 he calls on believers to put their freedom to *service through love* (ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις). Here Paul places love and service in the context of freedom in Christ as a vocation. The Christian had not been set free as a goal in itself. He was set free from the enslaving bonds that made it nigh impossible to look beyond the self and be other than self-serving. He now, after being freed, had the vocation to rise above flesh and serve in

¹ Hays, 1983, 157-76.

² Circumcision was probably only mentioned as the marking inclusive of, or implying the rest of law.

³ Houlden, 1992, 29.

⁴ Obviously, natural does not refer to man’s corrupted nature, but to his new orientation through the Spirit.

love.¹ In a helpful article concerning what Christ did to the law and how law had been fulfilled in Christ's loving service and should continually be fulfilled by believers in everyday living, Martyn writes

Reading Gal 5:14 in its own letter, then, we are reminded in two regards of Paul's ubiquitous concern to differentiate anthropological possibility from christological power. First, we sense that for Paul the difference between anthropological possibility and christological power is nowhere more evident than in the daily life of the church (cf. Gal 5:22-24). Second, we see that in the church's life, that difference emerges precisely in relation to the question of the pertinence of the law. In Gal 5:14, that is to say, the guiding imperative of the law, Lev 19:18, is not the result of an insightful deed of Paul, his act of reducing the law to its essence (his achievement of the *reductio in unum*). On the contrary, that guiding imperative is the result of the powerful deed of Christ, his act of loosing God's law from the law of Sinai, thereby addressing it to the church. The law taken in hand by Christ (Gal 6:2) is the law that Christ has restored to its original identity and power (Gal 5:14).²

Christ removed the link between the believer's morality and law, grounding it in his love demonstrated on the cross. Christian morality had to take its cue, not from law, but from Christ's love and faithfulness. Marxsen refers to Christian love as lived Christology.³

Fourthly, in Gl. 5:22 Paul introduces the *fruit of the Spirit* and places love (ἀγάπη) at the very prominent and important top position heading the list of Christian "virtues".⁴ At this stage it should be added that the very prominent and also important last position is assigned to so-called self-control (ἐγκράτεια). *Firstly*, despite differences of opinion concerning an identifiable structure of some kind in Paul's list of virtues, there is extensive agreement amongst scholars that the first, i.e. love, is the all controlling quality from which the others flow and from which they take their cue.⁵ This once again illustrates love as the overriding Christian orientation from which the others are born and through which they are carried. It is this orientation to love that bears with others and shares their burdens, giving them direction and a specifically Christian content. *Secondly*, the element of service is introduced into the equation by ἐγκράτεια. It is enough only to mention at this point that Paul's view on self-control is far removed from that of Hellenism. Broadly speaking, Hellenists took it to refer to man's ability to discipline himself, gaining control over his bodily and emotional being, so that he would not be dictated to by them, or even merely pleasure them. His main focus was mental and intellectual control of his life.⁶ Obviously this lead to a dispassionate disposition and disconnectedness from society⁷ and the

¹ Guthrie, 1981, 696.

² Martyn 1996, 60.

³ Marxsen, 1993, 217.

⁴ I would prefer the word "quality", although it also needs qualification. A virtue gives the impression of something objective to be achieved. With quality I mean it as an expression of the gift of love that the Spirit works in the believer. Thus, quality as an expression of love. This is also why I am in agreement with most scholars that the use of the singular for fruit points to this notion of the fruit of the Spirit being love expressed in different ways according to contextual need, and that all these ways must manifest in the individual Christian's life.

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 309.

⁶ Breidenkamp, 2001, 48.

⁷ Klauck, 2003, 383-4.

world at large (ἀπάθεια or ἀπαθής).¹ In fact, it lead to those successful in practising ἐγκράτεια regarding themselves and being regarded by others as a notch above the ordinary citizen.² Paul, on the other hand, follows a more relational understanding of ἐγκράτεια. It is not about mere control over one's emotions and desires. It should be seen more in the light of love and freedom, hinting towards being willing, through love, to hold back on one's freedom so that it does not impose on the freedom of another believer or of the community.³

It simply tells us that for the sake of the goal toward which he strives, the commission he has been given, and the task he must fulfil, he refrains from all the things which might offend or hamper.⁴

Once again, Christian freedom is not the freedom to do whatever one wishes, even if it would not necessarily be licentious. It is about being free to love and serve others according to God's will. It should be clear that Paul regarded Christ's love shown to him as foundational for the life and ethics of the believer. It should be clear that this very love of Christ would be the driving force behind his ethic, as well as its norm and its purpose. It would not be a love of lip-service, but one actively working in a spirit of service.

3.3. The law of Christ is no new law

All being said, Paul's positive remarks on law and his quoting of Mosaic commands in other correspondence calls to mind whether Paul does not in some way make provision for Mosaic moral laws in Christianity. Because the expression "law of Christ" (Gl. 6:2 - τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) is usually brought into play in this discussion and for other reasons that will become evident as we move along, we will deal with it in this chapter.

3.3.1. Why is Paul positive about law in some instances?

This is obviously a profoundly important question. If one accepts that Paul, in Galatians, argues that an ethic centred on law is incompatible with the Christian's true existence of being in Christ and living and walking by the Spirit; and if one accepts, as we argued in Chapters 1 and 2, that Paul had made up his theological and ethical mind on these matters even before he wrote to the Galatians, would the touchstone for the notion that Paul rejected any necessity for an ongoing function for law in the new dispensation not be Paul's own application of ethics in his correspondence? Many have argued that Paul divulges from his very law-exclusive position in Galatians to a more law-inclusive or law-positive position in his other correspondence,⁵ giving rise to a wide variety of

¹ Liddell & Scott, 1975, 86; Gärtner, 1978, 719.

² Bredenkamp, 2001, 49.

³ Bredenkamp, 2001, 195-8.

⁴ Grundmann, 1964, 342.

⁵ Because it is not fundamental to the argument, I refrain from citing Paul's negative references to law in the Roman and Corinthian correspondence. Instances of note where Paul refers to law positively are: (a) 1 Cor. 7:19 where he claims that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but "keeping the commandments of God"; (b) 1 Cor. 9:20-21 where he cuts it both ways; (c) Rm. 3:31 answers to the question whether faith overthrows law by stating: "On the contrary, we uphold the law"; (d) Rm. 7:7-12 explains how the law positively made

explanations of which not one is without limitation. Because others have done so competently, I will refrain from dealing with each of these positions in detail.

- *Paul was merely being inconsistent*,¹ or he changed his mind as time went by and libertarian tendencies in different communities forced him to step down from his principle ethic and introduce certain laws as still operative.² One should argue against this notion. Paul had taken a very strong stand in Galatians with regard to law having come to an end for the believer (Gl. 2:19; 3:26; 5:18). All these arguments against law are even repeated in the letter to the Romans – sometimes even more elaborately.³ If Paul had made up his theological, soteriological and ethical mind before writing to the Galatians and was so expressed in what he said, as we have argued, one would have expected Paul to explain his change of heart and mind in later correspondence. He would not have been careless in what he wrote to the Galatians or any of the other congregations and failed to pick up his different opinion himself. Equally, had he changed his mind one would have expected him to argue his case, especially after his harsh words to Peter at Antioch and the Jerusalem council. One is tempted to mention that many of those who argue thus accept that Galatians was written at a later date than accepted here. If this were the case it would be even more paramount for Paul to explain a possible change of view, because the lapse of time between the letters would be much shorter.
- *Paul only rejected those laws regarding ethnicity and ceremonial matters*, but still retained the moral laws about which he was positive. Dunn is well known for his so-called *new perspective on Paul* according to which Paul's references to *works of law* are to Jewish exclusivism, particularism and ethnocentrism. According to him it had precious little to do with legalism or

man aware of sin. Law itself was not sin, but revealed sin as caused by flesh. In this context he adds that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good"; (e) Rm. 7:14 refers to the law as "spiritual"; (f) Rm. 7:16 says "I agree that the law is good"; not forgetting the instances in Galatians, e.g. Gl. 3:19 which, according to my understanding refers to divine origin; Gl. 3:21 which confirms that law was certainly not against the promise; Gl. 3:23-24 describes law as a "custodian" to help keep the believer from sinning for the limited period until Christ would come. There are also instances where he refers to the law or a commandment in his dealing with ethics in the different congregations. According to Deidun, 1981, 157, there are only seven such references or allusions to prescriptions of the law in Paul's correspondence, namely: (a) 1 Cor. 7:19; (b) 1 Cor. 9:9; (c) 2 Cor. 8:15; (d) Rm. 7:7; (e) Rm. 12:19-20; (f) Rm. 13:9; (g) Rm. 15:14.

¹ Räisänen, 1983, 62-73.

² Hübner, 1984, 55. Taylor, 1997, 47-67, is a most readable article endeavouring to explain the seemingly contradictory elements in Paul's view on law in terms of cognitive dissonance. If I understand him correctly, he argues that Paul's conversion created great dissonance with his convictions at the time. Of course, this is without question. However, according to Taylor, the incident at Antioch had such a profoundly negative, disillusioning impact on Paul that he had once again to clarify his position on law. Galatians was his reaction to this rethink. In the process he radicalised his position, but moving on in time he came to temper down. In the letter to the Romans he re-evaluated his heritage in terms of God's grace and came to a "renewed attachment to his ancestral heritage." Although the dissonance remains unresolved, Taylor sees it as possibly explanatory of Paul's discrepancies regarding law from Galatians to Romans. It is a most enlightening article and a very good application of cognitive dissonance theory. However, it remains speculative and does not provide a satisfactory explanation for Paul's negative remarks on law in Romans that are largely a reiteration of those in Galatians.

³ Rm. 3:21-4:25; 8:1-17.

salvation in general.¹ Currently, this is a widely held view amongst scholars. The most important point of criticism against this view is that neither the OT, nor Judaism, nor Paul makes such a distinction. Paul speaks of law as a complete entity that had to be wholly observed.²

[W]orks of law refers to the deeds or actions demanded by the law. The term works of law is not used often in Jewish literature previous to or contemporaneous with Paul. In the texts in which the term appears, the reference is to the entire law. For example, in the Dead Sea Scrolls the phrase works of law refers to the whole law (4QFlor 1:7), for there is no contextual indication of any limitation or focus on part of the law (cf. also 2 Bar. 4:9; 57:2). The similar phrase in his works of the law (1QS 5:21; 6:18) also broadly designates the whole law. We find support for this in 1 QS 5:8, where the adherents pledge to “return to the law of Moses according to all which he commanded.”³

Together with this, one might add two points of interest. *Firstly*, if Paul’s dealing with law in Galatians has very heavy ethnic and ceremonial overtones, it is because of the way in which the problem of law presented itself in Galatia. Paul had to take his departure from that point and frequently return to it. Paul operated from a specific context. This in no way suggests that it was only with these ethnic indicators that Paul had a problem. In fact, given the context, if Paul had only ceremonial law in mind, it seems very strange that he so seldomly refers specifically to such laws, as opposed to his many references to law as such. *Secondly*, and associated with the first, Paul most definitely refers to moral laws when he echoes the so-called love command in Gl. 5:14 and states that the whole law is fulfilled in this one word.

- *Paul only rejected law as a means of “getting in” the right relationship with God, or righteousness.* In other words, with regard to soteriology Paul no longer accepted law as a requirement. However, when it came to staying in, or ethically living up to the right relationship, Paul envisioned a role for law.⁴
- *Paul merely rejected a certain attitude towards law* and wanted believers to redefine their attitude in order for law to have moral significance and effect, compatible with the period since the Christ event and the advent of the Spirit.⁵ In this regard Dunn has shown a renewed interest in the relation between three phrases Paul uses in positive reference to law, i.e. “the law of Christ” (Gl. 6:2), “the law of faith” (Rm. 3:27), and “the law of the Spirit” (Rm. 8:2).⁶ He credits Furnish for having connected these phrases as equivalents⁷ and also for connecting it to “the law of love” and to “the sum and substance of the law of Moses.”⁸ He also refers to Eduard Lohse who does the same and adds that through Christ the law can now serve its original purpose.⁹ Wolfgang Schrage also makes a connection with *To-*

¹ Dunn, 1990², 188-203; 1998, 354-71.

² Refer back to Ch. 4 at § 2.1.2. and § 3.3. .

³ Schreiner, 2001, 111.

⁴ Authors of this conviction abound.

⁵ Dunn, 1990², 224.

⁶ Dunn, 1996, 62-82.

⁷ Furnish, 1973, 100.

⁸ Furnish, 1968, 235.

⁹ Lohse, 1991, 161-2.

rah, but then as reinterpreted in Christ.¹ Ferdinand Hahn follows Lohse's approach, but without the tripartite connection between "law of Christ", "law of faith" and "law of the Spirit". His emphasis is on the demanding aspect of law.² It is indeed doubtful that these scholars have in mind that Torah was revived and reinterpreted by Christ to be anything near what it was before the reinterpretation. It is also unthinkable that Paul had in mind that this very same Torah, although reinterpreted, should be continued in the Christian community in some form or another. It seems these scholars actually refer to law with the intention to indicate that the Christian's moral life is such that it fulfils the moral requirements of Torah. But, the point being that the Christian in his being a new creation achieves precisely this;³ and at that, without Torah in any form.

- *All connections between Torah and the law of Christ are to be severed.* Hübner argues that ὁ πᾶς νόμος ("the whole law" - Gl. 5:14) and ὁλος ὁ νόμος ("the whole law"- Gl. 5:3) cannot be the same. His notion is that Gl. 5:3, referring to the position of the Judaisers, has in view a life according to law, whilst the Gl. 5:14 reference is to the summary or purpose of the law, namely the love of the neighbour – the former being a negative reference and the latter a positive one. Hübner's argument is that the latter cannot be equated with Torah, because it was a reduction of Torah.⁴ In the same vein Westerholm argues that law had been replaced by the Spirit and not by another law. He argues that "law of Christ" is not a reference to a law, but is used rather loosely, "by analogy with the Mosaic code, for the way of life fitting for a Christian."⁵ This is also Heikki Räisänen's position. He defends the notion that νόμος should, in this instance, be translated with "order" and not with "law", so that "the word νόμος thereby permits a polemical allusion to the Mosaic Law."⁶ This boils down to living a life according to how a life in Christ should be lived.⁷

We return to Dunn who, after setting up these lines, puts a very appropriate question, although this dissertation differs from his suggested solution.

Could it be, for example, that the discussion of New Testament ethics has disregarded emphases in Paul's theology which the narrower focus on Paul and the law brings out more clearly? Alternatively, could it be that the discussion of Paul and the law has treated the subject in a too narrowly theological way and has ignored the ethical question: How then should the believer live? At all events the all too brief treatment of these passages in studies of New Testament ethics and the dismissal of them as witness to Paul's evaluation of the Mosaic law in studies of Paul and the law suggest that they deserve closer attention.⁸

¹ Schrage, 1988, 206-7; Barclay, 1988, 134.

² F. Hahn, 1976, 38, 41, 47-9.

³ Furnish, 1973, 96.

⁴ Hübner, 1984, 36-40. He does, however, change his position with regard to law in Romans.

⁵ Westerholm, 1988, 214.

⁶ Räisänen, 1992, 68. It should be granted that Räisänen takes this position with regard to Rm. 3:27 and 8:2. However, the gist of the argument is the same. His position regarding Rm. 8:2 is shared by Cranfield, 1975, 374-6, however, strangely, Cranfield differs regarding Rm. 3:27 (219-20). See also Käsemann, 1980, 102-3; Lekkerkerker, 1971, 155, 325; Moo, 1996, 249-50, 474-5; Stuhlmacher, 1998, 109-10.

⁷ Dunn, 1996, 64.

⁸ Dunn, 1996, 64.

Obviously, we cannot reflect his investigation of these passages in detail. However, his conclusions, although different from this dissertation, are important. He rejects the second line of meaning for law reflected above, arguing that “law of faith” (Rm. 3:27) should be understood as the opposite of “law of works”. By the latter he understands those works of Torah referring to Israel’s protection and promotion of its distinctiveness from the other nations.¹ They are not basic to faith. In fact they lead to boasting because of Israel’s privileged position. Faith had to establish the law of righteousness, or faithfulness, or obedience. To obtain faithfulness one had to rely on, trust, God. “The law of faith, then, is the law in its function of calling for and facilitating the same sort of trust in God as that from which Abraham lived.”²

The “law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2) accentuates the position that the law may not be merely a letter of which mere notice is taken, but that it had to be a matter of the heart – and then a heart aligned to God’s. The Spirit is the great enabler of the faithful believer seeking to do God’s will in each new situation.³ He then raps up the first two phrases of the tripartite by stating:

In both cases Paul uses the term “law” because he wanted to underline the vital importance of doing, obeying God’s will. And in both cases the qualifier, “of faith,” “of the Spirit,” indicates in a summary way how that obedience is made possible. In Paul’s solution to the problem of human weakness and sin’s power, faith and Spirit are the two sides of the same coin.⁴

With regard to “the law of Christ” he follows the route of paralleling Galatians and Romans. Firstly, he draws a parallel between Rm. 13:8-10 and 15:1-3.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. – Rom. 13:8-10.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself... – Rom. 15:1-3.

He then picks up a parallel between the two passages in their insistence on love of the neighbour and Christ’s having done so. This is a fulfilment of the law. He finds the same train of thought in Gl. 5:13-14 and 6:2

...through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” - Gl. 5:13-14

Bear one another’s burdens and thus you will fulfil the law of Christ. - Gl. 6:2

He deduces that “law of Christ” is somehow linked to the example of Christ⁵ and the whole law – not just moral teaching – is to be fulfilled as Christ fulfilled it. “Paul still saw a positive role for the law in Christian conduct.”⁶ The way to fulfil it is by love of the neighbour, and by implication, also of God. The references to

¹ Dunn, 1996, 65. He refers to his much more detailed article on this matter and worth reading: 1992, 99-117.

² Dunn, 1996, 68.

³ Dunn, 1996, 73.

⁴ Dunn, 1996, 74.

⁵ Dunn, 1996, 78. In Dunn, 1998, 655, he also connects it to the love command.

⁶ Dunn, 1996, 77.

“the whole law” - ὁ πᾶς νόμος in Gl. 5:14 and ὅλος ὁ νόμος in Gl. 5:3 – are, contrary to Hübner’s position, to the same law. In Gl. 5:3 it refers to

“a misunderstanding of the role of the law in relation to Israel, all that Paul summed up under the terms ‘works’ and ‘letter’. But the other was a wholly acceptable and necessary appreciation of the law’s continuing importance – the whole law, but as summed up and expressible in and through the command to love the neighbor. Where requirements of the law are being interpreted in a way which ran counter to the basic principle of the love command, Paul thought that the requirements could and should be dispensed with. On the other hand, it was possible in his view for the whole law, and all its commandments to be fulfilled in a way that did not run counter to the love command.”¹

Finally, he concludes, law, misunderstood as *letter* and *works* and not as a matter of love inclusive of non-Jews, is the law for which Paul has only negative remarks in Galatians and Romans. But “the law will still be the measure of judgement when the power of sin and death are themselves brought under the final judgement.”²

If Dunn’s intention is to defend the whole law, minus certain cultural and cultic laws, as still applicable for Christians, the question arises why Paul did not indicate what laws were still applicable. At least the laying down of some sort of principle would have been most helpful. The absence of such an indication is even more pronounced considering the occasion of the letter and Paul’s urgency in setting the Galatians’ theology and ethics straight. However, I do not think this is Dunn’s intention. It could very well be that, in line with the cautionary notes mentioned above, he is merely stressing the point that morality should not be compromised in the Christian community. By stressing ethics as “law” he makes an uncompromising call to take ethics seriously. The question is then why such an issue about “law”? Is it not equally possible to emphasise the necessity of high Christian morals without introducing a form of *neo-nomism*? Should we not accept “law” in “law of Christ” as a *rhetorical mechanism*? Is Paul not possibly, by way of irony, introducing a new mode of thinking about ethics and using “law of Christ” exactly to the effect that “law” as previously understood is rendered ineffective?

3.3.2. Should the positive statements entrench law in Christian ethics?

I fail to understand what the problem is with the so-called positive statements on law as opposed to Paul’s predominantly negative evaluation of law in Galatians. Much has been written on the subject by many an irreproachable scholar. I do not wish to brush off their arguments as unmerited. To the contrary, they have all made valuable contributions to the debate and the small volume of space awarded to this matter in the present dissertation should not be regarded as a reflection of the respect for their labour. The intention here is to defend the position that Paul rejected law’s ongoing function in Christian ethics, to the benefit of the notion that the Spirit would guide and enable believers in doing God’s will. The reason for bringing up the matter of the positive statements is that the latter are often recorded as against such a notion. I am of the opinion that most of Paul’s positive statements on law do not

¹ Dunn, 1996, 78.

² Dunn, 1996, 81.

necessarily reflect a notion on his part that law should be awarded with some form of ethical authority in the new dispensation. One can account for all the so-called contradictions to Paul's rejection of a continued function for law, by accepting that Paul assigned to law a *divine origin* and the positive function of identifying sin and keeping it at bay – but then, only for the *limited period* from Moses to Jesus; and if one accepts that Paul sometimes had in mind *law as fulfilled in Christ* and the *believer's loving service*. This will be applied very briefly below.

- Paul's claim in *1 Cor. 7:19* that neither circumcision nor non-circumcision counts for anything, but "keeping the commandments of God," need not, and probably should not, be seen as a one-on-one reference to Mosaic law. Grosheide, although expressing himself in terms of "moral law" (*zedewet*), is quick to qualify that Paul does not have Mosaic moral law in mind. Paul uses ἐντολαί instead of the expected νόμος. Grosheide then makes the enlightening exegetical remark that by using ἐντολῶν θεοῦ without the article Paul was actually emphasising θεοῦ. It was not about the now human prerequisite of circumcision or not, but about God and obedience to Him.¹ Of this obedience Pop says it was about the two main issues, i.e. loving God and one's neighbour.² Thus Paul was most probably not referring to Mosaic law at all, but to obedience to God. Obviously he would be all for it!
- *1 Cor. 9:20-21* illustrates Paul's missionary and pastoral strategy characterised by respect. Important at this point is the fact that Paul can state that for those under the law he became as one under the law and for those outside the law as one outside the law, but not without the law of Christ. This he says immediately after stating his freedom from all men, but despite this freedom, his willingness to rather be a slave to all for the sake of their being won for Christ (*1 Cor. 9:19*). Thus, he follows a morality different from any other – also from Mosaic law. He follows the route of loving service in which the self and its freedom is characterised by responsibility for others. This is incredibly similar to his *fruit of the Spirit* in *Gl. 5:22-23* where he introduces the fruit with the overriding quality of love and rounds it off with self-control. We have seen that these qualities could not be brought about by law and that law could only applaud it.
- In *Rm. 3:31* Paul puts the rhetorical question: "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?" He answers it emphatically with: "On the contrary, we uphold the law." Ridderbos indicates that one should understand law in *Rm. 3:31* in a broader sense than the stipulations of Torah. It was about the total self-revelation of God in the OT. This is confirmed by his dealing with Abraham as an example in *Rm. 4*.³ Ridderbos continues by remarking that the antithesis Paul employs between καταργέω and ἵστανώ reminds one of Jesus' use of πληρῶω and καταλύω in *Mt. 5:17*, probably going back to a rabbinical formula.⁴ The conclusion is thus that

¹ Grosheide, 1957, 197.

² Pop, 1974, 141.

³ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 90. So also Newman & Nida, 1973, 72: "Paul uses the Law as a reference to the total religious system of Judaism, which finds its visible embodiment in the Old Testament."

⁴ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 90.

the OT had come to receive its full meaning through faith in Jesus. Once again, there is no reason to understand “we uphold the law” as of necessity meaning that Paul wished to entrench Mosaic law in some form in the new dispensation. In fact, it makes more sense to understand law in Rm. 3:31 in the broader sense rather than narrowing it down to a form of Mosaic law. It seems Rm. 3:31 could be understood as confirming that the ceremonial laws aimed at the promise had been fulfilled in Christ, and that the believer could now, because of the Christ event, fulfil the obligations laid on him to love God and his neighbour. Paul could be equally positive about this notion without reintroducing law as such.

- *Rm. 7:7-12* explains the positive role of law in making man aware of sin. Law itself was not sin, but revealed sin emanating from a life according to the flesh. In this context he adds that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.” Rm. 7:14 can also refer to the law as “spiritual”. Rm. 7:16 says “I agree that the law is good”. Taking great care not to deviate into debating who the ἐγὼ in Rm. 7 is, it seems evident that Paul’s positive references to law refer to its divine origin and intention. This is very much in line with Gl. 3:19, 21 and 23-24 where Paul is quite clear that it was meant for only the interim period between Moses and Christ.

In conclusion, within the framework of the temporary function of law in the interim between Moses and Christ, law’s having been fulfilled in the obligation of love, as well as the broader interpretation of law as referring to the whole system of Judaism in the OT, there is no need to regard the positive remarks regarding law as in any way entrenching law within Christian ethics. What Paul says about law and Christian ethics in Gl. 5:18 is meant to say precisely what it says, nothing less, and certainly nothing more: ***But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law!*** It is either the one or the other. Within the Christian paradigm it can be only the guidance of the Spirit. There is no alternative.

3.3.3. *What about the instances where he cites Mosaic law?*

As stated earlier, the touchstone in the matter of Paul’s rejection of a necessary ongoing function for law in the new dispensation is his own use or non-use of Mosaic prescriptions in his ethical applications. A few brief observations on this matter are required.

In 1 Cor. 9:9 Paul deals with the principle that someone working in the fields of the Lord should be sustained materially. This was such an obvious principle that it would almost be unnecessary to seek any textual support. In fact, it was a maxim equally well-known in Greek culture.¹ However, Paul refers to Dt. 25:4 where it is stated that an ox may not be muzzled when treading grain.² His allegorical interpretation is so out of context that one almost senses that Paul did not refer to it for Mosaic authorisation, but as a rhetorical mechanism. Anyone would understand that a worker in God’s field was more important than an ox. If oxen

¹ Grosheide, 1957, 241

² Deidun, 1981, 158.

were to be taken care of as a matter of commonsense, the congregation should realise the obviousness of the need to take care of evangelists.¹ The point is, Paul does not seem to base his call for support of evangelists on the law. He supports his call with an old and widely held decontextualised traditional maxim.²

In 2 Cor. 8:15 Paul calls on Ex. 16:18 in support of his argument that believers should be willing to share their abundance with those who lack materially. Of great interest is Paul's remark in 2 Cor. 8:8 that he does not appeal to them on the grounds of a command (κατ' ἐπιταγήν),³ but on the grounds of the grace bestowed on them by "Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." His argument is founded not on law, but in Christ and on his example. Thus his reference to Ex. 16:18 is not a motivation, but an illustration.⁴

In Rm. 7:7 Paul makes reference to the tenth commandment (Ex. 20:17; Dt. 5:21) inferring that if, for example, there were no commandment such as this one, he would not know sin. Clearly, his quoting of the commandment in this instance does not have any bearing on its continued efficacy for Christians. He is merely inferring that in the time when law was operative (from Moses till Christ) knowledge of the law was the way in which one learnt to identify sin.⁵ In fact, the whole context is that of law's ability to point out sin, but also its inability to counter sin, and so leading to death (Rm. 7:9-10).

Paul implores the believers in Rome not to take revenge when an injustice is done to them, but to leave it in God's hands (Rm. 12:19-20). He does not call on a requirement of law to substantiate his exhortation. He merely adds a quotation from Dt. 32:35 in which Yahweh states that He is the one to set injustices right. In so doing Paul provides them with the comforting knowledge that God knows of all wrongdoings and that He can be trusted with setting things straight. Thus, Paul's reference to OT scripture in this case is in no way a prescription of law, but a self-revelation by God concerning his justice. Equally, the reference to feeding the enemy and giving him to drink is not an OT law, but a sound piece of sagacious advice from the wisdom tradition of Proverbs (25:21ff.). One should also bear in mind that this whole section is preceded by the calls of Rm. 12:1-2, 9-10 and 17-18 which are far removed from the very specific stipulations of law, and abound in love as expression of God's will and that which is generally accepted by most people as decent and commendable behaviour.

¹ Pop, 1974, 180.

² Deidun, 1981, 158.

³ Granted that κατ' ἐπιταγήν does not refer to the commandments of God. Grosheide, 1959, 231, refers to κατ' ἐπιταγήν as an apostolic directive or an instruction with apostolic authority. The fact is, if he does not even award his admonition with apostolic authority. If he regarded law as still applicable would he not at least have awarded some authority to his admonition? As an apostle, and on a very important subject, i.e. the remembering of the poor, one would have expected him to lean more on law if it were still applicable.

⁴ Deidun, 1981, 158.

⁵ Cranfield, 1975, 348.

Paul reiterates the need for believers to love one another in Rm. 13:8-10 and adds that the love of the neighbour is equal to obedience to the law. He then follows with four of the commandments from the Decalogue of which he says that they and any other commandment¹ are summed up in the one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Lv. 19:18), to which he also refers in Gl. 5:14. He then adds that love is the fulfilment of the law. Deidun observes:

Paul does not say that the fulfilment of the Law is love, but that love is the fulfilment of the Law (v. 10b); nor does he say, ‘love is the fulfilment of the Law, therefore it does no harm to neighbour’, but: ‘love does no harm to neighbour, therefore it is the fulfilment of the Law’ (v. 10).²

Paul clearly did not ground these and other prohibitions in Mosaic law. He regarded Christians as duty bound to abide by these specific requirements, but they were to do it simply as an expression of their overriding obligation to love as Christ did, and not because it was a law requirement.³ Paul reminds the Christians in Rome (Rm. 15:4) that what was written in former days was written for their instruction, so that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the scriptures they might have hope. One must bear in mind the preceding OT quotation from Ps. 69:9. Clearly, whilst Paul is busy with exhortation, he does not base it on law, but on the sufferings of Christ of whom the OT bore witness.⁴ To regard this reference to scripture as a call to found Christian exhortation on law is stretching matters.⁵

Deidun observes that Paul refers to specific laws on only 7 occasions.⁶ If Paul were truly convinced of an ongoing role for law in Christian ethics, one would have expected Paul to have made much more use of specific laws available to him in dealing with ethical matters and exhortations. He does not. Added to this is the fact, as illustrated above, that those references to law or OT scripture that he does make, are not in any way convincing proof of such a notion. On the contrary, it seems that Paul never exhorts believers to adhere to a specific norm because it is thus stipulated by law, but rather because it is in accordance with the love and sacrifice of Christ and because it fulfils law through love.

The basic eschatological-ethical stance of the transformed person is thus established from within, not governed by any set of external rules. Paul does occasionally appeal to external authorities, but these sporadic occurrences demonstrate, rather than call into question, Paul's independence from any kind of normative rules ethic. He can appeal to the teaching of Jesus (1 Cor. 7.10f). He can cite Scripture to support his judgement (e.g. Rom. 12.20). He can just as easily (and more frequently) bring in popular Hellenistic wisdom (e.g. the catalogues of

¹ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 296, comments that it is significant that Paul does not follow the well-known chronological order in which the commandments appear in the Decalogue. It is equally interesting that he does not provide a systematic and complete inventory of commandments, and that he almost carelessly opens the possibility of reading into *καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερα ἐντολή* any law other than the Decalogue. Not at all the type of conduct one would expect of one who still regards (moral) law with the same esteem as in the old dispensation.

² Deidun, 1981, 159.

³ Deidun, 1981, 159. Schreiner, 2001, 327, like many others, differs from this view. Does a believer, guided by the Spirit, really need the Decalogue to identify murder, adultery, covetousness and theft as morally wrong and sinful?

⁴ Cranfield, 1975, 732.

⁵ Deidun, 1981, 160.

⁶ Deidun, 1981, 157. He refers to the above 6 quotations, together with 1 Cor. 7:19 with which we dealt previously.

vices). The eclecticism of this approach makes it clear that there is no single set of rules which control character formation. Outside rules support and confirm interior insight.

Obedience to Christ and his Spirit leads to salvation, as well as to an ethically sound life following on salvation. The one is never without the other. In this sense, although his intention is praiseworthy, Schreiner overstates his case, awarding too much authority to law as ethical standard, when he writes:

Those who categorically eliminate any obedience of law in the new covenant fail to understand Paul. Keeping the law by the power of the Spirit is not legalism, nor does it quench freedom. On the contrary, it is the highest expression of freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).²

3.3.4 *The law of Christ?*

Dunn's notion is that the threefold use of law in combination with Christ, the Spirit and faith (*the law of Christ* - Gl. 6:2; *the law of faith* - Rm. 3:27; and *the law of the Spirit* - Rm. 8:2), indicates that Paul awarded a prominent role to law in the ethics of the new dispensation, but gave it a new interpretation as qualified above. In view of this, one has to deal with the question why Paul would have used the word *law* in these combinations. To be sure, if Paul had not used the word *law* Dunn would probably have a much weaker case.³ Why would Paul have used this term? Was it a reference to some form of Mosaic law or did it have a completely different intent?

I contend that Paul was not referring to the Mosaic law in any form. Once again, I am profoundly aware of the superb scholarly labour that has been spent on this subject. Although I will be brief it should not be seen as brushing the matter aside. Also, I do not wish to enter into a critical discussion of other interpretations. My aim is to point out that the interpretation of "law" in *law of Christ* as indicative of or alluding to a qualified ongoing role for Mosaic law in some form is unnecessary and even an overburdening of the text. Although I will endeavour to come to a conclusion on all three phrases my focus will be on the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2). My opinion is, these three are very clearly aligned and that by explaining one the meaning of the others should become clear. Positions taken on ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ can briefly be described as follows:

- W.D. Davies suggests that it be translated as "the law of the Messiah." He tries to explain that this would reflect something of the rabbinical notion that the Messiah would replace Torah with a new law of which the elements would vary from modifications and new expositions of the old, to its total replacement. It would, applied to "the law of Christ," consist of the teachings of Jesus and be regarded as a type of Christian halakah. Evidence for such a new law known as "the law of the Messiah" is very scant.⁴ This notion was revisited by C.H. Dodd concerning the very similar phrase in 1 Cor.

¹ Scroggs, 1989, 130.

² Schreiner, 2001, 329.

³ Ironically, on the surface of things, the Judaisers would equally have had less with which to answer Paul.

⁴ Barclay, 1988, 127-8. See also W.D. Davies, 1970, 111-46; Schäfer, 1974, 27-42. Gerhardsson, 1981, 72, reminds us that Paul did not introduce a new halakah, but gave instruction and exhortation for a given situation.

9:21 (ἐννομος Χριστου).¹ He regarded Paul's maxims in Gl. 6:1-5 as very closely connected to Jesus' teachings in Mt. 18:15-16 and 23:4. Jesus had handed these teachings on to his disciples and they to the congregations in order that they be fulfilled.² R.N. Longenecker addresses his fear that the absence of external or fixed Christian maxims would jeopardise Christian morality by insisting that there had to be, and there remains, a core of instruction originating with Christ, which Paul regarded as part of the new tradition with regard to ethics. He lists a few such instructions (Rm. 12:14, 17, 21; 13:7, 8-10; 14:10, 13, 14)³ and then states:

It is certainly a mistake to consider "the law of Christ" as the equivalent of the rabbinic Halakah or to confine its designation only to the teaching of Jesus. Yet it remains that "even for Paul, with his strong sense of the immediate governance of Christ through His Spirit in the Church, that which the Lord 'commanded' and 'ordained' remains the solid, historical and creative nucleus of the whole."⁴

Despite this quotation I fail to understand on what grounds, if one were to accept that the church had such a tradition,⁵ one could conclusively argue that such a tradition would be known as "the law of Christ." However, the real problem relating to its use in Galatians is that, in terms of Paul's elaborate argument concerning the christological-pneumatological indicative at the heart of and forming the foundation of Christian ethics, such a view of law of Christ⁶ defined in terms of halakah is extremely unsatisfactory and inadequate. It fails to give enough weight to the Christian's having died to law (Gl. 2:19) and the world (Gl. 6:14); having been crucified with Christ and no longer living, except for Christ living in him (Gl. 2:20); being a new creation (Gl. 6:15); having received the Spirit (Gl. 3:2-3; 4:6); walking by the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25); and bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gl. 5:22-23). These definitive aspects of Christian ethics, are either excluded or set so far back in the mind that it plays almost no role.

- A very limited interpretation of law of Christ is that of Strelan.⁷ He views it in terms of the sharing of their common financial burden, which is enhanced by the fact that teachers were to be taken care of (Gl. 6:6) and the collection for

¹ Dodd, 1953, 96-110.

² Dodd, 1953, 109. In this regard R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 184-5, voices his fear of a one-sided understanding of Christian ethics as inwardly motivated by the Spirit without some form of external guidance. He also cites instances in Qumran scrolls where the expectation of such a Messianic Torah is noted.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 188-90. Barclay, 1988, 129, notes that estimations of such sayings going back to Jesus vary from 8 to 1000. This varying figure itself is under suspicion. He is correct in his statement that: "It is notoriously difficult to establish where Paul is alluding to or dependent on the teaching of Jesus."

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 190. He cites the quotation in his quotation as that of Dodd, 1953, 110.

⁵ There is no need to go into the merits of the existence of such an authoritative tradition in this dissertation. I am in agreement with Barclay, 1988, 130, that Paul mostly only alludes to such teaching, and thus takes away much of the authoritative quality one would expect from an ethical code.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 194: "Paul viewed the Law of Christ as both propositional principles and personal example, standing as valid external signposts and bounds for the operation of liberty and concerned with the quality and direction of Christian liberty."

⁷ Strelan, 1975, 266-76.

Jerusalem. In view of the above criticism against Davies, Dodd and Longenecker, it is enough to say it is even more limiting than their position.

- Another unlikely view is that Paul used the law of Christ simply because it was a phrase used by the opponents. Betz mentions a few reasons why this could be plausible.¹ *Firstly*, it is a very rare phrase occurring only in Gl. 6:2 (although 1 Cor. 9:21 probably has the same meaning). *Secondly*, according to Betz, it “played a considerable role” in extra-Pauline traditions.² *Thirdly*, the Judaisers probably combined Torah-obedience and obedience to Christ in some way. *Fourthly*, Paul wanted to use a phrase that would illustrate that he did not advocate lawlessness.³ Although Betz acknowledges that Paul gave a different content to his use of the phrase than the opponents, it seems very improbable that Paul would have used an opposition phrase. His rhetoric throughout the letter is that of total rejection of the opposition’s stance. He describes their position as a different gospel (tantamount to a non-gospel – Gl. 1:6, 8). He implies that the opponents are accursed (Gl. 1:8). The Galatians are foolish for having considered their message (Gl. 3:1, 3). He speaks of a position like theirs as severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). We have previously stated the profound urgency of the letter and Paul’s use of antitheses. At no stage does he follow a middle-of-the-road approach. It is either flesh or Spirit, law or faith, etc. It just would not fit the context or Paul’s rhetoric to soften up to his opponents nearer the end of his letter by accommodating one of their phrases. He would remain antagonistic in line with his remark in Gl. 5:12 where he wished for their castration and Gl. 6:12-13 where he accuses them of fearing persecution for the cross of Christ; not themselves keeping the law; and glorying in the flesh of the Galatians.
- There is the more acceptable notion than the others, namely that ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ should be understood as the principle by which Christian life is controlled, namely by living in Christ and by rule of love. However, I believe that although this approach is on the right track it does not go far enough, unless its advocates either do not express themselves clearly enough, or are too cautious in their formulations.⁴

I would argue that *law of Christ* should not only be understood in terms of a new operational principle, but rather, in terms of a paradigmatic approach.⁵ It fits very well with this dissertation’s arguments thus far. It was argued in Part 1 that Paul not only wrote the letter with a profound sense of urgency, but that he made abundant use of apocalyptic allusions in order to impress on the Galatians how radically different the new order in Christ was. A paradigm shift had occurred. Everything had to be reviewed. In Part II we had a glimpse of the present evil age. Then we

¹ Betz, 1979, 300, is followed by Brinsmead, 1982, 163-85, known for his exaggerated mirror-reading of Galatians.

² Betz, 1979, 300, does not mention these instances.

³ Would this really have been necessary? Was he not clear enough on this in his listing of the “works of law” and the “fruit of the Spirit”?

⁴ Advocates for this position are: Guthrie, 1969, 152-3; Räisänen, 1986, 80.

⁵ Hays, 1987, 268-90, follows this approach.

moved on to Part III in order to grasp the meaning of freedom as a description of the new dispensation. We saw that this freedom or new life can be described as christological-soteriological and pneumatological-ethical; these being the two sides of one coin. In Christ the old dispensation of slavery to the flesh and its second, law and the elements of the world, had come to an end. By being crucified with Christ the believer now had Christ living in him. Equally, the Spirit now lived in the believer. The believer was alive through Him and had to walk by the Spirit in order to live free from flesh's desires. The Spirit would guide the believer internally, according to God's will, and enable the believer to do God's will in practice. The touchstone for living and walking by the Spirit would be whether the believer was expressing sacrificing and serving love: the same love that Christ had shown him!

The love of Christ, his service, sacrifice, words and pattern of life are part and parcel of the new aeon or new soteriological and ethical order. Christ did everything necessary to introduce the new paradigm, but the Spirit as Enabler is equally part and parcel of this paradigm and inclusive of this existence in Christ.

Therefore it must be insisted that for Paul, Christ crucified is the law of Christ. It is his cross that sets the standard for self-giving, self-sacrificing love. It is his cross that is the supreme measure of love. Any definition of the law of Christ that loses sight of the cross loses the centre of Paul's ethics.¹

Of course, the most important litmus test for this understanding of the *law of Christ* is whether it stands up to the exegetical evidence in its specific context. It seems to pass this test with flying colours. We shall be returning to the specifics of Gl. 5:25-6:10 in the next chapter. The following remarks should suffice in the mean time.

- Paul introduces the pericope in Gl. 5:25 with the now axiomatic principle of the new ethic, i.e. walking according to the Spirit in conjunction with the other side of the same coin, living by the Spirit.
- He speaks in Gl. 6:1 of the possibility of someone falling to sin of some kind, and adds that such a person should be restored (καταρτίζω) by the spiritual (οἱ πνευματικοί) in a spirit of gentleness (ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος). This restoration should not be seen in isolation from the work of restoration done in Christ.² In the same way grace was shown to believers and they were put right with God, they were to reciprocally restore those who fell to sin. In fact, in a very real sense their restorative work as people living by the Spirit, would be an extension of Christ's own work through his Spirit. In this light Paul's reference to οἱ πνευματικοί should probably not be understood in a sense of irony or even sarcasm. They really had an intimate relationship with the Spirit.³ He was not only part of their life, but in Christ He was their life. It was in the Spirit that they had to restore others.
- In Gl. 6:2 Paul exhorts: "Bear one another's burdens (Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε), and so fulfil the law of Christ" (καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν

¹ Hansen, 1997, 232. One is reminded of Matera's parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17 in which he determines that the cross of Christ is the focal point of Paul's arguments in Galatians. In this regard, see my Ch. 1 (§ 3.2.4.2.) and Ch. 5 (§ 2.2.)

² Schippers, 1978, 350. Also Delling, 1964², 476.

³ Betz, 1979, 296-7; Morris, 1996, 177.

νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Importantly, the imperative βασιτάζετε is in the present tense. This infers that the believer was to keep on carrying the burden of others. Just as they were continuously in Christ and living and walking by the Spirit, were they to live this life of bearing the burdens of others as Christ did for them. It was not something which could be done sporadically. It was simply how their lives had become in Christ.¹ They were set in a new paradigm in which life was lived differently, namely in the paradigm of the faithfulness of Christ.

- When Paul adds: καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε (“and so fulfil the law of Christ”) he undeniably connects the bearing of burdens with the law of Christ. The bearing of the burdens of others was how the law of Christ – the new paradigm of life in Christ – presented itself in practice. By using the future tense of ἀναπληρώ he confirms the fact that this paradigm is about action. It is about putting the indicative of being in Christ into practice.

There is no doubt that the paradigmatic explanation of *law of Christ* fits perfectly with the context and exegetical evidence. There is no indication that the use of “law” should in any way imply a connection with Mosaic law or any other ethical code for that matter.² Paul was free to make use of all the nuances with which language provided him, with a view to making the best possible rhetorical impact.

[T]he arguments that Paul always means the Mosaic Law when he uses the term νόμος are frankly unconvincing.³

However, one needs to answer the remaining question, namely why Paul would describe this new paradigm as the “*law of Christ*?” Could he not have used words like *paradigm*, *order*, *dispensation*, *way*, or the like? Although I have rejected the notion that Paul used it to refer to his not being lawless or immoral, or as a way of appeasing the opponents, I do believe it was rhetorically intended, as irony and paradox.⁴ The Galatians had been influenced by the opponents. The latter placed a high value on law. Paul wanted to put them off following this route. He was probably saying: “If you have to follow a law of some kind then follow the law of Christ! In other words: let Him live in you through his Spirit, and let Him guide and enable you to love others.” Hopefully they would have understood the irony and paradox, because Paul’s theological arguments had made it quite clear that *Christ* and *law* as such were exclusive of each other.

¹ Morris, 1996, 178; Hays, 1997, 27-32.

² In this respect I differ from Matera, 1996, 172, although I am largely in agreement with his article as a whole. The Christian ethic is of a totally different order than any other ethic – even of the Jewish ethic.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 425. Snodgrass, 1995, 158-74, has made a valuable contribution, stressing the importance of context. He argues, there are different spheres in which law is applied. The negative statements fit in the sphere of sin, flesh and death. The positive statements fit in the sphere of faith, Spirit and Christ (174). However, if I understand him correctly, I fail to understand why law as an external measure has to be awarded with any position of authority since the advent of Christ and his Spirit. A totally new definition of law is called for, one that is totally detached from the law of Moses, except for the fact that both are meant to aim at the fulfilment of the obligation to love. This new ethic has to allow for the new dispensation in which flesh has been dealt with and the Spirit leads the freed Christian.

⁴ Hays, 1987, 275-6.

4. THE CREATIVE ETHICS OF FREEDOM

Marshall has written a very well balanced article on the problems regarding deriving ethical injunctions from Scripture.¹ He identifies three areas of difficulty. *Firstly*, the ethical issues with which man is confronted today may not be present in the Bible. The world has changed since then.² *Secondly*, the character of biblical revelation in itself brings its difficulties. If, for instance, Scripture bases an ethical argument on nature or commonsense, does that imply that because it now is part of Scripture it has divine sanction and loses its initial motivation and appeal to a wider audience than the community of believers? Does biblical ethics apply to unbelievers? To what extent was a specific biblical ethical issue under review intended to have a broader temporal and special application.³ *Thirdly*, there are the common problems with regard to the cross-section reader not having the necessary exegetical and hermeneutical expertise, or merely sensitivity, to understand a text in its original context and then to interpret it against its modern horizon.⁴

He discusses a few approaches to the Bible in determining ethics for today. These include extreme biblicism with its inclination to selectivity and indiscriminate deductions from Scripture, the results often “out of harmony with modern ethical insights.”⁵ Equally unacceptable is the approach accepting that the gap between the Bible and today is too wide for application. There should be room for systematic theology to bring the two worlds together, and modern insights often have to be challenged by the old.⁶ Of course, there is Bultmann’s demythologising approach, operating with a closed world-view and historical scepticism and rejecting the supernatural,⁷ working exclusively on an anthropological level. There are also the approaches of Houlden, stressing variety in NT ethical positions and finding them helpful, but not normative,⁸ and J.T. Sanders finding most of NT ethics based on out-dated theological concepts on which no modern ethic can be based.⁹ Although he has justifiable criticism against both these positions he acknowledges that they reveal the need to discount the biblical ethical variety and to come to a “fruitful synthesis”.¹⁰

Marshall then proceeds to lay down ground rules for the enterprise of reading an ethical position from Scripture. He correctly stresses that the Bible should be taken seriously.¹¹ This implies proper exegesis and hermeneutics. Equally,

¹ Marshall, 1978, 39-55.

² Marshall, 1978, 40, mentions matters arising from scientific developments, such as contraception, artificial insemination, genetic engineering, etc.; new structures have arisen and others have disappeared, such as democracy that has become more prominent than the biblical monarchy; etc.

³ Marshall, 1978, 41-2.

⁴ Marshall, 1978, 42-3.

⁵ Marshall, 1978, 45-6.

⁶ Marshall, 1978, 46.

⁷ Marshall, 1978, 48.

⁸ Houlden, 1992, 115-25.

⁹ J.T. Sanders, 1986, 29, 65-6, 129-30.

¹⁰ Marshall, 1978, 48-9.

¹¹ Marshall, 1978, 51.

on hermeneutical level, the variety of cultures in modern society is to be respected. What is appropriate in one time and place can be inappropriate in another.¹ The whole Bible must be taken into account in order to find underlying principles that might not at first glance seem applicable. On the other hand, he stresses that some principles find quick association with modern situations, while others are not that obvious. One must be careful of too easily drawing analogies and being forced into taking commands literally and as applicable *per se*. Equally, one must not seek analogies where there are none.² Finally, he acknowledges that there are divine commands (e.g., genocide) which are also unacceptable in later Biblical teaching and should be regarded as time-bound.³

What is the relevance of this? It points to the fact that, although much of Biblical teaching remains the same throughout Scripture, there are abundant ethical injunctions that changed even in the span of the OT itself, as salvation-history and secular history developed, not forgetting the vast change brought about by Christ, to which we paid ample attention. Further, it emphasises that the vast change in situation from the Second Temple period to the twenty first century world implies ethical development. Today questions are asked for which the Bible was not geared. Thus, modern man would have to engage in developing many ethical positions as if on a clean slate. He would have to engage with the true gospel through which he, knowing Christ Jesus, seeks the guidance of the Spirit. He would have to engage with the community with its own ethical history and ethical goods, to find the Spirit's answer to their situation. "Find" would probably be more a matter of developing an ethical stance under the guidance of the Spirit.

In other words, being part of new creation, the new territory brings with it the necessity of a new ethical way of thinking. The appropriate ethic would have to be creative⁴ with a view to addressing a specific situation. It cannot be a casuistic ethic in any way. Such an ethic would be a reversion to the ethics of Second Temple Judaism, in which an ever increasing elaborate set of rules was developed in order to address any possible situation with a ready answer. This did not always address the situation with the love Yahweh intended to communicate. In other words, a more situation-specific ethic is needed. However, it cannot be one in which the situation dictates to the gospel. A situation-orientated, not a situation-based ethic, is needed – truly an ethic of a new order.

What can and must be said is not what is good once and for all, but the way in which Christ takes form among us here and now. The attempt to define that which is good once and for all has, in the nature of the case, always ended in failure....The concretely Christian ethic is beyond formalism and casuistry.⁵

¹ Marshall, 1978, 51.

² Marshall, 1978, 51-2.

³ Marshall, 1978, 53-4.

⁴ Briggs, 1978, 78, underlines the idea of having to put creativity into action when he, amongst others, says that Christ called his disciples "to discover the true meaning of being a neighbour." This is a human creative activity under the guidance and sensitising of the Spirit.

⁵ Bonhoeffer, 1978, 66.

4.1. Ethics of a new order

Just glancing over Paul's letter to the Galatians one initially gets the impression of a vastly underdeveloped ethic. Lategan puts the question whether Galatians has an inherent "ethical deficit",¹ basing his question on the following:

- Paul's direct ethical instructions are extremely scant. Most scholars regard only Gl. 5-6 as exhortation. But, this being said, the only rather explicit ethical instructions are found in Gl. 5:13-14, 16, 25-26; 6:2, 6 and 10.²
- This phenomenon of minimal ethical instructions on Paul's part is even more curious in view of the context in which he operated. The Galatians, as former pagans, found themselves in an ethical void, or at least ethically deficient.³ Their Jewish fellow-believers largely continued to follow their Jewish ethical roots. Obviously, as we have seen, this also had its disadvantages. However, the Galatians, unless following Jewish requirements, had "no idea" what was expected of them by the God of the Jewish-Christian tradition. Because of this very void they easily succumbed to the opponents' argument that they had to uphold the Jewish way of life. It is possible that their vulnerability was enhanced by Paul's not having given them enough authoritative ethical instructions when they initially came to believe.⁴

[O]ne needs a set of time-tested rules for the practice of this faith. That is exactly what the Jewish way of life can offer – it has stood the test of time; it has guided the Jewish people through the most testing and adverse times of their long history. Not only does it offer a practical guide to the Galatians, but it also provides the means to become part of an age-old tradition, to become fully initiated and accepted by the central leadership in Jerusalem. In view of the psychological needs of new converts – their acceptance into the group and their self-identity and sense of security after being cut off from their natural environment – this is a very attractive and persuasive argument.⁵

In such circumstances one would have expected Paul to provide more than his few general ethical remarks. He provides them with neither a list of applicable instructions from the Jewish tradition – not even a Christian adaptation – nor with a list of newly formed Christian ethical instructions. This is in stark contrast to his theological reflection and arguments that are both very thorough and, in comparison with the ethical instructions, elaborately motivated. When Paul does venture into providing a list of vices and another of virtues it is not in the form of direct instruction or broken down into contextualised specifics. Rather, he provides them with a list of undefined qualities that should be visible in the lives of Christians.⁶ He refers to them as *fruit of the Spirit*, but, seeing that they

¹ Lategan, 1990, 320.

² Lategan, 1990, 320, lists only Gl. 5:13 and 16 as specific instructions. He regards the rest as either theological motivation for the instructions, or as illustrations of what is meant. I prefer to include slightly more into the category of specific instruction, although it does not take away any force from his observation that Paul is very stingy with regard to specific instructions in this letter.

³ B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 143.

⁴ Betz, 1988, 206.

⁵ Lategan, 1990, 321.

⁶ Lategan, 1992¹, 138.

were well-known in Hellenistic philosophical schools where they were provided with specific meanings, one would expect Paul to redefine their meaning in terms of the newfound faith. He does nothing of the kind. In light of the above remark of the ethical void this unqualified reference to the list of virtues could even be interpreted by the Galatians as a reversion to their former religions or philosophical schools. This is also the case with quite a few other ethical concepts used by Paul, such as “boastful” (Gl. 5:26 - κενόδοξος),¹ “provoke” (Gl. 5:25 - προκαλέω), “envy” (Gl. 5:25 - φθονέω), “restore” (Gl. 6:1 - καταρτίζω), “examine critically” (Gl. 6:1 - σκοπέω),² “burdens” (Gl. 6:2 - τὰ βάρη), which are prominent in Hellenism.³

4.1.1. *Theologically motivated ethics*

Paul’s ethic is uncompromisingly based on his theology.⁴ He introduces himself as being from God (Gl. 1:1); he brings grace and peace from God the Father; he states that the deliverance Christ brought was according to the will of our God and Father (Gl. 1:4); and he adds that all glory belongs to Him (Gl. 1:5). He equally states that what he does as a slave of Christ, he does to please God and not man (Gl. 1:10). His vocation was to glorify God, and therefore his pleasure in the fact that believers were glorifying God, because of his faith and preaching (Gl. 1:24). Throughout the letter Paul persists in connecting the works of Christ and the Spirit with God’s gracious dealings with man. We see this in Gl. 3:1-18 where the christological-pneumatological element is grounded in God’s promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:6, 18). Equally, law was given by one God till the advent of the offspring (Gl.3:19-20). He adds that all believers in Christ are sons of God (Gl. 3:26) and heirs according to God’s promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:29). He clearly states that God sent forth his Son (Gl. 4:4) and also the Spirit of his Son through whom we are directed to the Father (Gl. 4:6-7). Paul continues in the same vein throughout the rest of Gl. 4.

Moving on to the ethical section with its heavy emphasis on the Spirit, Paul stresses that those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21). He then continues with the ethical maxims of Gl. 6:1-10 in which he clearly states that these matters should not be taken lightly, because God is not one to be mocked (Gl. 6:7). One either sows to the Spirit, or one mocks God by sowing to the flesh (Gl. 6:8-9). He then expresses a benediction of peace on all who live according to the paradigm of Christ, and refers to them as the Israel of God (Gl. 6:16).

His emphasis is on theology as the seedbed from which ethics should flow. Coming from the tradition that he did, Paul knew how warped ethics could become

¹ Oepke, 1965², 662. Although it must be granted that, according to Betz, 1979, 294, it entered Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity via the synonym ἀλαζων.

² Fuchs, 1971, 414-6.

³ Betz, 1979, 295, 297, 299.

⁴ Jewett, 1994, 250.

when only loosely connected to its theology. Paul's emphasis is on the fact that Christians are free in Christ and that they have to stand firm in that freedom (Gl. 5:1). The theological and christological-soteriological basis had to be sound. The point of departure could never be ethics in itself: neither in the form of law as in the old dispensation, nor any other form. *Freedom in Christ* was the determining factor. At no point could it be allowed that freedom be jeopardised – neither by reverting to law observance, nor by living according to flesh. Equally, being in Christ also meant living by the Spirit. He had arrived in the wake of the Christ event to bring life to believers and to enable them to call God their Father. He would be the one to guide and enable them. Since they were living by Him they were also to walk by Him. They had to be in step with Him in order not to fall prey to the flesh. There was only one way of standing firm in the freedom brought about by Christ, namely walking in the Spirit. The point is, through faith they had been crucified with Christ and ridden of the curse of law. He was now living in them. They were dead to the world and to the law. They also received the Spirit through faith, and not through law. If the seedbed of their ethics, God's salvation in Christ, was thoroughly without law, how could law determine their ethics? In terms of Hay's arguments in my previous chapter, faith, not being the precondition for receiving the blessing, was the appropriate mode of participation in the pattern enacted by Christ. As the believer reacts in faithful obedience, he re-enacts Christ's faithfulness.¹ It is about believers partaking in a new pattern of life as part of a new humanity created through the faithful obedience of Christ leading up to the cross.² Now, it being about this new humanity and pattern of life through faith in the faithfulness of Christ, it follows that in as much as the gift of righteousness is without law, so too is the ethics characteristic of that life.

However, there is more to be said about a theologically motivated ethic. It is not only about the theological-soteriological indicative in distinction from the ethical imperative. It is especially theological in the sense that it is about God and his will, rather than about man and his subjective interpretation as to what pleases God³. It is not about man's subjective interpretation of love and his in-

¹ Hays, 1983, 249.

² Hays, 1983, 249-50.

³ Meeks, 1993, 151-7. Barth, 1955, 126, fervently warns against considering Christian life as a "private concern". He also warns against two corporate traditions that are equally guilty of falling prey to man's wanting to be his own master, namely a tradition (he refers to the "Roman church") which "dares to subject Christian life to a statute devised and formulated by man and consisting in regulations dealing with cult, law and morals;" and the tradition of religious enthusiasm "which wishes to submit Christian life to the dictation of what is called the Spirit, or of an 'inner light' which is alleged to be divine, or simply to the dictates of the conscience of every individual." He states: "In both forms man is secretly his own master; in both forms the apparent order of the Christian life is really disorder, and in both forms the Christian life is in fact at the mercy of chance and individual will" (127). In line with the above arguments regarding Christ as the new paradigm of life, and Hays' and others' arguments regarding the justification "through the faithfulness of Christ", he is quite right in stating: "The true ordinance governing the Christian life is *Jesus Christ*" (127). Küng, 1976, in his endeavour to explain why one should be a Christian (25, 601-2), speaks in the same vein as Barth. He compares the Christian ways of the progressive, individualistic Corinthian enthusiasts and the conservative, legalistic Galatians. He illustrates how Paul referred both groups back to the cross and the Crucified. They would discover their

adequate reaction to it that postulates the norm, but God Himself. The Christian ethic is born from and based on God's gracious will and equally gracious act of sacrifice in his Son. He has set the norm of loving service for Christians to follow in step with the Spirit whom He also sent forth. Ultimately, the Christians' life was not simply about doing the right thing, but about doing everything to the glory of God. However, to think in terms of a commandment based ethic as the ultimate check to subjectivism is fallacious. One cannot fathom the will of God that easily so as to capture it in certain commandments that ought to deal with all situations at any given point in time.¹

When the early Christians made "the will of God" their ultimate norm, they thus implied that there is an absolute ground for their ethics. Yet the qualifications we have observed show that the absolute norm was not absolutely clear.²

Paul was very aware of the fact that the believer could easily fall prey to a subjective and individualistic charismatic ethic, becoming the judge of his own actions and not being accountable to God and fellow believers. *For this reason the following chapter will be dedicated to Paul's insistence on responsibility and accountability within the paradigm of a christological-pneumatological ethic.*

4.1.2. An ethic from a heart set free

Only one way of remaining ethically true to their salvational seedbed in Christ was communicated to them by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), and that was walking by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25). He would produce ethically sound fruit in them. The relationship between the Spirit of Christ and the believer would determine the believer's lifestyle. This would be an inwardly determined ethic. It would not be determined from outside by a set of casuistic or legalistic stipulations. Law could not provide life, but instead only led to slavery. True, one could argue that law could not provide life, but that it was given to guide believers as to the rights and wrongs in God's kingdom. It was only because of flesh that law was unsuccessful in the old dispensation and in the end became more of a curse than a blessing, but now, since Christ had dealt with flesh and the believer no longer lacked life and the ability to do God's will law would be helpful to remind him of the rights and wrongs of his choices. Thus, the argument would mean that there was a place for law in a reduced form (moral law only) in the Christian community and that it should thus be retained. On the other hand, I find no obligation in Galatians to retain law as an ethical standard. In fact, Paul expressly rejects its ongoing function.

Nowhere in this letter does he assign such a function to law. Given the context mentioned above of a possible ethical void amongst the Galatians one would have expected him to provide such guidance; or at least to explain on what grounds one retains one stipulation and rejects another; or with the help of what

true humanity and identity in Christ alone (399-402). By partaking in Him through faith, man becomes truly human in the sense that God intended (601-2). See also Küng, 1968, 163, 167, 200-1.

¹ Meeks, 1993, 157.

² Meeks, 1993, 156.

rationale one reinterprets old stipulations to be retained in a new form. Paul does absolutely nothing of the kind. I dare say, if Paul expected them to reinterpret law on their own and to draw up new stipulations for the Christian community, he certainly would have blundered in a pastoral sense by not providing such instructions or ethical detail from his side. They were at that stage not united in thought. Paul, although hyperbolically, describes them as biting and devouring one another (Gl. 5:15). If he expected them to sort out which laws were still applicable or in what form they were to be retained, he would really be setting the cat amongst the pigeons! On the contrary, he rejects the whole law.

Despite the fact that he acknowledges the divine origin of law (Gl. 3:19), he very clearly states that its role was limited to the period between Moses and Jesus. Nowhere in Galatians does he introduce any ongoing function for law.

We have determined that one should not read Galatians as if Romans has priority over it. It would be hermeneutically and exegetically fallacious to ignore that the Galatians had only this letter and Paul's previous oral teaching to go on. If one were to accept that Paul had become more accommodating and even positive with regard to law when he wrote Romans, one would have to inquire as to what Paul was actually saying in that specific context. Why would he sound more positive? What was different in Rome? If one accepts that Paul had not changed his mind on the matter, as we have argued, one cannot merely accept Romans as a Pauline commentary on Galatians and then *equally* and *simplistically* interpret Galatians in terms of Romans. That would be equal to blatant *eisegesis*. The proper question to ask is whether Paul does not use νόμος in a multivalenced way so that context should rather explain the meaning. It has been illustrated that the so-called positive statements on law are mainly in reference to its origin and interim function between Moses and Jesus, or to its having been fulfilled in the obligation to love, or in the broader sense, as referring to the whole system of Judaism in the OT.

In view of the scriptural evidence I find no reason why one should have to argue for some positive role for law in the Christian community. On the contrary, Paul sets law and Spirit up as opposites. He clearly says: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law!" (Gl. 5:18). To award a necessary ongoing position to law in Christian ethics on the grounds that flesh has now been sufficiently dealt with in order for law to be effective at last, is a motion of no confidence in the Spirit. It is tantamount to arguing that the Spirit Himself was weak and needed assistance from law.¹ Flesh, although still a threat, has been dealt with in the crucifixion of and with Christ. Why would the Spirit of Christ, of which the OT testifies that he would be part of God's solution to Israel's plight, now, since flesh's demise, be in need of law, of which we have learnt that even the OT regarded it as underlining that very plight and providing no solution?

¹Dunn, 1993³, 71-6, is a clear example of how freedom is bound up with law and how law is assigned with a necessary function till the *parousia*.

It must be reiterated that one should not cloud the issue with the fear that immorality automatically follows on the rejection of law. Anomism in a Christian context is not synonymous with immorality or libertinism. I would define Christian anomism as that position that defines ethics in terms of the inward walking through the Spirit and so producing external deeds describable in terms of the qualities of loving service and self-sacrifice on the basis of the Christ event. It is a rejection of the position regarding law in some form as necessary for the formation of a Christian ethic.¹ It would be an exegetical and hermeneutical distortion if one's fear of immorality would force one to revert to some form of law as supportive of life walked by the Spirit – ethical synergism as it were, between Spirit and law. Was this not exactly the position in which Paul found himself and in which he rejected the necessity of law? Is it not in the midst of his parenthesis to the Galatians with their *lack* of external ethical guidance that Paul explicitly states that those led by the Spirit are not under law (Gl. 5:18)?²

For being “in Christ” means neither nomism nor libertinism, but a new quality of life based in and directed by the Spirit.³

This is exactly the notion conveyed by Paul's use of the phrase “fruit of the Spirit”. He does not provide this list of qualities in Gl. 5:22-23 as an exhaustive list of Christian virtues. The idea is to explain how differently from law the Spirit works. Law drives its slaves to reach its ideals and keeps score of the achievement. The Spirit produces a certain style of living in the mature child of God that no external law can create, because it is born from a heart set free from the bonds of the flesh, and borne in love. For this reason Paul refrains from lists of laws, mostly referring to qualities produced by the Spirit. In fact, when providing ethical guidance in Gl. 6:1-10, he refrains from emanating a spirit of apostolic authority, but exhorts them on the basis of personal and communal responsibility.⁴ His aim was to guide them pastorally, not to dictate to them. He was illustrating the same spirit of gentleness he expected of them in their admonitions (Gl. 6:1).

Marxsen stresses that Paul did not have an ethical system from which he drew ethical admonitions as need be. It would be a travesty to make a compilation of all Paul's ethical comments and admonitions and present it as Paul's ethics. He emphasises that Paul's ethical comments are very incidental and situational and are not necessarily meant for different social and political conditions.⁵

¹ B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 144, emphasises that the absence of nomism is not indicative of a deficient ethic. Christian ethics is eschatological. It is oriented on Christ and enacted in a new life through the Spirit. Law is in this way fulfilled eschatologically, so that law-observance has come to an end.

² Matera, 2000, 243, remarks: “This vision of the moral life, as life under the guidance of the Spirit, is probably the most optimistic statement of Paul's ethical teaching, and is clearly intended for more mature believers who allow themselves to be led by the urging of the Spirit.”

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 246.

⁴ We return to this subject in Ch. 7.

⁵ Marxsen, 1993, 214.

It is in this sense of a new life-style under the guidance and enablement of the Spirit that Paul chose to follow the route of an *ethical minimum* as opposed to an *ethical maximum*, and in distinction to an *ethical deficit*. This specific ethical minimum had in view that that which law itself could not achieve, namely to love one's neighbour as oneself, be fulfilled. Thus the result of this ethic would be morally higher than that of law. In this sense less is actually more! Paul was advocating *minimum ethical regulation* with a view to *maximum ethical output*, but absolutely not in a theological-ethical void. After all, this ethic would operate in the fullness of time, inaugurated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit and filling the void of ethical impotence that law with its ethical maximum could not answer to. He was advocating the fullness of walking freely in the Spirit with a view to believers witnessing as he did, that it was no longer they who lived, but Christ who lived in them; and the life they lived they lived by faith in the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them (Gl. 2:20).

Only if a man ceases to be a slave to morality and becomes the slave of Christ (1 Cor. VII, 21f.) can the Spirit enable him to live in freedom and love.

So, it is not about Christianity being without morals.² It is not about a *laissez-faire* ethic in which almost anything goes as long as the actor's intention illustrates love. It is about living according to a specific *κανών* (Gl. 6:16), namely the new creation inaugurated by Christ and lived by his Spirit (Gl. 6:15). Put differently, it is a life in accordance with the law of Christ, which we have described as the new paradigm of life in Christ. It is about being crucified with Him and His now living in the believer through his Spirit, so that the believer is enabled to live according to Christ's example of love and self-sacrificing service to God and neighbour.

Thus, believers are *not without a moral norm*. What they are *without* is a *moral norm determined by law and clad in rules* regulating moral life and robbing believers of much of their responsibility to God and neighbour. Schrage correctly states: "[L]ove manifested in Christ is also the criterion of Christian conduct."³

4.1.3. Inclusive, contextualised and creative ethics

This is a very exceptional trait of Paul's ethics in Galatians. As we have said earlier, Paul motivated his position in Galatians in a situation in which the Galatians, under influence of the Judaisers, could very well have reasoned that they were to follow the Jewish ethical tradition, albeit in an adapted form. However, maybe because he feared that any hint in the direction of Judaism would lead to an embracing of Jewish law, Paul goes out of his way to incorporate ethical dictums from a wider field. In terms of the Jewish heritage of Christianity Paul makes good use of Lv. 19:18 ("You shall love your neighbour as yourself" – Gl. 5:14). It was an old tradition that was given due prominence by Jesus Himself (Mt. 22:39;

¹ Houlden, 1992, 34.

² Schreiner, 2001, 320.

³ Schrage, 1988, 173.

Mk. 12:31). This being said, Paul makes much more use of dictums from the Hellenistic world. True, some of them could have entered the rhetorical situation via Hellenistic Judaism. However, it makes no difference to the actual argument that Paul did not feel himself obliged to stick to any one tradition of ethics: neither Jewish nor Hellenistic; neither religious nor pagan. The fact remains that Paul made use of a wider range of ethical maxims than just those provided by OT law. He was willing to follow the lists of vices and virtues which were very foreign to Judaism in terms of content and form.¹ He did not ignore good qualities of other traditions in his *Umwelt* from which Christians could learn, even though the content sometimes needed adaptation. He was in no way threatened by the fact that other cultures and religions also had good moral elements from which Christians could learn.² It would have been a travesty of God's grace to think there would be only evil and immorality outside Jewish tradition.³ After all, in the new dispensation Paul equates law and elements of the world.

With regard to the content of the sententiae, there is little that is specifically Christian. By definition the gnome must be general ("infinite"). It must contain generally recognized principles dealing with the issues of human life, the life of the individual and of the community. The gnomonic style provides critical observations about what is wrong behavior and advice on how to correct it. The effect, therefore, is provocative, corrective, demanding, and advisory.⁴

The Pauline ethic steers clear of the Jewish ethical ideal of measuring merits in terms of elaborately worked out ethical prescriptions and requirements, which lead to accumulation of ethical merits and consequential glorying in individual achievement.⁵ It is equally serious about not falling prey to the Hellenistic notion of living up to one's potential or failing to attain it. It is not an anthropological, but a theological ethic, as indicated above (§ 4.1.1.). Paul's concern is that they reflect that which they are in Christ in their ethical ways. The difference is not as much on the level of what is ethically sound and not.

The Christian is addressed as an educated and responsible person. He is expected to do no more than what would be expected of any other educated person in the Hellenistic culture of the time.⁶

The difference was at a much deeper level than meets the eye. It was on the theological level that things differed.¹ The end ethical product, on the surface of

¹ Marxsen, 1993, 213-4, states "none of the contents is really new." Paul includes maxims from his whole environment, be that Jewish, Hellenistic, or even nature based (1 Cor. 11:14-15). Malherbe, 1986, 11-6, underlines Christianity's indebtedness to Greco-Roman moral traditions. Especially the Stoics were dominant in the Roman Empire (12)

² Pretorius, 1992, 455. Schweizer, 1979, 207; Gerhardsson, 1981, 83-4. Jewett, 1994, 250: "Paul's view is that the gospel establishes a cross-cultural requirement of sharing material and spiritual resources together, constituting a new kind of fictive family that sought to overcome the clannishness of Graeco-Roman social life."

³ Meeks, 1986, 161, states the Christian movement wove different traditions into their moral fabric. He reflects on the Greek and Roman (40-64), as well as the Jewish traditions (65-96). This was only possible because Israel did not have an exclusive access to moral behaviour. Not even Israel had a one-dimensional moral sense (97-123).

⁴ Betz, 1979, 292.

⁵ Bavinck, 1960, 261-6, speaks of the danger of hiding God behind a magnitude of ethical requirements, so that his love and grace are so hidden from view that nothing Christian is longer recognisable. I find it very apt that an author on missions writes in this vein. So many years after the great missionary, Paul, wrote to Galatia.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 292.

things, was not necessarily what made the difference. It was more about God's glory and his will. It was about being able to live according to God's will, because of the paradigm switch that Christ brought about and the enabling and sensitising presence of the Spirit in the believer's life. It was about operating from a heart set free to love and even to sacrifice as Christ did. It was about an ethic that was not part of a philosophy, but the product of the gospel of Christ having effect in the believer's life. One is reminded of Bultmann's insight:

[Paul's ethical practice is distinguished from that of other people only by the fact that it has the character of obedience [that is, obedience out of faith]. From the justified person is demanded only whatever is good and acceptable and perfect, whatever virtues and praiseworthy things we might name (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:8).²

Paul did not introduce maxims from other religions – Judaism included – uncritically and without reinterpretation in terms of the law of Christ as defined above.³ For instance, in Hellenism there was not a concept for love equal to the Christian concept at the beginning of his list of Christian moral qualities.⁴ In the same vein, Paul's understanding of self-control was vastly different from that of Hellenism.⁵ Equally, the notion of humility was not common to Greek and Roman thought. In terms of their understanding of honour as something on an anthropological level, they would not be inclined to think it virtuous to trade the honour of this world for dishonour, in order to receive God's praise in the last days for seeking his honour presently.⁶ Of course, the notion of the cross and its stigma as the foundation of Christian living was equally something that had to be reinterpreted. Paul borrowed from different cultures, but always remained true to the theological basis of his ethics that flesh had been crucified with Christ and Christ now lived in him through his Spirit, bearing fruit in step with the Spirit's guidance, and emanating love.

¹ Bultmann, 1967, 47-54, defined the relationship between Paul's indicative and imperative. The imperative is always founded on the indicative, and this indicative is essentially the justification of the believer. Käsemann, 1980, 172-4 and 1969, 168f., has expressed the fear that in Bultmann's terms the imperative can easily be regarded as strictly an anthropological notion, dissociated from God as the Giver. In this way the imperative loses its theological basis and demand. The imperative should, equally, be understood as included in the indicative. It is in no way a human effort springing from an equally human insight to react to God, as a second movement. It is about the one Spirit who in one action brings the faith and brings man to believe and live faithfully. Malherbe, 1998, 230-244, provides good reading on how Paul's communication to the Greek world shows many similarities regarding conversion and morals. The difference was at the deeper theological level.

² Bultmann, 1967, 51.

³ Latagan, 1990, 325.

⁴ Quell & Stauffer, 1964, 37, indicate how totally different ἀγάπη was used in Greek literature in comparison to the Biblical use. It was not used in reference to relationships on a horizontal level or to a lower level, but with regard to movement from lower to higher levels, eg. from the human to the divine level.

⁵ Bredekamp, 2001, 195-8. Bartlett, 2002, 279, although in an article on homiletics and in a different context, remarks: "Paul is not always a great proponent of democracy, and the word 'inclusive' seems a little thin for the radical change Paul thinks the cross of Christ has made in the interactions of humankind." In no way do I wish to soften the radicality of the new dispensation in Christ. Inclusivity does not exclude a christological-pneumatological reinterpretation. By now this should be clear.

⁶ Meeks, 1993, 86.

One should take due cognisance of Bonhoeffer's warning that ethics should never be abstract, neither should it be casuistic. It must, however, be entirely concrete. By this he means that an ethic developed in abstraction could very easily be unmasked as totally insensitive to a context for which it was not prepared. In order to make it applicable for any conceivable situation, one would have to develop such an elaborate casuistic system that it becomes totally unmanageable. To his mind it is much rather about Christ taking concrete form amongst believers and in the world in everyday reality.¹ In this regard the well-known Biblical realism of Hendrik Kraemer is most relevant. Christian ethics is never an entity on its own, or an aim in itself. It is born from and borne in a living, historical² relationship with God in Christ Jesus and through his Spirit. Although it is eternally fixed in God and his will, it is also eternally changing as it finds its application in the ever-changing context of each day. Differently put, the Christian ethic is very flexible in its application, but fixed in God's being and will.³ It is a live entity! It always seeks to create new ways in new situations to concretise God's will in deeds of love.

In the sphere of Biblical realism, to do the will of God is a spontaneous act and a decision of loving obedience, because God's will is love and can only be done in free, spontaneous love. To do it otherwise means to do it not at all. The Christian ethic, well understood, is the joyful liberty of the pure-hearted children of God.⁴

A parenthetical remark would not be totally out of place at this point. Too often, as one listens to laymen and scholars, one gets the impression that believers, being hermeneutically pressed and often uncertain of what to make of biblical laws in new situations, take the even more uncertain road of trying to strike a balance between decontextualised *law requirements* and modern responsible and feasible action. Seen this way, it often boils down to either a choice between fundamentalist biblical ethics and subjective libertarian action, or striking a balance between the two. However, both are equally un-Pauline and equally irresponsible. With regard to the fundamentalist approach one must take full cognisance of the fact that ethics in biblical times was also creative and participationist within its context. The following remark by J.A. Sanders with regard to a more fundamentalist approach is exceptionally brilliant and relevant:

Their argument, as I understand it, is that the ancient culture reflected in the Bible is that which God wills for humans today. The major problem with that is that the Bible was formed and shaped over a 1200-year period in antiquity (no matter the theory of authorship) from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age to the Persian Period to the Greek and Roman eras. And each of the cultures of those eras in and through which the Bible was formed left its mark in biblical literature. The Bible, therefore, is transcultural and does not reflect a single ethic but is full of cultural dialogue.⁵

In the next chapter it will be illustrated that Gl. 5:25-26 and Gl. 6:9-10 form a chiasmus around the maxims that Paul communicated to the Galatians.⁶ Of significance at this stage is the fact that, given the chiasmus, it seems Gl. 5:25-26 introduces

¹ Bonhoeffer, 1978, 66.

² Meeks, 1993, 214-7.

³ Kraemer, 1977, 87-8.

⁴ Kraemer, 1977, 88.

⁵ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 125.

⁶ See Ch. 7 at §1 and fig. 7.1 dealing with the structure of Gl. 5:25-6:10.

and Gl. 6:9-10 summarises and concludes the maxims. Read together, the two sub-sections state that believers are obliged to walk according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:25-26) and that this would result in the believers doing good to all men, but especially to those of faith who are closer to them, and according to what the specific context calls for. If this assumption is correct, Paul's maxims (Gl. 6:1-8) are an indication of what their specific ethical needs in Galatia were. Once again, Paul creates a situation conducive to the Galatians being able to work out what had to be done amongst themselves, only providing the main parameters. In fact, if we accept that Gl. 5:13 introduces the ethical section proper and Gl. 6:10 concludes it, we can deduce that Paul's whole ethic of freedom is summarised in doing good as loving service in accordance with the Spirit's guidance.¹

Within this frame of reference one could say Paul's ethic came close to one of commonsense and commonly accepted practice, but born from a heart set right with God in Christ, ethically enabled by his Spirit, and aiming to serve God and neighbour in love.² For this reason there can never be any room for moral heroism³ or self-aggrandisement. It is always aimed at glorifying God.

4.1.4. *Participationist ethics of the mature*

From what has been argued up to now, it seems reasonable to describe Paul's ethics as participationist. *Firstly*, he is willing to include ethical dictums from different traditions, cultures, philosophies and religions. The proviso being that it must be in accordance with the law of Christ – the new paradigm of life! *Secondly*, he is slow to award his ethical dictums with apostolic authority as though he were the sole judge on these matters. After all, all believers have the Spirit and he makes much about this in his letter. *Thirdly*, he involves the whole community in ethical decision making, as well as in the restoration of sinners (Gl. 6:1-10).⁴

Although on a different subject, namely the narrative substructure of Paul's thought, Horrell indirectly contributes to the creative ethics issue and the role of community.

[I]n opposition to a certain kind of cerebral Christianity, it shows that Pauline thought cannot be conveyed as a series of propositions to be believed but only as a story⁵ that is 'lived', retold, and embodied in the practices of the community that celebrates that story.

He adds that Pauline ethics is not about setting up lists of principles and judgments on certain issues. It is more about forming the character of the believer as part of a specific community of believers who are part of an existing story and build onto it.⁶ It is about these characters making responsible choices in

¹ Snyman, 1992, 480.

² Meeks, 1993, 217: "Common sense is shaped, in the way I have argued in this book moral sensibilities are shaped, by common lore, common tradition, common practices, by our memory and our experience – no other way."

³ Kraemer, 1977, 91.

⁴ Both Meeks, 1993, 216-7; and Hays, 1997, 187-9, speak of this aspect, the diversity of opinion or insight, in the community of faith as polyphonic. Snyman, 1992, 482.

⁵ Horrell, 2002, 170.

⁶ Horrell, 2002, 170.

terms of the position in which the community finds itself at that point.¹ This fits in well with what we have found till now. Paul's ethic is based on his theology. The indicative of the christological-pneumatologically defined paradigm brings about a change in the character of the believer. He now lives life as new creation and makes responsible choices as led by the Spirit and resulting in deeds of loving service. Because there is no fixed and detailed set of ordinances according to which choices are made, even unwittingly, he has to consider situations as they arise. He has to apply the necessary discretion born from his new self-understanding, in order for his decisions to be responsible.²

Obviously, certain patterns of action would result, making choices easier, but still not automatic. On the other hand, an ethical pattern of action might take a specific form in one situation or community, but take a slightly different form in another. How love and respect is communicated does not have to do only with the intentions of the communicator. He has to take the context in which he operates into consideration. Will the object of his love experience it as he intended it? Paul clearly illustrates this in his ethical praxis in 1 Cor. 8:4-10; 9:19-23; 10:23-33. Obviously, referring to different situations, one also includes temporally different situations. What is accepted as responsible and respectable in one generation could easily and correctly be regarded by a next as indiscriminate, antiquated, fossilised, uncouth, boorish or inappropriate for the new situation. As knowledge demythologises old patterns of thought and accompanying ways of doing it becomes necessary to adapt one's ethical patterns to the new point of view.³

This is not to advocate a form of situational ethics in which principles are subordinated to the most practical and practicable set of actions. It is not about accommodating sin or finding middle ground, because it seems the best way to go or to keep most people happy. It is not about compromising principle or going with the flow of things. It is about individuals and communities living by the Spirit and wishing to walk in step with the Spirit, having to honestly seek the form in which the love of Christ is to be communicated and lived in a specific place and time so as to come across as though Christ incarnate is present (Gl. 2:20).

Paul's ethics accordingly cannot be understood as timely moral truth, independent of all historical conditions. Its individual injunctions are not meant without exception for all people in

¹ Gerhardsson, 1987, 17, also stresses the profound role of the community, as well as responsibility in the pneumatological ethic. He writes: "In the fellowship of the congregation some typical attitudes emerge, are discerned, and encouraged, and are consolidated. A Christian way of life is developed, which the law, if it had the right to pass judgement upon it, would not be able to condemn."

² Lategan, 1990, 324.

³ Examples are abundant. To mention but a few: what to eat and what to drink; the wearing of a head-covering by women; the length of ones' hair; the unquestioning positive reaction of a child to his parents' requests as opposed to his wanting to first understand and be party to the decision; the handing down of corporal punishment as opposed to remedial action; the indiscriminate rejection of the use of condoms in a society where HIV-AIDS is prevalent, as opposed to calling on the use of it by a society that does not wish to abstain; etc. See Schweizer, 1979, 207-8.

all situations; in part they are unique and unrepeatable (cf. Philemon), in part quite pragmatic and practical (cf. 1 Cor. 16:2).¹

Pauline ethics distinguishes itself from any notion of situational ethics by the mere fact that it is not aimed at pleasing man, but at glorifying God in the way we love and serve fellowmen. It is not anthropologically, but theologically motivated. To think of Pauline ethics in Galatians wholly in terms of neighbourly love in isolation from God's love in Christ and the fact that He is to be glorified, is to create a commonsense ethic alien to Paul's.² When we refer to commonsense in Pauline ethics, it is about that which is commonsense to the regenerated man. Much of it, probably most, on a horizontal level, would be commonsense to the unregenerate as well. However, because the Christian ethic is generated from a heart set right with God, it will seek God's glory. In unregenerate society one's ethics in a given situation might be determined by one's concern for an individual, sympathy with his/her dilemma, defence of the dignity of the individual concerned, appreciation for the individual, or even a reciprocating obligation borne from the past, etc. Although these impositions all have a bearing on how one deals with the individual, when push comes to shove, the believer's love of his neighbour is coloured by his love of God in the first place.

Christian morality is indeed resumed in love of neighbour, but it is not *reduced* to it, if by that we mean that love of neighbour competes with, overrides or replaces the particular demands which confront the Christian in virtue of his total situation.³

Paul does not wish to drown the life of Christians in a sea of casuistic trivia. Nor does he wish to provide laws applicable to every conceivable situation. But he does wish for concrete application to real life...The difference between Paul's approach and casuistry lies not in a lack of concreteness, but in the absence of any elaborate system embodying every possible injunction and reducing them all to the lowest common denominator of triviality.⁴

This calls for *responsibility* on the part of the *individual* and the *corporate body*, the subject of our next chapter.

5. CONCLUSION

The ethic that Paul advocates and reflects in the letter to the Galatians has many aspects to it. In order to conclude this chapter as clearly as possible, I will briefly reflect and summarise these aspects. Importantly though, these aspects are not separable and should be seen as well integrated into one holistic ethical paradigm.

i) *A theological ethic*

Paul's ethic is wholly theological. It is founded on the initiative and will of God as He pronounced it in the deliverance that his Son attained for those believ-

¹ Schrage, 1988, 191. I gather from the context that by "timely" he means that which is meant for all times.

² Douma, 1981, 89; Thielicke, 1979, 648-67.

³ Deidun, 1981, 185.

⁴ Schrage, 1988, 189.

ing in Him. It is not anthropological in the sense of being born from man and his insight in life on a mere horizontal level. It is not about man subjectively deciding on what is ethically good from his or his society's point of view, but about what God wants. It is about God who provided man with salvation through his Son and who makes it possible for the believer to live according to his will through the Spirit whom he equally provided. God provided a new soteriological and ethical paradigm in the advent of his Son and Spirit. The believer is to live within and according to this paradigm characterised by love and sacrificing service.

God does not impose an imperative on man without firstly providing him with the indicative in his Son and Spirit. Equally, having provided the indicative, he does not leave it to man to decide whether he wishes to react positively on the imperative. The imperative is not optional, but obligatory upon the believer. The indicative and imperative are not separable, but the two sides of one coin. Neither are they to be regarded as the division between God's work and man's. God provides both the indicative and the imperative in Christ and the Spirit. Man is to respond to both the indicative and the imperative by faith in Christ through the Spirit, and equally, by obedience to Christ and his Spirit within.¹

ii) *A christological ethic*

Paul's ethic is solidly founded on his soteriology. His soteriology can be described as the believer's freedom from the present evil age dominated by flesh, as provided by God in the Christ event and quickened existentially by the Spirit. He refers to this new status of the believer as a vocation (Gl. 5:13). He has been freed and is called to be free. Obviously, this implies that the believer is to live in freedom. If salvation is described as freedom, then the ethics following from this new status should also be characterised by the same token of freedom. Paul does not have a soteriology disparate to his ethics. His soteriology is about being free from flesh and having crucified the flesh and being dead to the world. It is about living through the Spirit.

Equally, the ethic emanating from this status is born from the intimate relationship with the Spirit. If his soteriology is about being free from flesh's *secundi*, law and the elements of the world, his ethic is equally free from law and the elements. When he speaks of the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2) he does not have a new Christian set of rules or ethical system in view, but the new paradigm God provided in Christ and his Spirit. Having been set free from the flesh by Christ, and subsequently quickened to faith by the Spirit, the believer is persistently to live in step with the Spirit. His life and salvation being founded on the faithfulness of Christ, the believer has to live in accordance with Christ's faithfulness.

¹ The believer's obligation to God will be revisited in the next chapter by way of the family metaphor.

iii) *A pneumatological ethic*

In the advent of Christ and his Spirit, through faith, a new mode of living was introduced. It is not about balancing one's freedom with law in some form so as to prevent one from falling prey to flesh. Law has never been able to curb flesh. In fact, under influence of the latter, law became aligned with flesh and therefore opposed to the Spirit. What law could not do in the old dispensation, the Spirit would now do without the help of law. It is not about an inner conflict between flesh and Spirit as equals. Flesh has been dealt with. It has been crucified with Christ. It is a beaten foe that cannot stand up to the Spirit. The believer is therefore to allow himself to be led by the Spirit. In the process he will bear the fruit typical of a life in the Spirit. It is the believer's responsibility to be led by the Spirit and to walk in step with Him. The fruit will follow, not as a work of the law, but as a fulfilling of the purpose to which law was given.

We investigated Paul's use of the three pneumatological phrases, εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι (Gl. 5:25), πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε (Gl. 5:16) and πνεύματι στοιχῶμεν (Gl.5:25). We found that it underlines the notion that Paul's ethics was built on his soteriology. New life was given by the Spirit and had to be lived through the Spirit as opposed to following the guidance of a law of some kind. If there was one point of orientation to which the believing community had to orientate, it was to the guidance provided by the Spirit. This, we argued, is in no way comparable to an orderless *laissez faire* ethic. Rather, it is about a well-ordered life in the absence of the dictates of law or some form of natural ethics and to the glory of God. It is given from the internal guidance provided by the Spirit. Obviously, subjectivity (even well-meant and "spiritual" subjectivity) can derail such guidance. Therefore, Paul emphasises the individual's responsibility, as well as that of the community, to seek God's will and his glory. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

iv) *An anomistic ethic of obliging obedience*

The central thrust of both Paul's soteriology and ethics is that a new paradigm has been inaugurated by Christ. He refers to this as the *law of Christ*. The believer is to live according to this paradigm. He is a new creation. This is the paradigm in which the Spirit enables the believer to live according to God's will, and guides him in what is expected in every situation. It is not a new law.

The norm of this ethic is the love of the neighbour. Obviously, although Paul does not expound the matter, the love of God is implied in the believer's faith which is nothing less than total surrender to Him. He refers to it as being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20). While law intended to promote a life of love towards the neighbour, but was unsuccessful because of flesh, the christological-pneumatological ethic that God has now provided makes this goal possible and incumbent upon the believer.

With regard to Paul's seemingly positive remarks on law and his reference to specific laws from time to time in other letters, we determined that these instances do not indicate that Paul foresaw a role of some kind for law in Christian ethics. Paul's positive remarks on law can be discounted against the original intention with law. It was given for a limited time, meant to curb sin and a gift for Israel alone. God gave it and therefore Paul makes positive remarks in that sense. He is also positive with regard to the goal of law, namely the believers' obligation to love. But, in the new dispensation all of this has been taken over by the Spirit. He has written this on the hearts of the believers. Law is thus irrelevant. Equally, when Paul refers to instances of law and seemingly builds his ethics on these laws, it is evident that he only cites these laws in the sense that they are so obviously expressions of love that they will not be disputed in the particular situation. Paul did not ground his ethics in law. He grounded it in the love and faithfulness of Christ from which followed the obligation to love.

In this paradigm of the enablement of the Spirit, Paul is very wary of an ethic of maximal regulation. It was unsuccessful in the old dispensation. True, given the new creation and the Spirit and flesh's crucifixion, man was now in a better position to live up to law's requirements. However, the Spirit is not in need of laws, because he works internally. The believer is under the obligation to bear the fruit of the Spirit. He is not relieved of that duty. However, he does exactly that, because of the Spirit's indwelling without the use of law.

Paul does not promote ethical relativism or subjectivism. He lays a heavy obligation on believers to live in accordance to God's will, but not in a nomistic fashion. He promotes an anomistic ethic of being guided by the Spirit in every new situation, so as to translate the love of God in Christ into that situation, and so to glorify God.

v) *An ethic for its time and place*

We found that Paul's approach to ethics is very creative. He makes use of a variety of maxims from different circles in his *Umwelt*. He has a type of commonsense approach to ethics. He seeks that which is good in God's sight for a specific context. He takes maxims from outside the religious realm, from the philosophical realm, and introduces them into the life of the Christian community. Obviously he would only use those compatible with Christian theology and aimed at doing God's will while loving the neighbour. The big difference from other ethics not primarily being on the level of *what* is required, but that the believer is *enabled* to do good and does it altruistically and to *God's glory*.

vi) *An ethic of participation*

This ethic is not one in which the individual reigns supreme. It is an ethic involving the community. The community not only provides the context in which the ethic is lived, love proven and the self sacrificed. It is equally involved in de-

termining what is ethically acceptable in the community and instrumental in the application. Although the community is without law it is not amoral or immoral. It lives a life of high moral quality under direct guidance of the Spirit. This does not mean that certain patterns of moral action do not take form. This would obviously happen. However, as soon as the pattern becomes the moral authority and opens the way for casuistics and formalism, stripping the believer of direct moral responsibility before God, that pattern has become an external law of the same order as the Mosaic law and the old elements of the world.

* * * * *

Paul undoubtedly went out of his way to bring the Galatians to understand that the apocalyptic event of the advent of Jesus and his Spirit, not only stripped law from any notion of effecting salvation, but also from playing any essential part in ethics. Surrendering to God through Christ and his Spirit, implied living life through Christ and his Spirit. The community of faith would live by faith and not by law in any form.

CHAPTER 7

AN ETHIC OF FREEDOM IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AND IN THE MIDST OF THE COMMUNITY

We have determined that the believer, crucified with Christ and endowed with his Spirit, bears fruit befitting new creation. Christ freed him from flesh's demands on him, enabling him to be influenced by the Spirit. In other words, Pauline ethics is christologically founded in the freedom God provided in Christ (Gl. 1:4; 5:1), and pneumatologically initiated, actualised and driven in the believer's life. We indicated that Christian ethics is not essentially about the pursuit of external ethical codes, but about emanating Christ crucified's self-sacrificing love quickened by the Spirit in the inner being of the believer. One could erroneously assume that a pneumatological ethic is a euphemism for blatant Christian subjectivism – a distorted view according to which the believer may do as he pleases on the assumption that he is free and is led by the Spirit irrespectively. To question his views and deeds is tantamount to dishonouring the Spirit. Consequently, this chapter deals with the importance of ethical responsibility, individually and communally, as well as accountability to God in the final analysis. Paul is extremely emphatic on these matters in Gl. 6:1-8. Although the Christian ethos is a fruit of the Spirit, springing from the relationship with Christ through his Spirit, it is not altogether automatic. The believer bears responsibility to be influenced by the Spirit and not to resign to the flesh. Christian ethics is put into practice amongst people and to God's glory (Gl. 1:4-5).

In this respect we will have to attend to the question of the role of ethical codes in Christianity. How does Paul deal with the matter of ethical creativity and participation in practice? Does his use of the different maxims in Gl. 6:1-10 not in effect reintroduce the notion of an external law or ethical system? Does his use of these maxims fit the picture argued in the previous chapter, or does it in fact indicate an external ethical system of some kind? After mentioning the list of virtues, predominantly aimed at communal life, Paul reiterates the importance of doing good to all, especially to those of faith. The social character of Christian ethics includes that the community of faith take *responsibility* for one another, restoring one another and bearing one another's burdens. It will be argued, contrary to modern, individualistic Christian practice in general, that Christians are to take responsibility for the welfare of others and for the restoration of relationships. Paul equally emphasises *accountability to God*. Though he emphasises it only near the end (Gl. 6:7-8), it is implied throughout, e.g., in the metaphor of the believer's *sonship of God* (Gl. 3:23-4:7), the *covenantal promise* (Gl. 3:15-20; 4:21-31) and the *Israel of God* (Gl. 6:16).¹

1. STRUCTURAL MATTERS

Despite the difficulty in finding some structure in this section,² these maxims are not at all unrelated. The field of structural suggestions vary from refraining from

¹ The reader is reminded that a few matters pertaining to this section of Paul's letter have been dealt with already, such as *new creation* (Gl. 6:15), *living and walking by the Spirit* (Gl. 5:25), and *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2).

² Despite criticism of Betz' view on rhetoric in Galatians and how the section holds together, it has already been acknowledged in Ch. 5 that his division of Gl. 5:1-6:10 is accepted. Therefore, other than most, our chapter will deal with Gl. 5:25-6:10 as a unit and not merely Gl. 6:1-10.

making any suggestions¹ to breaking it up into smaller units so meticulously² that one wonders whether the *sententiae* hold together only in their being compiled by Paul. Some divide Gl. 6:1-10 into two parts, with the division either between Gl. 6:5 and 6,³ or between Gl. 6:6 and 7.⁴ There are also those dividing it into three parts, i.e. Gl. 6:1-5, 6:6 and 6:7-10,⁵ or even into four, namely Gl. 6:1-2, 6:3-5, 6:6, and 6:7-10.⁶ All of these positions can be substantiated in some way or another. What is interesting is that Gl. 6:6 seems to be difficult to place. The more one breaks up the pericope, the more Gl. 6:6 is distinctly different from the others – even out of place.⁷ Why would Paul have added this maxim? How does it relate to the others, if at all? We shall return to this.

I agree with most scholars that Paul did not merely “dump” a few ethical maxims, mostly Hellenistic in origin, on the Galatians without some relevance to their situation. The letter as a whole reflects a high degree of structural integrity and everything Paul writes is highly relevant to the argument. The urgency with which he tackled the Galatian problem is reflected in different ways. The letter’s internal logic and rhetoric, and the way in which all the parts hold together, culminating in the ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10), make it very difficult to think Paul would, just before his grand conclusion and greeting (Gl. 6:11-18), throw in a few loose cannonballs. Why would he, after such prudence, break off the logic of his reasoning at the point where everything had to be wrapped up? It can be assumed that the context called for verbalised admonitions. To the original readers they would have made immediate sense. Hopefully our discussion will assist us in making sense of it. On the face of things, it seems extremely difficult to find an apparent structure in the text. It is doubtful that any suggestion pertaining to structure can be regarded as final – the present suggestion included. However, it is necessary to find some internal logic so as not to miss finer nuances. I would argue for the simplest possible structure.

The section is *chiastically* enclosed by markedly different exhortations from those in Gl. 6:1-8. *Firstly*, Paul includes himself throughout, making abundant use of the first person plural in the verbs and participles. I refer to Gl. 5:25-26 as introductory, and Gl. 6:9-10 as concluding exhortations. *Secondly*, the character of the exhortations in Gl. 5:25-26 and 6:9-10 are less gnomic and express what is typically or endemically Christian: the paradigm of living by and walking in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), and typically Christian allusions to the *parousia* (καρπός and *reaping and sowing*).⁸ *Thirdly*, enhancing this chiasmus, are the introductory exhortations (Gl. 5:25-26) starting off by stating the expected con-

¹ Schlier, 1971; Duncan, 1934; Bruce, 1982¹.

² Betz, 1979 291-3. Betz acknowledges it “appears confused, but it is not without organization and structure” (291), regarding the internal connection it is more on the level of “language and inner logic” than textual structure.

³ Lightfoot, 1890, 67; Kuck, 1994, 290.

⁴ Oepke, 1989, 265.

⁵ Mußner, 1974, viii. Esler, 1998, 230-3, also divides it into three parts, but differently, i.e. Gl. 6:1-6, 7-9 & 10.

⁶ NEB

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 271, suggests just this.

⁸ We have dealt with the apocalyptic element of these terms in Ch. 2.

duct positively (25), and following by banning certain negative attitudes and deeds amongst them (26). The opposite occurs in the concluding exhortations (Gl. 6:9-10), the negative, *not* to grow weary of well-doing and *not* to lose heart (9), stated first and followed by the positive exhortation to do good (10).

Everything between the two markers is more gnomic or aphoristic. A further division of these utterances is possible. *Firstly*, Gl. 6:1-6 is focussed on the *horizontal level*, dealing with both the ethical responsibilities of *individual* believers (1b,3-5) and their responsibilities toward fellow believers (1a, 2, 6). Together with this, there is also the *corporate responsibility* of the community of faith towards its constitutive individuals (Gl. 6:1-2). *Secondly*, Gl. 6:7-8 is focussed on the *vertical level*, dealing with the believer's relationship with God (7) and the Spirit (8); God being the final judge or rewarder of believers' actions, and the Spirit the one through whom they are led and enabled to sow with a view to eternal life. This gives rise to the structure below (fig.7.1), illustrating the chiasmus with its introductory and concluding exhortative principles (Gl. 5:25-26; 6:9-10); the maxims on horizontal responsibilities (Gl. 6:1-6); and vertical accountability (Gl. 6:7-8). Hopefully this will serve us well regarding Christian freedom and ethics.

Gl. 5:25 εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.	+
26 μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλοῦμενοι, ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.	-

Horizontal responsibility

- 6:1a (other) Ἄδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημψῆθῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος,
 6:1b (self) σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.
 2 (other) Ἄλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 3 (self) εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μὴδὲν ὦν, φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτοῦ·
 4 (self) τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον·
 5 (self) ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.
 6 (other) Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ καταχρούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ καταχοῦντι ἐν πάσιν ἀγαθοῖς.

Vertical accountability

- 7 (God) Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μκπητρίζεται· ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπεῖρη ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·
 8 (Spirit) ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

9 τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν, καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν μὴ ἐκλύομεν.	-
10 ἄρα οὐν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.	+

Fig. 7.1.

What is important at this point is that Paul seems to bring the matter of ethics right into the midst of the Galatians' current concrete situation. He had dealt at length with the immediate problem of circumcision and law (Gl. 3-4). He had come to the conclusion

that the reversion to law was tantamount to severance from Christ and falling away from grace (Gl. 5:4). They had been given freedom in Christ and had to stand firm in it (Gl. 5:1). In fact, they even had a divine vocation to live in this freedom (Gl. 5:13). In the previous chapter it became clear that Paul, having taken law out of the theological and ethical equation, had to explain in greater detail how the ethics of the new dispensation worked. He described it as an ethic produced in the believer by the guidance and enablement of the Spirit – a pneumatological ethic as it were. This ethical fruit was multi-dimensional, but primarily boiled down to loving service and the willingness to set one's own interest second to that of others (Gl. 5:22-23). This was also after expressing the so-called love command as the fulfilment of the law (Gl. 5:14).

In a sense one could regard Paul's list of Christian ethical qualities, as well as the call to love the neighbour, as largely theoretical. He was discussing ethics as subject and the norm of love could very easily be regarded as an abstract entity. It could even remain such. Therefore, after having argued his view on ethics, he moves on to explain how it was relevant to their own situation. How were they to move on from where they were? How were the Galatians to put walking in the Spirit into practice *in Galatia*? How was the creative and participationist ethic to be implemented in their concrete situation?

The use of the first person plural in the chiasmus creates intimacy, which is enhanced by his reference in Gl. 6:10 to the community of believers as "the household of faith". They were family! It is as if Paul at this point intended sitting down at a table with the Galatians and saying to them: "Alright, you've heard my whole argument. Now, how do we apply this ethic in the very situation we are in now? Where do we go from here?" In other words, he clearly expects the Galatians to review their current situation and to make the necessary and correct decisions in view of the fact that they lived by the Spirit and were expected to walk in step with Him. Most commentators are agreed that Paul's negatively formulated hortatory subjunctives in Gl. 5:26 should be explained in terms of the Judaising opposition. Either Paul was explaining how believers were not to operate and suggesting that the opponents were handling the situation incorrectly, or they themselves had followed suit in their internal debate on the matter of law and needed to be admonished by Paul's very specific reference to misbehaviour amongst themselves.

Whichever way one looks at it, it seems obvious, Paul would not have mentioned these examples of misbehaviour and suggested these guidelines if they were totally unconnected to the specific situation. One could safely say Paul was addressing a very specific situation to which he applied his ethic as argued up to that point. What we have here is applied Pauline ethics as a culmination of his arguments. He never intended his ethical views to be mere points of philosophical discussion, but to be put to use and concretised in daily living in the community of faith.

One should not award Gl. 6:6 the status of hermeneutical key to our current pericope. Gl. 6:6 is not a loose addendum which should be understood as an entity in isolation from the rest of the letter. It is part of an integral whole and

should be understood in terms of the paradigm of ethical conduct in the new dispensation of freedom in Christ. It is about specific guidelines with regard to walking in step with the Spirit by whom they live (Gl. 5:25) in a situation of which Paul is quick to add, that there was self-conceit, provoking and envy of one another (Gl. 5:26).

2. AN ETHIC OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Even though Paul describes his ethic as one of being crucified to the world (Gl. 6:14); of Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20); living by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25); and the ethical qualities of this new life emanating from the relationship with the Spirit in the same way as fruit is produced by the tree of which it is part; and that it is not the result of the believer's hard labour and efforts (Gl. 5:22-23), he never gives the impression that this life follows automatically on the relationship with the Spirit of Christ. For this reason Paul follows up his indicatives with imperatives. In Gl. 5:1 Paul's indicative of freedom in Christ is followed up by his imperative to stand firm in that freedom and not to submit to slavery again. Gl. 5:13 fixes the admonition not to abuse freedom as an opportunity for the flesh on to the indicative of the vocation to freedom. He even adds the so-called love command (Gl. 5:14). Gl. 5:16 exhorts the Galatians to walk according to the Spirit. In the same vein he follows in Gl. 5:25 with the call to complement the indicative of their living by the Spirit with the imperative of walking in step with the Spirit. This is evidence enough that Paul does not think of the believer as a thoughtless ethical automat doing as the Spirit commands. In fact, if this were the way the Spirit operated it would rob the believer anew of his freedom in Christ. Of course, Paul would also have to explain why believers still sin, but this is not currently our concern.

Paul most definitely values ethical responsibility exceedingly highly. The freedom in Christ and according to his Spirit is one that always involves the call to take up the responsibility of not only living by the Spirit, but actually walking in step with the way He points out.¹ The Christian's responsibility is not to match the guidance of the Spirit with works of law from his own resources, but to allow the Spirit to convince him of and enable him to do that which is fitting to the situation and emanates the love of Christ to the glory of God.

[F]reedom did not mean that there was no moral discipline or moral direction. Moral discipline, for Paul is applied through identification with the cross of Christ: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). And moral direction is provided by the Holy Spirit: "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law" (5:18).²

The structure of evangelical ethics is essentially determined by the fact that its sole task is to spell out and expound what Luther calls the "freedom of a Christian man." This freedom implies that we are free from the Law and from tutelage, that we are the children of God and hence are of age, mature [*mündig*]. This means above all that we are always the subjects of

¹ Buckel, 1993, 209-13.

² Hansen, 1997, 221.

our action. Those who are under the Law are not subjects of their own action but merely objects of an alien will; they are “functionaries.”¹

As we have seen in the simple structure above (*fig. 7.1*), Paul does not limit his call for responsibility to the individual in his relationships. He equally ardently calls on the believing community to take responsibility for individuals in its midst. But besides this responsibility of believers on the horizontal level (Gl. 6:3-6) there is a profound sense of accountability to God and the Spirit on the vertical level (Gl. 6:7-8).

2.1. An ethic involving community

Paul did not advocate an individualistic ethic that ran the risk of being subjectively determined under the guise of being given by the Spirit. The question is therefore: what proviso did Paul build into his ethical rationale through which the possibility of a subjectively misconstrued or downright misguided ethic could be countered? Given the fact that the believer would not necessarily walk by the Spirit and that he/she would always run the risk of not distinguishing between the Spirit and their own spirit, what mechanism was available for testing the fruit presenting themselves in Christian lives, to determine whether they were from the Spirit or according to the flesh?

I would argue that Paul placed a very high premium on the community of believers being so involved with one another, and the common good of the household of faith, that this social fabric of the community of faith would assist to discern between right and wrong and to build the moral fabric of the community.²

2.2. Horizontal communal responsibility

2.2.1. *Never on your own. About we, us and sound relationships*

This element in Paul's ethical reasoning is of the utmost importance. Viewing the matter from modern Western civilisation's individualism, a very heavy burden of hermeneutical responsibility and integrity rests on scholars dealing with this subject. It is common knowledge that the first-century Mediterranean personality was essentially dyadic. In other words, personality was not viewed in individualistic terms, but in terms of inter-relatedness. It was about personality being defined in terms of others and behaving in terms of the expectations of others – always embedded in a specific group with its own identity and ethos. Paul does not seem to change this. The following is indicative of Paul's continued thinking in terms of the community and the corporate personality.

- Paul makes almost exclusive use of the second person plural when addressing the Galatians in his ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). The same must be said of his use of the personal pronoun. The only times he does not do this, is when he includes himself in their number (e.g., Gl. 5:5, 25, 26; 6:9, 10), and when he refers to the fictitious third person singular (Gl. 6:1, 3-8).

¹ Thielicke, 1979, 455.

² Jewett, 1994, 250.

One must add, however, that in the case of the latter it can hardly be said that Paul has an individualistic ethic in mind. It will become clearer in due course that even this use is embedded in the context of the community.

- In addition to this, Paul makes good use of the reflexive pronoun ἀλλήλους (“one another” – Gl. 5:15, 26; 6:2) and refers to the Galatians in the vocative ἀδελφοί (“brothers” – Gl. 5:11, 13; 6:1). This term indicates closeness, intimacy and affection enhancing the notion of communality.¹
- His list of “works of the flesh” is heavily burdened with vices that reflect discord in the community.² Equally, the “fruit of the Spirit” is a list of qualities of which most are conducive to unity within the community.³
- Paul’s reference to the believing community as the “household of faith” (Gl. 6:10) is of the utmost importance for our subject.⁴ The imagery of family was a most effective way of communicating horizontal relations and responsibilities in the ancient Mediterranean world. The family as basic unit of the societal structure was vastly determinative of society. As of late much has been done on a social-scientific level to probe the depth of the metaphor.⁵ One’s social position was determined by the family into which one was born. It determined one’s identity and social standing or honour.⁶ Believers were spiritually the family of God and family of one another. They had, therefore, to think and act as a family unit.⁷ Living according to the family identity determined whether one honoured or disgraced the whole family.⁸

Of importance for our discussion of Gl. 5:25-6:10 is that the whole section is enclosed by koinonial references. Gl. 5:25-26 very explicitly makes abundant use of the first person plural (“we”, “us”) and the reflexive pronoun “one another.”

2.2.2. *About sinning and restoring*

The paradigm shift from the present evil age dominated by flesh and its *secundi*, law and the elements, to the new dispensation founded on Christ pre-

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 271.

² Esler, 1998, 228.

³ Esler, 1998, 229.

⁴ Take note of other supporting elements, such as the fatherhood of God (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4; 4:2, 6); Christ’s offspring from Abraham (Gl. 3:15), as well as that of the believer in Christ (Gl. 3:29); and the believer’s heirship in Christ (Gl. 3:29); and the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gl. 4:21-31). We return to these in §4.2.3. below. Of obvious significance with regard to the family metaphor, is the reference to the “household of faith” (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως - Gl. 6:10). Gl. 4:5 introduces the notion of the believer’s adoption by God through faith in Christ. He expands the idea by introducing the Spirit in the same breath as the One through whom the believer calls to God: “ἄββα ὁ πατήρ” (Gl. 4:6).

⁵ It is impossible to make mention of all investigations. The references made in the course of our arguments should suffice in reflecting the mainline arguments regarding current research results. A word of warning with regard to these studies is appropriate. Van der Watt, 1999, 492, warns that on this subject one works “in rather abstract and generalized terms.” The reason for this being that one must accept that there was cultural diversity in the ancient Mediterranean world.

⁶ Van der Watt, 1999, 494.

⁷ Van der Watt, 2000, 289-93.

⁸ Van der Watt, 1999, 496.

sent in his Spirit, had brought about radical changes on more than one level. Obviously, when the foundation of faith changes from a promise still unfulfilled and law, to the fulfilment in Christ and his Spirit, it simply has to impact not only on the foundation of salvation and ethics, but equally on the level of the restoration of the sinner. Christ had fulfilled law together with its sacrificial system which communicated the sinner's remorse. God set the sinner's relationship with Him right, as well as the sinner's relationship with the community to the extent that it could be done. We have dwelt extensively on the matter of restoring the relationship with God in the new dispensation. What remains, is the restoration of the sinner in concrete community life,¹ as well as the role of the community in restoring the sinner in relation to God.

Paul does not create the impression that the believing community no longer sins. He assumes it to be the case that believers still sin. In Gl. 6:1 he writes:

Ἄδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινὶ παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραύτητος, σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.

Paul's use of "brothers" (ἀδελφοί) not only implies he is about to make an important statement,² but also sets the tone in which they were to deal with sinners. He takes the harshness often characteristic of the old dispensation out of the equation. After all, the curse on the sinner associated with the old dispensation (Gl. 3:10) had been dealt with by Christ when He Himself became a curse via the law (Gl. 3:13). Thus, the curse had now been removed and could not be part of the new dispensation, even though believers still sinned. With Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20), as well as the Spirit through whom the believer calls to the Father (Gl. 4:6), a new way of dealing with sin and sinners in the believing community was called for.

R.N. Longenecker suggests that the protasis was written to serve a future situation that would most probably arise (ἐάν with a subjunctive verb). Although Paul creates indefiniteness, he adds the high probability of such an occurrence.³ He enhances this notion by using ἄνθρωπος ("a man") in a generic sense, not having a specific person in mind. On the other hand, he is not referring to an altogether general situation. He is after all dealing with these brothers to whom he is writing and giving very concrete advice.⁴

The questions to be answered by this Pauline exhortation are: *firstly*, how is sin identified in the new dispensation in the absence of law? *Secondly*, what does Paul mean when he uses the verb προλαμβάνω ("surprised", "overtaken")? Does he mean that the sinner was surprised by sin, caught unawares as it were, therefore not sinning altogether intentionally; or does he have in mind that

¹ Betz, 1979, 295.

² Betz, 1979, 295;

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

⁴ I refrain from substantiating this notion by referral to MSS that have tried to enhance this notion by substituting ἄνθρωπος with the indefinite τις ("anyone", "someone") or the addition of ἐξ ὑμῶν ("of you") such as is done by R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

the sinner was caught unawares by his fellow believers while sinning? *Thirdly*, how does restoration take place?

- a) *How is sin identified?* In the absence of law, and this was probably an issue on which the opponents could have thrived, a new way of identifying transgressions was needed. Paul does not deal with the matter explicitly, probably because he does not deem it necessary after his elaborate arguments. We should be reminded of the fact that we have already identified the law of Christ as the soteriological and ethical paradigm of the new dispensation since the advent of Christ and his Spirit. There are a few essential indicators. The following are not exhaustive and are only touched on to illustrate that law was no longer necessary, let alone essential, to determine wrongdoing amongst believers in Christ. Obviously, these indicators can hardly be separated. They are actually descriptions of the same thing.
- i) Action that is *out of step with the Spirit*. In Gl. 5:25 Paul summarises the ethical obligation of the Christian as “to walk according to the Spirit,” using the verb στοιχέω. We have already determined that it has the meaning of “walk in a straight line”, “conform to a standard” or “walk in step with”.¹ The Spirit is the One who guides the believer in the law of Christ. To be out of step with Him and his guidance is to transgress. This notion is pronounced by Paul’s use of παράπτωμα (“transgression”) rather than a word such as ἁμαρτία. Etymologically παράπτωμα carries with it the imagery of “fall beside (the road)”.² Thus, in view of παράπτωμα being used so shortly after the introductory Gl. 5:25 and its use of στοιχέω, it seems logical to understand “transgression” in Gl. 6:1 as the believer’s making a false step,³ falling out of step with the Spirit and thus losing his way. Seen this way, transgression does not take place only at the point when it manifests in a specific wrongdoing, but already when the believer ignores the guidance of the Spirit and in so doing creates disharmony between himself and the Spirit⁴ and follows the desires of the flesh.⁵
- ii) Action that is *incompatible with the fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22-23) and, therefore *in line with the works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19-21). We have already seen the very heavy emphasis Paul places on love of the neighbour. In Gl. 5:6 he stresses the paramount importance of faith working through love, or faith being translated into an ethic of love. In Gl. 5:13-14 Paul urges the Galatians to serve one another through love, adding that the whole law is fulfilled in loving the neighbour as one loves oneself. Then there is Gl. 5:22-23 describing the fruit of the Spirit, or the

¹ See my Ch. 6.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

³ Matera, 1992, 213.

⁴ Michaelis, 1968, 172, also points to the word as indicating disruption of the relationship between the believer and God.

⁵ Küng, 1976, 468-72, warns against failure to discern between the Holy Spirit and one’s own sinful spirit. Of the latter he indicates that on both individual and structural level, it is possible to claim authority for a certain viewpoint on the grounds that it is according to the Spirit’s guidance.

qualities that follow from walking in step with the Spirit. We have already stressed that all the qualities follow from the most fundamental of them all, namely love. They are all descriptions of love. The last quality, i.e. “self-control (ἐγκράτεια), has also been identified as that quality of love by which one is willing to place the needs of another before those of oneself, in fact, placing others before oneself. So, in conclusion, the overriding quality against which one measures one’s being in step with the Spirit, is whether one’s deeds reflect the love of Christ or deny it!

One should emphasise that it is not about love in general, but about the love Christ illustrated in his crucifixion (Gl. 2:20), so that he now lives in the believer and not only shares that love with him, but endows him with it, in order for him to share it on his part. Thus, the touchstone for determining whether one’s deeds are in or out of step with the Spirit is the sacrificing and serving love of Christ made manifest in the believer.

- iii) Action that causes *disharmony in the community of faith*. It is striking how many of the works of the flesh in Gl. 5:19-21 can be connected with disharmony in the community of faith. Equally, just after positively exhorting the Galatians to walk in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), he admonishes them not to have any self-conceit, not to provoke one another and not to envy one another. Clearly, these are matters concerning disharmony. As we have seen, and it will be touched on again, Gl. 6:1-10 in which Paul becomes very concrete, has a tremendously profound emphasis on the community and its taking care of one another and bearing one another’s burdens. One is also reminded of Paul’s efforts to promote unity between himself and the leaders in Jerusalem as reflected in Gl. 2:1-10; and his disgust at and disappointment with Peter for having acted insincerely and separated himself from the Gentile Christians when the Jerusalem party arrived in Antioch (Gl. 2:11-14).
- iv) Action that is *not born from seeking God’s glory*. Pauline ethics being fully based on theology and not on anthropology, always seeks his glory. This position was motivated in the previous chapter.¹ Suffice to say, the will of God is fundamental and already introduced in Gl. 1:5. God was to be pleased (Gl. 1:10) and glorified (Gl. 1:24). Paul specifically emphasises the divine deed foundational to Christian ethics and in which God is glorified, namely glorying in the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:14). After all, the believer lives because of the faithfulness/obedience of Christ to the will of God. He also lives this life in that faithfulness/obedience of Christ to the will of God.

At this junction it is important that law is no longer needed to identify transgression. The latter is equal to being out of step with the Spirit who leads and sensitises the believer in the new christological paradigm, the law of Christ.

¹ Ch. 6, §4.1.1.

- b) *How should προλαμβάνω be understood?* One way of looking at the verb is to accept the sinner had been taken unawares by the transgression, either being tricked into it or transgressing inadvertently.¹ Paul could possibly have intended to enhance the notion of a future possibility which the sinner himself would not want to have succumbed to. On the other hand, there is no necessity to take it as such, and it creates the impression that when it came to deliberate sin Paul did not have restoration of the sinner in mind, only unsuspecting sin being in view. This does not seem the case, since Paul actually seems to place a stronger emphasis on the role of the restoring community than on that of the sinner.² I am in agreement with the notion that Paul had in mind the coming to light of the sinner's transgression, even if he were trying to conceal it.³ In other words, it could be translated as: "When a man is caught out/detected in any trespass..."⁴ This makes it irrelevant whether there was a motive on the part of the transgressor or whether he sinned inadvertently. He was found to be out of step with the Spirit. It also paves the way for emphasising the role of the community, namely to restore the sinner, irrespective of the circumstances leading up to the disclosure. This obviously implies accountability within the community. The sinner in the household of faith could not argue that he was only accountable to God. He was part of the family of faith who were given to one another and called to care for one another, and even to restore sinners in their midst.
- c) *How is the sinner restored?* The maxim: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gl. 6:2) has a wider scope, to which we shall return shortly. However, it should not be read in isolation from the sinner, his sin and his restoration in Gl. 6:1.

"You who are *spiritual* should *restore* that man in a *spirit of gentleness*"
(ὤμεις οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος)

The question is, what to make of οἱ πνευματικοὶ? Should it be taken at face value or as a rhetorical mechanism? Some have taken it as irony on Paul's part.⁵ There is not enough evidence that Paul really intended irony. On the face of things it seems most likely that he meant to refer to their participation in that which he announced in Gl. 5:25. They were living by the Spirit and he urged them to walk in step with the Spirit. In Gl. 3:2-3 he refers to their life of faith as one having begun in the Spirit and, by implication, to be continued as such. In Gl. 3:5 he takes their having been divinely supplied with the Spirit by grace for granted, and equally so in Gl. 4:6.⁶ In fact,

¹ Delling, 1967, 14; Siede, 1978, 750; Morris, 1996, 177. Also Barth, 1955, 128-30.

² Betz, 1979, 296.

³ Dunn, 1993², 319.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 420, remarks "[the] verb suggests an unanticipated interruption of an action in progress, not a dealing with an action already completed." It enhances the notion that the sinner is detected in sinning.

⁵ Schlier, 1971, 270.

⁶ See also Gl. 3:14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-23, 25; 6:8. A very stern cautionary would be appropriate at this point. One should not understand this "supply" in terms of a once given gift now at man's disposal. It should

his use of οἱ πνευματικοὶ if chosen for rhetorical reasons makes more sense if it is not understood as irony, but rather as part of Paul's very sincere appeal to them to live according to the Spirit. The *pathos* emanating from this section of the letter is all but irony and sarcasm.¹ If Paul meant it sarcastically he himself would have contradicted the intimacy of this epistolary section, as well as that which he was expecting from the Galatians, namely to bear one other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gl. 6:2).

This was part and parcel of Christian ethics, how the law of Christ as new paradigm functioned,² how the Spirit led believers in the event of one of the flock sinning. Being of the Spirit and accepting his guidance, love would be manifest in "gentle" restoration (καταρτίζειν). It was impossible for those believing in the Son of the holy God, to regard the need for holiness and responsibility as secondary since the disappearance of the law, or to simply accept obvious sin in the community.

For Paul, freedom and mutual respect do not imply simple affirmation of whatever takes place within a universal Christendom.³

The time of heavy-handedness had passed. It was not about one believer being of higher spiritual order than another, but about believers – the sinner and the restorer – being of a new time and order, namely of spiritual maturity. It was the time after the advent of Christ and his Spirit. It was the time after the immaturity of the age of law and other such elements of the world. A new way of living and dealing with sin and sinners had arrived. *Punishment* and *condemnation* did not befit the new era.⁴ They were to deal with sinners in the same way God dealt with sinners in Christ, i.e. loving, serving and restoring them. With καταρτίζειν in such close proximity to Gl. 6:2's reference to burden-bearing and the law of Christ as understood in this dissertation, one cannot do otherwise than make a connection between restoration and bearing the burden of the sinner. Cousar writes:

Paul describes the restoration as bearing burdens: sharing the pain of failure, assuming a portion of the guilt and judgement...⁵

One is once again reminded of the family imagery. When a family member acted in discord with the family's traditions or value system, the family itself regarded it as a shame and a threat to its stability. However, they could restore the disobedient in the family by way of punishment or discussion. In the process the honour of the whole family could be restored. All was not lost forever. It could be rectified.⁶ Against this background, fervently re-

be read against living by and walking by the Spirit. His guidance is the directing force. In this regard one should read Barth, 1979, 48-59 (especially 58). See again Barth, 1949, 140, as quoted in my Ch. 3 on p.103.

¹ Dunn, 1993², 320.

² Matera, 2000, 244.

³ Schrage, 1988, 195.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 297.

⁵ Cousar, 1982, 145.

⁶ Van der Watt, 1999, 498-501.

minding them that no one had to think more of himself than he should (Gl. 6:3), and knowing that they were all equal before the Father, he admonishes them to restore one another in a spirit of gentleness.

While fierce competition for honour may be the order of the day outside the family, within its ranks everyone is expected to work to maintain its collective honour.¹

Although “gentleness” is an acceptable translation for *πραΰτης*, “humility” is better.² It fits much better with the reminder that they could also be tempted. What Paul means by being tempted is not altogether clear. It could carry the meaning of the temptation to sin just like the sinner discovered in sinning. It could also carry the meaning of being tempted to self-righteousness in dealing with the sinner, in that way encouraging the “works of the flesh.”³ Whichever way, humility was called for.

Obviously, there is a profound difference in the fact that Christ founded the indicative within which believers have to operate. It was a “once for all” that would never be repeated. But there is another difference, i.e. on the level of Christ’s example. They were to remember that they themselves were vulnerable. This matter will receive attention further on.

2.2.3. About bearing one another’s burdens like Christ

Betz indicates quite a few instances where the maxim of burden-bearing amongst friends is encouraged in Hellenistic literature.⁴ “Burdens” (*τὰ βάρη*) in Gl. 6:2 is preceded by the notion of sin and followed in Gl. 6:6 by the notion of financial sustenance. Although these two forms of burdens would have been very near the surface in Paul’s and his readers’ minds, they are not to be regarded as the only burdens to be borne.⁵ It is about daily living and all its hassles and struggles.⁶

Moving on to *βαστάζω*, it is about more than just tolerating the fellow believer with his problems, faults and failures, and even sin (Gl. 6:1). It is about providing his needs so as to bring relief. It is also about accepting that failure is part of this life and therefore also part of the burden to be borne with others.⁷ One must be wary of weakening the preceding context of sinning, by focusing too strongly on burdens in general. Paul’s reference, following on the sinning of the fellow believer, is firstly to the sinner’s burden of sin and his need for restoration.⁸

It is extremely important that Paul uses the present imperative form of the verb to emphasise that the bearing of the burden of another is not an occasional

¹ Esler, 1998, 219.

² See Bauder, 1976, 256-9 for more information.

³ Betz, 1979, 298.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 299.

⁵ Mundle, 1975, 261, stresses the burden of sin, but not exclusive of other burdens, or of the responsibility to bear one’s own burdens. Also Schrenk, 1964, 553-61 for a wide range of meanings. Also Dunn, 1993², 322.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 299.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 299. See also Büchsel, 1964, 596.

⁸ Kuck, 1994, 292.

supportive act, but an ongoing responsibility.¹ It is part and parcel of being a part of the community of faith. It is part of following in the footsteps of Christ as the Faithful *par excellence*.

That Paul links the bearing of burdens so effortlessly with fulfilling the law of Christ, cannot slip our attention. He connects these with the combination καί οὕτως (“and, in this manner”). Καί as connective already joins Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε with ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. However, using the adverb οὕτως (“in this way”), Paul strengthens this logical connection. It is further enhanced by the prepositional prefix attached to the verb in the future tense ἀναπληρώσετε.²

We have indicated that law of Christ refers to the new soteriological and ethical paradigm in Christ and his Spirit. It would not be far-fetched to include that Paul is inferring that this paradigm is founded on the fact of Christ’s burden-bearing *par excellence*. What Christ did, not only set the example to his followers, but cut out the pattern along which believers and their community would necessarily act in the eschatological time inaugurated by his advent. It was part of their paradigm. There was no escaping the responsibility.³ He says: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gl. 2:20). The believer is now like Christ and not able to do otherwise than bear the burdens of fellow believers.

2.2.4. About remembering your teachers

Why would Paul have added this admonition? Did he intend this admonition to be so central to the section that one should actually relate it to each surrounding component; in other words, almost as an hermeneutical key to our pericope? For our purpose it is not necessary to go into all the arguments that have been put forward in answer to this question. Our intention is to determine how this “most puzzling of all Paul’s directives in 6:1-10”⁴ fits into the broader picture. Is it an enigma or a hermeneutical key? Or is it just a very logical remark emanating from the situation. I would argue in favour of the latter.

We have seen that Gl. 6:6 is a rather independent verse. For instance, Gl. 6:3-5 and 6:7-9 are two groups of maxims, each having some form of internal coherence. In form they are internally supportive of each other,⁵ and in content they are linked by a specific thread of thought: introspection and self-evaluation in the case of the former, and sowing and reaping in the case of the latter. If one were to regard vs. 6 as belonging to Gl. 6:3-5 the structure could suggest that the whole matter of bearing burdens was actually intended to build up to the climax of supporting the teachers. If, on the other hand, it were to be affixed to Gl. 6:7-9 it could suggest that sowing is all about finances. Whichever one opts for, it seems

¹ Morris, 1996, 178.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 275.

³ Fletcher, 1982, 204.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 278.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 278.

that the text would be hermeneutically clouded in financial terms so as to obscure other shades of meaning that seem to have much relevance. Strelan¹ e.g., has argued that Paul's reference in Gl. 6:2 is about the congregation's responsibility to share in the common financial burden of the community, particularly the responsibility toward missionaries and teachers, and possibly also the collection for Jerusalem. This leads him to understand that the fulfilling of the law of Christ is the carrying out of the duty that he laid down in 1 Cor. 9:14, i.e.: "[T]hose who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."

Although the bearing of burdens surely includes financial burdens it seems an unnecessary road to take. Besides depriving the text of more meaning, it makes the matter even more enigmatic. Why would Paul, after arguing so logically and coherently from theology to ethics, on the verge of concluding his letter (Gl. 6:11-18), decide to fit in a whole section dominated by finances? It had not featured at any other point, unless one regards Paul's reference to his promise to remember the poor (Gl. 2:10) as such. But, surely the link is too weak to provide reason enough for this explanation. A more contextually responsible way is needed and seems probable.

The broader historical context, according to Ramsay, would have made this exhortation more than apt. Pagan religions did not have a system of teaching. It was about ritual and bargaining with the gods.² They would not necessarily have known of such a responsibility and would have to be taught in this regard. However, the specific context in Galatians would have made the call even more appropriate.

Paul was being very practical at this point and very aware of the intricacies of the human psyche and how it influences relationships and accompanying deeds. His readers, of whom some considered circumcision, some were at least carried away by the teaching of the false teachers, and others probably stuck to their Pauline guns, were possibly deeply divided. The first two groups could very well have reasoned that teachers of Paul's orientation towards the gospel were not teaching the truth and were therefore not to be supported. Paul most probably did not have himself in mind, but teachers of his conviction. Whether they would even have considered supporting the Judaisers is uncertain. One does not know whether the latter presented themselves as teachers. It would be best left out of the equation. Now that Paul had dealt with the problem of whose gospel was correct and had assumed (he says he has no doubt) that the Galatians would follow his reasoning, he reminded them that they had a responsibility towards the teachers that they had distrusted. They were to take care of their needs anew. There might also be the hint, in terms of reciprocity, that they were to share the good things with the teachers, because these teachers' teachings were good. Although one cannot be sure of the circumstances and whether this presentation of matters is correct, one can at least argue that there is more than enough reason to accept that Paul had not interrupted his argument and that the pericope under discussion need not be

¹ Strelan, 1975, 266-76.

² Ramsay, 1900, 457-8; Morris, 1996, 182.

clouded by finances, although finances would have been one of its nuances. What is beyond doubt is that teachers were to be supported as partakers in the community of faith; partakers who had the vocation to teach the true gospel of freedom in Christ.

Esler remarks that one should view this matter of material support in terms of the family metaphor.¹ Family members had responsibilities toward one another. The teacher was part of that family and had to be taken care of as a family member. The implication is that it was a matter of honour to do this. Not to support a family member was tantamount to shaming the whole family. They were to include the teacher in their communal circle of burden-bearing. Obviously, this would be the will of the Father of the family and He would be honoured in the process.

A final remark with regard to Paul's specific use of the maxim in Galatians is warranted. Although pagan religions did not have the custom of teaching, they supported their priests by way of ritual sacrifices. However, it was customary in philosophical circles of antiquity for a teacher's followers to support him.² It was a matter of reciprocity. The teacher shared his knowledge and they reciprocated with material goods. Seen from this angle it was not an uncommon thing for Paul to touch on. What is interesting is that while Paul, in his First letter to the Corinthians (9:14), motivates his stance on subsistence for teachers on the authority of the Lord (Lk. 10:7), he desists in this instance. Rather, he *appeals* to them to do such. He once again appeals on their sense of *responsibility*. If the teacher teaches the truth of the gospel he should be cared for.

2.3. Horizontal individual responsibility

Obviously, that which is written above with regard to the responsibility of the community is equally applicable to each individual within the community of faith. Therefore, it will not be elaborated any further in the current context of individual responsibility. However, what does concern us, is the fact that Paul does not allow for the individual to hide behind the corporate responsibility of the believing community. One should not regard the individual responsibility as dissolved into that of the community, as if Paul was advocating a communal ethic as such. In fact, if the believer were to sacrifice his own responsibility for the community to take over and decide on his behalf, it would imply that the guidance of the Spirit belonged to the group. The individual would then be enabled by the Spirit to do uncritically that on which the group decided on his behalf. It would also imply that the believer is cast in a new form of slavery, namely that of the community. If they reflect on matters ethical and decide on his behalf what actions he is to take, it boils down to slavery of the group. It would assign a mediating role to the group in the eschatological time when the Spirit would lead the believer from within. While acknowledging the vast role of the community in the ethical choices and ways of the individual believer, one should not

¹ Esler, 1998, 232.

² Betz, 1979, 305. See Hauck, 1965, 132-3. J.L. North, 1992, 523-7, provides additional examples.

frustrate the immensely intimate relationship between the Spirit and the individual and the immediacy of his guidance of the individual. Paul does not allow for this. He emphasises the individual believer's responsibility as much as that of the community, each on its own terrain.

The believer is always tempted to "self-righteousness and arrogance" when becoming aware of another's wrongdoing. For Paul this is a form of "works of the flesh".¹ He adds (Gl. 6:3) that if one thinks highly of oneself when, in fact, one is nothing one is caught up in a delusion. Now, Paul does not merely draw from philosophical diatribe. One's faith is constantly threatened by forgetfulness. The basis of one's faith is the acceptance of the fact that one's life is one of plight before God. In order to break out of the destruction of the present evil age, man had to be delivered from outside his realm by divine intervention in Jesus Christ (Gl. 1:4). This fact underscores the dilemma of man in his fleshliness. In himself he is nothing. If not for God's divine intervention in Christ, the believer would still be pitiful. He has no need to think of himself as better than another, because his new status in Christ underlines the fact that he is undeserving. It is very significant that Paul introduces the law of Christ at this point (Gl. 6:2). The new paradigm in Christ makes the difference, not the man privileged to be part of that paradigm.

There is another point to be made in this regard. Paul seems to fear that the Πνευματικοί might think of their having the Spirit as authorising them to deal with other sinners in their midst from a position of spiritual superiority. Having the Spirit does not place one in a position of authority over fellow believers. In fact, he adds that it does not place one out of the reach of sin. In fact, in Gl. 6:7-8 he underlines the possibility of believers sowing to the flesh. Therefore the believer had to test his own work (Gl. 6:4). This was not only about taking responsibility for one's ethical life, nor only about being careful not to fall prey to sin. It was especially about not comparing oneself to others and glorying in it. It was about being constantly aware of the fact that one was a new creation and had to continually and consciously choose to live within the paradigm of the new life in Christ and his Spirit.

It was about spiritual maturity, honesty and taking responsibility for one's spiritual and ethical life. Ultimately each had to bear his own burden of responsibility.

3. AN ETHIC OF VERTICAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD AND HIS SPIRIT

3.1. An ethic in the sight of God

At no stage does Paul allow for a humanitarian ethic without ultimate accountability to God. The Christian ethic is firmly grounded in both the christological and the pneumatological indicatives, which we have discussed elaborately. It is possible for man not to take his responsibilities seriously and to ignore the christological-pneumatological indicative and to do what does not befit a believer. It is possible to know what the Spirit expects and to shun that admoni-

¹ Betz, 1979, 298.

tion in order to sow to the flesh (Gl. 6:8). One is reminded of Eph. 4:30 where it is written: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” It is possible to ignore the Spirit. It is possible to misuse one’s freedom. It is endemic to the notion of freedom to think that one cannot be called free if one is to be controlled by an entity of some kind – even if that entity is the Spirit. On the other hand, Christian freedom is defined by its foundation, which is Christ and his faithfulness. This foundation provides man with deliverance from the present evil age in which flesh dominated his life and enslaved him. He was set free from that bondage, not for the sake of unbridled freedom in itself, but with a view to being able to do God’s will as illustrated in the Christ event (Gl. 1:4), and indeed to do it by walking in step with the Spirit. He was set free from the old bondage with a view to let Christ live in him (Gl. 2:20).

Despite flesh having been crucified, it is still possible for believers to sow to the flesh, and even to seemingly get away with it. As possible as it was in the old dispensation to do the right thing in terms of law, but without love and thus not honouring God, it was also possible in the new dispensation to do the right and expected thing without love, or to do the wrong thing without being “caught out.” This could never be the position the believer takes. Paul admonishes the believers to always be remindful of the fact that God is not mocked (Gl. 6:7). The soteriological and ethical indicatives culminating in Gl. 5:1 (“For freedom Christ set us free”) and the notion of new creation in Gl. 6:15, are firmly founded in the great theological indicative that all of this came about because God willed it; it was his initiative of love and service (Gl. 1:4).

One’s ultimate ethical responsibility is towards God who provided the Spirit as the Enabler of life in the paradigm of Christ.¹ If one were to live, or, from time to time, conduct oneself in a way that is not in step with the Spirit’s guidance, one would be making a mockery of God’s saving act in Christ Jesus and his Spirit. In as much as circumcision could be indicative of severance from Christ indeed already having taken place, it was also possible to indicate such a severance having taken place by consistently living a life out of step with the Spirit, and therefore fleshly. This reminds one of Paul’s words to the Galatians in the context of reversion to law, but equally applicable here: “Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (Gl. 3:3).

3.2. About remembering who God is

3.2.1. *God’s will and honour as over-riding principal*

In Gl. 1:4a Paul states of Christ that he “gave Himself for our sins to deliver (ἐξέλιπται) us from the present evil age.” We have already attended to the fact that this deliverance is nothing other than Christ’s setting free of the believers from the present evil age in order to live in that freedom under the guidance of the Spirit. Paul grounds this deliverance and freedom in the *will of God the Fa-*

¹ Keck, 1996, 3-10, emphasises the intimacy of the believer’s relationship with God in Christ (Gl. 2:19-20) and through his Spirit (Gl. 4:6). Within this relationship the believer accepts this accountability unquestioningly.

ther (Gl. 1:4b).¹ It is most significant that he does this at the onset of his letter. The entire case for freedom and the accompanying life of freedom is founded on God's will and Christ's being obedient to that will. The conclusion earlier² that *law of Christ* should be explained as the new paradigm in which the believer lives, i.e. the new soteriological and ethical order introduced by Christ and involving his love, service, sacrifice, words and pattern of life, and the living presence of his Spirit, is founded on God's will and initiative. If the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) and the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-17/18) are read in conjunction, as we motivated in Ch. 2 that they should be, this notion is enhanced. The *salutatio* emphasises God's glory as illustrated in the deliverance of the believers by Christ. The *conclusio* does the same. Here Paul emphasises that he wishes to glory only in the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:14). This is in stark contrast to the opponents' motive to glory in the flesh of the Galatians.

Thus, the whole letter is enveloped by the motif that God is to be glorified for the new life in Christ and that his will is the overriding principle of Christian living, as opposed to the will and glory of man. If the believer is to glory in the cross of Christ as paramount token of obedience to God, he can have no other motive, but to live equally obediently according to the cross, even sacrificing himself and human glory. Paul reiterates:

Am I now seeking the favour of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

3.2.2. God's initiative and promise to Abraham fulfilled

Aligned with the above, is the rhetoric regarding Abraham. *Firstly*, in Gl. 3:6-29 and Gl. 4:21-31 the introduction of Abraham and his faith in God and his promises, takes the believer back to the time before the introduction of law. It takes the individual as well as the community of believers back to the basis, the indicative of our faith, God's electing grace, his promises and his setting up of a relationship, or covenant, with those of the promise and their seed. By bringing this covenantal element into the argument, Paul emphasises that the indicative of faith and its accompanying life of faith can in no way be defined in anthropological terms. It is also more than merely a pneumatological or christological matter. It goes back to the theological heart of the matter, Yahweh who is gracious and loving; who makes and keeps his promises; and who, in the fullness of time sent his Son (Gl. 4:4) to deliver (Gl. 1:4) and redeem us (Gl. 3:13) and set up a new creation (Gl. 6:15). As new as the new dispensation was, it was not something arising out of the blue. It went back to Yahweh and his gracious promises. *Secondly*, Paul's use of the phrase *Israel of God* (Gl. 6:16) in reference to the new eschatological people of God, also connects the new dispensation in Christ and his Spirit with God's initial promise to Abraham that in him all the nations would be blessed (Gl. 3:8 in reference to Gn. 12:3).

¹ Betz, 1979, 42.

² My Ch. 6, §3.3.4.

Thus, one could argue that the same God who committed Himself to Abraham and his believing offspring, and who provided them with the law in order to curb their sin in reaction to his promises, provided them with the fullness of the promise by providing Christ and his Spirit (Gl. 3:14-16, 29). This was no new initiative. It was about the initial initiative coming to fruition. The same God who required obedience from Abraham as a man of faith, still requires obedience from those of faith. However, this obedience is not in terms of law as was the case in the interim period between Moses and Jesus. It was about obedience flowing from faith in the promise to Abraham now fulfilled.

3.2.3. *The believer as a child in God's family*

Paul alludes very strongly to the believer's need to honour the Father of the household of faith by using the dynamic metaphors of family and sonship of God, and adoption by Him. In this regard the following references are obvious enhancers of these notions.

- In the *salutatio* Paul thrice refers to God as the Father of the believing community (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4). He repeats the fatherhood of God in Gl. 4:2, 6.
- In Gl. 3:15 Paul refers to Christ as Abraham's offspring. He returns to the subject by referring to the believers as Abraham's offspring, because they are in Christ (3:29). Together with this, he speaks of God's promises in the metaphor of a man's will (Gl. 3:15), and then returns to the subject by introducing heirship in Christ in Gl. 3:29. The same notion is reintroduced to the argument in the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gl. 4:21-31). In this regard, Gl. 4:28, 30-31 are especially important, emphasising sonship.¹
- Closely related to this is the introduction of the notion of the believer's adoption (υἰοθεσία) by God through faith in Christ (Gl. 4:5). He expands the idea by introducing the Spirit in the same breath as the One through whom the believer calls to God: "αββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). The view taken by most scholars is that Paul is referring mostly to the Hellenistic custom of adoption, since it was largely absent from Mosaic law.² The important point is that no one had a natural Father-son relationship with God, besides Je-

¹ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 122, stresses: "The Metaphor for the covenant was basically the family for which the ultimate father/mother was God."

² Moore-Crispin, 1989, 203-23. Knobloch, 1992, 79, warns that one must be careful of judging too quickly on the use of adoption in Israel. If one's definition is too narrowly defined the notion becomes totally foreign to Israel. He indicates that Israel had an understanding of the notion of adoption. Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998³, 14, adds to this, indicating that social needs that other societies alleviated by way of adoption in the stricter sense, were addressed by Israel via customs such as polygamy, legitimate heirs by female slaves, levirate marriage and guardianship. Van Aarde, 1997, 150-72, provides most informative information from the Umwelt of the NT. Although he applies it mostly to Jesus' Sonship, he does make mention of the fact that it referred to the believer's non-biological relationship to God, their allegiance to Him and their being separated from those outside that relationship as a social identity (163). J.L. De Villiers, 1950, 10-47, illustrates very well that the idea of adoption is very well represented in OT and covenantal theology, and that Paul made thorough use of this in Galatians (74-111). We cannot go into the details of these terms, but amongst others, he refers to Yahweh's election of Israel; Israel as his first-born (Ex. 4:22); children of God (Dt. 14:1); God as Father (Dt. 32:6, 18; Is. 1:2; 43:6; 63:8, 16; 64:8; Jr. 3:4; Hs. 1:10; 11:1; Mt. 1:6; etc.); and others.

sus. Whether one was a law-observant Jew or a Greek without law, one needed to be adopted into the family by faith in Jesus Christ.¹ If this Hellenistic notion is accepted, it implies that the adopted child was in all ways equal to those of blood and thus with the same familial standing. A new family unit had been created by faith in Christ.

- Of obvious significance with regard to the metaphor of family, is the reference to the “household of faith” (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως - Gl. 6:10).

We have already emphasised the importance of the imagery surrounding family and the great importance of the metaphor with regard to conduct within the family of God.² Of fundamental importance for our discussion here, is the authority of the father as the head of the family.

Birth and acceptance into the family automatically meant that the child stood in a specific, well defined relation to the father of the family.³

Whether one was born into a family or adopted into it,⁴ as part of that social entity one was expected to act according to the wishes of the parents. Having received life, a home and provision from which to live, the child had to honour his parents by living according to the family identity as lived and laid down by the father.⁵ This obligation was not voluntary.⁶ It was a matter of honour in a society of limited good and in which one did one’s best to increase one’s honouring. A child was not allowed to be disrespectful to his/her parents in any way. This obviously included the prohibition on disobedience.⁷ In fact, it was expected of a son to emanate the father’s words and actions. What is important with a view to Paul’s ethics in Galatians is that the imagery of family (the Fatherhood of God, the believer’s adoption into sonship of God) is strategically prominent in the letter. It can be assumed that, against the ancient Mediterranean culture, Paul’s use of this imagery most probably alludes to the believer’s ethical responsibility and accountability to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They would not have thought of their salvation in terms of becoming part of God’s family, and then have ignored their ethical responsibility to honour Him in daily living or ethics. Their ethics of freedom could not be absorbed in subjective, individualistic libertinism. As *paterfamilias*, God had to be taken abundantly seriously. Their ethic was born from a restored relationship with God in Christ. His will would have to be taken absolutely seriously. They were fully accountable to Him. They had become part of a family and were to uphold the family values of which the father was the guardian.⁸

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 283, 289; Moore-Crispin, 1989, 214-6.

² See §3.1.1.1.

³ Van der Watt, 1999, 495.

⁴ Malherbe, 1995, 120.

⁵ Van der Watt, 2000, 291.

⁶ Malina & Neyrey, 1991, 29; Van der Watt, 2000, 284.

⁷ J.W. Roberts, 1984, 157; Van der Watt, 1999, 498-501.

⁸ Van der Watt, 1999, 501-2.

Of course, this was equally important regarding the image they created in secular or other religious societies of themselves and God. In a society in which the values of a community often reflected the essence of the community, it was important that they “do good” so that the broader society would honour God for what they reflected of Him. This was not about law, but about values expressing who they were and to whom they belonged.¹ They were, after all, a missionary church wishing to persuade others to join their ranks by aligning with Christ and his faithfulness.

Although we will not re-enter the subject of slavery, one should, regarding the believer’s obligation to obedience, remember that Paul refers to himself as a slave of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

3.3. God is not mocked

In Gl. 6:7 Paul very brusquely interjects: “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap!” However, although the interjection is frank and almost surprising – out of the blue, as it were – it would only sound as such to the modern Westernised ear. In view of the above discussion on Yahweh’s profound role, albeit in the background, and the strong allusion to family and God’s fathership of the believers, the cross-section ancient Mediterranean believer would not have experienced it as out of place. It would not have surprised him.

His use of μή πλανᾶσθε (“do not be deceived”) adds great urgency to the following *sententiae*. It is an interjection quite often used to introduce a warning. In Paul’s time it had become a very solemn warning in itself.² As indicated earlier, it probably had apocalyptic undertones emphasising the urgency of the situation.³

His warning following the interjection is in the form of a proverb:⁴ “God is not mocked” (θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται). It has different nuances, but scholars are rather unanimous that its meaning should be sought in the semantic field indicating the showing of contempt.⁵ It was not akin to the Jewish tradition, although it entered into Judaism from Hellenism via the LXX. It usually associates the godless and enemies of Israel with this attitude.⁶ The reference in this case is not about verbally mocking God, but about showing contempt towards

¹ Malherbe, 1983, 50, makes mention of the tendency to emphasise the analogies between Paul’s *Haustafeln* and ethical instruction in Hellenistic communities and philosophy, but adds a very important matter. In line with Hellenistic Judaism, Paul emphasises the apologetic and missionary functions as important evidence concerning their inner life. This was especially enhanced by the suspicion with which they were regarded by many (53) in view of their “deflection” to Christianity.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 279.

³ Günther, 1976, 459; Betz, 1979, 306.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 306.

⁵ Nida & Louw I, 1988, 435.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 264; Betz, 1979, 306.

God by living against His will¹ as if He were a fool. In fact, it was about living as if God did not matter, or, even worse, as if He did not exist!

There is no way in which man – believer or non-believer – could live as though God did not exist, or did not take note of man's ethics. Ultimately, man was accountable to God. Paul was not merely making a proverbial utterance for rhetorical effect. He was calling on believers to take ultimate responsibility for their lives and to remember their ultimate accountability to God Himself! He adds a truism from agriculture that man cannot expect to sow one thing and harvest another.² One cannot ignore God or treat Him contemptuously and expect Him to be the fool who blesses when He should be punishing.

Although Paul prefers to persuade rather than to threaten and to operate from God's grace before resorting to judgement, one should not fault by breaching the dialectical bond between these concepts. In as much as his theology and ethics operate on the basis of God's grace in Christ Jesus, it also acknowledges that in the end all have to answer to his eschatological judgement.³ God expects man to do that to which He enabled him in Christ Jesus and through his Spirit. This amounted to glorying in the cross and so glorifying God – honouring Him. To ignore this, was to mock God and to open oneself to his ridicule and being shamed in the day of eschatological divine judgement.

3.4. About sowing and reaping

If a believer continues to live a life in contradiction to God's will he should expect to harvest God's wrath. The responsibility rests with man alone.⁴

The metaphors of sowing and harvesting are common on all ancient literature. The same can be said of the idea of divine retribution, whether it is understood in the sense of immanent life experience or of eschatological judgement. In Gal 6:7 Paul thinks, of course, of the divine retribution at the Last Judgement, where "man" [= "everyone"] (ἄνθρωπος) will have to appear, in order to be judged according to his deeds.⁵

The choice is between sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit (Gl. 6:8). God cannot be tricked into believing that man had sowed to the Spirit when, indeed, he sowed to the flesh. Man will have to bear the consequences of his deeds if he wilfully sows to the flesh. Betz describes sowing to the flesh as nothing other than "giving an opportunity to the flesh" (Gl. 5:13), and the opposite of "crucifying the flesh" (Gl. 5:24).⁶ The ultimate harvest of such a person is corruption (φθορά), the opposite of eternal life (ζωή αἰώνιος).⁷ The latter, again, is endowed to the one who sows to the Spirit.

¹ Preisker, 1967, 796.

² Morris, 1996, 182.

³ Hays, 1997, 40-1; Fletcher, 1982, 206; Kuck, 1994, 289.

⁴ Fee, 1994¹, 202, emphasises the sufficiency of the Spirit to deal with both flesh and law, but equally the fact that all does not work automatically. The believer has the responsibility to sow to the Spirit.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 307.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 308.

⁷ Schreiner, 2001, 282.

'Sowing to the Spirit' is an unusual expression, but it clearly points to a concentration on those aspects of life which involve interaction with God's Holy Spirit. It signifies concentrating on what will produce 'the fruit of the Spirit'. It means seeing our spiritual life as more important than our secular experiences and devoting time and energy to it accordingly.¹

A remark or two should be made with regard to φθορά. It has a wide range of nuances in classical Greek literature, e.g.: moral corruption, bribery, the seduction of a woman, ruin, destruction, etc.² It occurs only 8 times in the NT, of which 5 are in the Pauline corpus. Seeing that he uses it in opposition to "eternal life" it seems in order to translate it with "ruin" or "corruption". Because of the eschatological context created by Paul's "sowing and reaping" motif and his reference to "eternal life", Paul most probably has in mind the damnation associated with the *parousia*. He definitely does not seem to have an immediate and ongoing cause-effect notion in mind. However, he could have in mind the notion that the ruin, although it will only become clear to all and sundry in the day of judgement, is taking effect even as man sows from day to day. However, God, to whom man is ultimately accountable, is not fooled. He knows. Thus the appeal rather to sow to the Spirit, because God already sees and knows.³ Although the fullness of the ruin will be seen in that day, it is already operative in daily living and probably visible in the works of the flesh (Gl. 5:19-21). As it creeps on man, he himself is actually shown to be the fool.

The fact that the eschatological time had already arrived in the advent of Christ enhances the urgency of the warning. The eschatological movement from the old dispensation of slavery to and expected sowing to the flesh (of the present evil age) had come to an end. The new dispensation of living by the Spirit and the expectation of walking in step with Him (new creation) had arrived. To sow to the flesh in this time of being guided and enabled by the Spirit would be surprising and foolish. Dunn very aptly remarks on the use of the present tense with regard to sowing to the Spirit. This indicates a continued responsibility and act of being involved with the Spirit.⁴

There is also another side to the issue of sowing and reaping to the Spirit in Galatians, a very practical one. It needs to be mentioned because it involves both the vertical and the horizontal levels. In fact, it is about the impossibility of managing successfully the horizontal level without tending to the vertical level. Taking the context into consideration, there seems to have been self-conceit, provocation and envy amongst the ranks in Galatia (Gl. 5:26). Paul speaks of the problem of someone being overtaken in transgression and the necessity to restore such a person (Gl. 6:1); the need to be vigilant with regard to one's own actions (Gl. 6:1b, 3-4), and bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ (Gl. 6:2). One is only in a position to take care of these matters and to live a harmonious community life if one actually sows to the Spirit. So, in

¹ Morris, 1996, 183.

² Merkel, 1975, 468. Also Harder, 1974, 93-6.

³ I cannot agree with Demarest, 1978, 525, that Paul had in mind that "the liberality with which one sows determines the spiritual and material benefits one reaps." There simply is no such indication in our text.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 331.

this sense there is a blessing in heeding the call to sow to the flesh. There is no way in which they could achieve these aims if they tried *merely on a horizontal level*. That would boil down to trying to achieve these things in the flesh (my Ch. 3). The *vertical level*, God's input, sowing to the Spirit, made it possible to achieve these aims. There was no way in which they could move forward from their impasse if they were going to try it on their own – sowing to the flesh. It could not be achieved exclusively on a horizontal level. If they were not going to allow the Spirit to lead them out of the impasse they would continue to fight amongst themselves. They had to sow to the Spirit in order to experience the fruit of the Spirit in this respect.

Although one must be careful of thinking only, or mostly, in terms of ethnic identity markers when considering what Paul means with sowing to the flesh, I agree with Dunn that he would have had this in mind as well. Wrapping up his arguments and using the flesh-Spirit antithesis, Paul would not be referring to only the ethical sowing, but also to circumcision, which would inevitably lead to the works of the flesh (Gl. 5:19-21).¹

3.4 About biting the bullet

At no stage does Paul give the impression that the ethic of the new dispensation is at all plain sailing. Although it is a fruit (Gl. 5:22) it does not come effortlessly. Although the believer is in Christ and under the guidance of the Spirit, it does not imply that he is a programmed, unthinking, involuntary automat. Although flesh has been dealt with and the believer lives according to the Spirit, the possibility to live according to flesh is still open till the day of final judgement. So, while on the subject of responsibility and accountability, Paul reminds the believers not to grow weary in well-doing (τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιῶντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν - Gl. 6:9). Apparently this was not at all a remote possibility, considering the following information.

- In Gl. 1:6-10 Paul mentions the possibility of apostasy and pleasing men rather than God. He adds to this by referring to their actions as deserting Christ (Gl. 1:6). In Gl. 3:1 he even refers to the Galatians as foolish for having allowed themselves to be bewitched. In Gl. 4:9 he asks them how they can turn back to weak and beggarly elemental spirits, underlining the possibility of apostasy.
- He even adds the poor example set by Peter who, to Paul's mind, had chosen to please men rather than God (Gl. 2:11-14). Contrary to this action by Peter, Paul and his entourage "did not yield submission even for a moment" (Gl. 2:5).
- In Gl. 5:1 he affirms the indicative of salvation in terms of freedom and immediately warns that they are not to submit to slavery again. He regards this as falling away from grace and being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4).

¹ Dunn, 1993², 331-2.

- He warns against bad influence by referring to the action of yeast (Gl. 5:9). This clearly refers to a negative influence and the possibility to yield to it, or being hindered (Gl. 5:7).
- Paul mentions his own persecution and, in the same breath, the cross as a stumbling block (Gl. 5:11). Not all believe in the cross and could even stumble over it or persecute others. He returns to the subject of persecution in Gl. 6:17 where he probably refers to marks of persecution for the cross of Christ.
- Equally indicative of the possibility of apostasy and of the need to persevere, is the juxtaposing of the Spirit and flesh (Gl. 5:13-24) and the strong emphasis on their opposition to each other, causing an inner struggle in the believer (Gl. 5:17).
- Then, of course, the call to bear one's own burden, and also those of others (Gl. 6:2, 5), and the possibility of falling to sin (Gl. 6:1, 4).

Without going into any detail whatsoever, it should be clear just from reading the above references that Paul had no illusions about the fact that Christian ethics is not altogether easy riding. Walking in step with the Spirit is not a walk in the park, so to speak, but the taking up of one's burden as Christ did when he introduced the new paradigm. Obedience and loving service, even to the point of persecution, was expected of believers. The good news was that it would never be a curse, because of the guidance and enablement of the Spirit. Thus, they were to persevere in the faithfulness of Christ.

3.5. Conclusion

Paul's pneumatological ethic was not an ethic based on a set of laws. It was not about the responsibility to live up to such a list. It was about being in Christ and no longer living according to the flesh, but having Christ live in the believer. The believer was no longer orientated towards the law, but towards Christ. The law of Christ, the whole paradigm switch brought about by Christ, was what counted. It was, by the same token, about the Spirit living in the believer, sensitising, guiding and enabling him to live his life in the paradigm of Christ. He had to allow the Spirit to orientate him to Christ. This was not about an exterior entity or code imposing itself on the believer to act accordingly, but about the Spirit being in a relationship with the believer and convincing him in his inner being to act as it pleases God in Christ, but also involving horizontal responsibility to listen to fellow believers and to love his fellowmen.

However, this being said, the believer was still accountable for his deeds. He was not accountable to a set of laws or the enforcers thereof. He was accountable directly to God! Ultimately, God, who had enabled him in the Christ event and the advent of the Spirit, was the One to whom man had to account for his deeds in the eschatological time that had begun in Christ and would be fulfilled at his *parousia*. It was the time in which believers were to be regarded as mature (Gl. 3:25, 29; 4:7) and to be treated as such.

4. ABOUT FREEDOM, OBLIGATION AND SETTING RULES

We have determined that the ethics Paul promotes in Galatians is the product of the Spirit of Christ as He enables and guides the believer to do God's will in freedom. It is clear that this ethic is characterised by love and service towards fellowmen. It was also determined that this ethic of loving service is aimed at and should be implemented in concrete life. It is therefore not an ethic in which one indulges in the abstract. It is aimed at a concrete situation. Paul does not provide ethical blueprints from which believers can derive specific instructions for each new and unique situation. It is the responsibility of the individual and his community of faith to determine the correct action for every situation, in freedom and under guidance of the Spirit. Together with this, Paul makes use of ethical maxims from different religions and philosophies in his *Umwelt*. If a certain instruction has a bearing on the specific situation, Paul does not fear using it. Importantly, however, it is applied in the new christological-pneumatological paradigm as the direct guidance of the Spirit for a given situation.¹

We have also indicated that ethically sound behaviour is not optional for the Christian. Paul does not separate indicative and imperative. The imperative is given in the indicative as it were. One cannot be part of the new paradigm in Christ and through his Spirit and not be moved towards doing that which befits this new life. Thus, in the absence of a legal system of ethics, and in the presence of an ethic of freedom, walking in step with the Spirit was obligatory.

Given the dangers of subjectivity and of laxity on the side of the individual believer, would a set of ethical maxims not be in order for Christians to apply as the situation calls for it? Is Christian ethics so situational and every situation so unique that certain patterns cannot be determined, let alone an elaborate system? Should one's fear of casuistry lead one to abandon an ethical system aimed not at regulation, but at providing guidance?

At the end of this chapter dealing with responsibility and accountability, and in which Paul himself applies maxims, it is a most relevant subject to ponder.

4.1. Either pneumatological ethics or casuistry

I am in agreement with the conviction that Christian ethical action is born from the dynamic interaction between the believer and the Spirit in every concrete situation. Therefore, if one takes the lead of the Spirit seriously one should not frustrate the dynamics of such a position by introducing ethical direction previously given for a different situation. Marxsen follows this route. He argues that if one were to take that which is good for today's concrete situation and apply it unreservedly to tomorrow's concrete situation without further reflection, one makes today's answer applicable as well as normative for tomorrow. We then

¹ Westerholm, 1984, 245, comments that Paul's instructions are concrete, although "not capable of statutory formulation." Paul was well aware that instruction was still needed for the period till the *parousia*, because of temptation and man's weakness despite being in the Spirit. However, the encouragement he provides is akin to a life lived and walked in the Spirit, and not comparable with externally imposed commands

endanger our ethics by making the dated instruction provide guidance instead of leaving that to the Spirit. This is tantamount to doing what the Jews did, namely to allow instruction (*law or torah*) to take the place of God.¹

He acknowledges that there is a risk involved and that the guidance obtained in this way might have a certain ambiguity.

Anyone seeking to avoid ambiguity in ethical decisions will consider this 'solution' unsatisfactory. It is also unsatisfactory because there is no solution. Yet this is exactly the nature of the matter.²

Since there are no unambiguous concrete imperatives in Pauline ethics, but Christianity has to be practiced concretely in the flesh, each decision is always a risk.³

If I understand him correctly, I am in agreement with him that one either follows a theological approach in which the Spirit leads the believer in Christ according to the will of the Father with all its risks, or one follows the nomistic route of casuistry according to which the ethical system provides the lead. Of the latter, we believe, Paul informs us that we have been fully freed. Differently put, more correctly, there is only one route for the Christian, that being, following the lead of the Spirit without the necessity of law in any form. From a dogmatological angle, and in keeping with his dialectical approach to theology and ethics, Karl Barth also takes this position.⁴ He wishes to restore the dynamics of the vertical dimension of ethics in each new situation on the horizontal level. Although he acknowledges that the history of vertical encounters on the horizontal level could have an educative value,⁵ he is wary of allowing past injunctions, instead of the Word of God, to dictate to the present.

For precisely in Holy Scripture the command of God does not confront us in the guise of rules, principles, axioms and general moral truths, but purely in the form of concrete, historical, unique and singular orders, prohibitions and directions.⁶

In short, it is about an ethic relying fully on the Spirit's guidance in each new situation, without an ethical system of authoritative instructions which have to be implemented. A position allowing for such an authoritative system would be considered as casuistry.

The value of this view is its defence of the dynamic relationship between the Spirit and the believer in every new situation in which the latter has to make responsible choices. It enhances the need for the believer to continually evaluate his motives to determine whether they are in line with the overall obligation to love the neighbour. It equally enhances his sense of responsibility as well as the consideration of each new situation in its uniqueness. It should equally be appreciated for its emphasis on the defence of the believer's freedom to obey

¹ Marxsen, 1993, 218.

² Marxsen, 1993, 218.

³ Marxsen, 1993, 219.

⁴ Barth, 1961, 3-31.

⁵ Barth, 1961, 17-8.

⁶ Barth, 1961, 12.

God¹ as he walks with the Spirit. As soon as some system of law is introduced it involves casuistry of some kind. This robs the believer of his accountability to God, and also of his freedom before God, and places the system between them as a type of ethical mediator.

In view of the danger of subjectivism on the part of individual believers, the role of the community of faith is vastly important and is accepted by this approach.

That is to say, it may well be the case – indeed, it will always be so – that one man has the task of interfering in respect of the conduct of another, that with the great or little authority and knowledge which he has in relation to the other he must warn him concretely and particularly about this or that mode of behavior or act, or *vice versa* spur him to it; and perhaps that neither of them can evade this duty, although ultimately each can only act for himself in a case of conscience.²

This might be more than mere advice. It could even be an authoritative exhortation leaving little room for discussion, but then, even though another is involved, the exhortation is born from the dynamic interaction between the Spirit and the believers and is meant for that situation only.

Obviously, given a community's history and tradition of ethical directives, a believer will be sensitive to patterns of the past. One never acts on a clean slate. However, tradition alone cannot be the directive. In fact, tradition itself could be proved imperfect, even blatantly wrong. God alone, through his Spirit, can provide the needed guidance, for which He has no need of oral or moral law in a casuistic sense. Tradition itself must always be subjected to historical-critical examination. However well motivated and theologically and ethically sound traditional directives might be, they were given to or arrived at by a certain community of faith in a given situation at a set time. One cannot simply accept these unchanged or unchallenged in another time. It must be reiterated that ethical patterns and traditions must not be regarded as evil or representative of "another gospel" in opposition to the true gospel *per se*. It is about authority. If it is awarded with ultimate authority or infallibility or in any way hampers the Spirit's role, it is wrong of.

The matter of tradition also calls to the position the Bible in Christian ethics. I do not wish to digress; neither do I wish to denigrate the Bible to being merely part of Christian tradition on the same level as all other ecclesiastical goods. Far from that! However, approaching the Bible fundamentalistically for ethical guidance, as if its ethical maxims and directives are all equally authoritative and directly applicable for today, is to disregard the original context of the instruction and its situational relevance. It equally robs Scripture of the opportunity to speak anew in the modern situation after proper exegesis. Thus, although the authority of Scripture should never be questioned, phenomenologically speaking, it should be investigated like any historical document to determine its original contextual meaning, in order to determine how it is applicable today. In this regard Birch and

¹ Barth, 1961, 13-4.

² Barth, 1961, 9.

Rasmussen have done well to provide theological ethics as science with guidance on the use of Scripture in ethics. Their emphasis is on honest exegesis instead of abusing Scripture to justify certain moral positions, or merely taking scriptural references literally without hermeneutic sensitivity.¹

4.2. Pauline ethics involving exhortation, but not external law

Deidun verbalises the feeling of many scholars when it comes to deciding on the role of external law in Christian ethics.²

It is a distortion of Paul's true perspective to suggest that he sees this break as liberation from law *qua* external law. For Paul, christian liberty is first and foremost radical emancipation from the power of sin and release from the impotence of self. This of course, entails a break with (a 'death to', cf. Rm. 7.4.6; Gal. 2,19) the law as γράμμα (mere demand) ; but it is not correct to suggest that Paul sees ἐλευθερία precisely as freedom from external law as such – with the result that *even in the Christian economy* external imperatives have to be seen chiefly as a sign of imperfect liberation.³

If one were to equate exhortation with external law the above quotation would have some merit. Christianity without exhortation in the new era prior to the fullness of the new creation at the *parousia*, would have to work on the premise of individual perfection. One would equally have to turn a blind eye to Paul's own exhortation – even in Galatians. This is, not forgetting the guidance and admonitions of Jesus and the other apostles. We do not live in perfection yet and therefore exhortation is part of our Christian being. However, to equate such exhortation with law is fallacious. If the intention with the use of law is to indicate the need that the *indicative* is to be followed by an *imperative*, the *Gabe* by the *Aufgabe*, or the *gospel* by *law* in the Lutheran sense of the dichotomy, one would not have too great a problem with this notion. However, when it is used in the sense of ethical codes and systems as necessary elements for Christian ethics to be effective, it becomes a problem for the reasons we mentioned in the previous section.

Even though Deidun is correct about the necessity of external exhortation within the ecclesiastical context;⁴ that the inner awareness created by the Spirit also involves the body of Christ's admonition to come to a well articulated expression of love; and that it has to be concretised in the body and outward;⁵ it is not necessary to have an elaborate ethical code of conduct by which one should determine one's actions. Such an approach carries with it the notion of indiscriminate control, threatening Christian freedom with being replaced by a tyranny of ethics. It essentially robs believers of making responsible choices within the dynamics of the interaction with the Spirit in the momentary situation in which he has to decide on what God expects of him in that *kairos*.

¹ Birch & Rasmussen, 1989, 181-8.

² See §3.3.1 in my Ch. 6 on the ways in which law is often assigned some ongoing function in Christian ethics.

³ Deidun, 1981, 209.

⁴ Deidun, 1981, 215.

⁵ Deidun, 1981, 222-3.

Yannaras warns against what he calls “the totalitarian dimension of objective ethics.”¹ He argues that it is typical of modern Western society to seek objective solutions or proposals to societal problems. This would equally apply to moral problems. There is more than often a tendency to impose these solutions dynamically and “politically”. What is lost in the process is the personal differentiation in which the wishes of individual human beings and their capacity to put solutions into practice are ignored. Theories have priority over humans. Crucially important for our subject, the individual is robbed of his responsibility to seek for what is morally correct, and his individuality as a partaker in the bigger societal search for what is moral in a given situation.² This is not to disregard the communal aspect. The point is, even communities within a diverse society are robbed of their communal individuality or identity, and, further, the dynamism of differentiation in a community or society is ignored.

Truth is no longer something achieved by a personal approach and personal experience, but a complete, closed “system” of concepts and intellectual relationships which interprets natural and historical reality definitively and with authority, with “axioms”, “principles” and “laws” of “scientific” positivism.³

This warning is most relevant with regard to freedom, the guidance of the Spirit and human responsibility to make correct moral decisions.

Thus, exhortation by the household of faith is part and parcel of responsible and accountable Christian ethics. Even awareness of ethical decisions and patterns of the past has a place. It would be unlike human beings to ignore such patterns. But, when push comes to shove, the exhortation must be born from the interaction between the Spirit, the exhorter, and the exhorte. It cannot simply be derived from past positions and systems. Equally, following Paul’s way of exhorting, one should always be crucially aware of the danger inherent to objectified moral exhortation. There is always the danger of formalisation and fossilisation, which, as in the case of OT casuistics, leads to law, in whatever form, mediating life between God and the believer or believing community. That would rob the Spirit of providing direct guidance, and it would rob the acting believer of his freedom to walk in step with the Spirit.

4.3. Paul’s use of maxims in Galatians

The question remaining after the above discussion on the need for and role of maxims is: how do Paul’s maxims in Galatians fit the position taken above? Without going into any detail, the following should suffice.

- On the whole, Paul’s maxims are very broadly formulated (Gl. 5:13-14⁴, 5:16, 22-23, 25-26; 6:1-5, 7-10¹). The effect of this formulation is twofold.

¹ Yannaras, 1984, 200.

² Yannaras, 1984, 200-1.

³ Yannaras, 1984, 201-2.

⁴ Although, one must add that immediately after expressing this maxim, Paul actualises it with regard to their dissonance.

Firstly, it calls for concrete application. It emphasises that faith can never be a matter of mere words. It has to go into ethical action. *Secondly*, it places the responsibility on the believer to apply it as he sees fit in his interaction with the Spirit. He does not limit his exhortations to case specific situations. He does, however, remind the believer to be case specific in his application. One should also acknowledge that the letter as a whole is very contingent and that Paul's broadly formulated exhortation would definitely have hit home. It was aimed at concretising, but the concretising was not provided by Paul. He seems to have left this to the Spirit by whom they lived and had to walk (Gl. 5:25). This is even the case with the maxim regarding remuneration for teachers. We have indicated that it probably was a problem related to the dissention amongst them. However relevant it was, Paul merely left the matter in their hands.

- Whilst Paul's ethical exhortation in Galatians is broadly formulated, he is extremely specific with regard to his exhortations regarding the indicative aspects of faith – the foundation of ethics. In fact, his letter was written in defence of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10; 2:2, 5, 7) of Christ crucified (Gl. 6:12, 6:17) against an onslaught of reversion to law. Paul spares them nothing when it comes to exhorting them to remain true to the One who delivered them. He is even harsh with the Galatians (Gl. 1:6; 3:1, 3; 4:20). He leaves no room for a different interpretation of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10). He reminds them of their own acceptance of Christ (Gl. 3:1-5; 4:12-14; 5:7). He warns them that they could be cut off from Christ (Gl. 5:2, 4). This does seem to indicate that Paul emphasises the inner disposition of being in the paradigm of Christ and his Spirit more emphatically than the specifics of ethical living.
- Paul assigns a major role to the community of faith. On this we have elaborated in this very chapter. It is especially with regard to the ethical exhortations in Gl. 6:1-10 that we see Paul emphasising the community of faith.
- We have already indicated that Paul refrains from being too authoritative in Galatians' ethical section.²
- We have also indicated that one would have expected Paul to provide a more elaborate ethical system to the Galatians. They probably experienced an ethical void in the absence of Paul's law free gospel as opposed to the Judaiser's provision. He refrains from providing such a system.

4.4. The Spirit does not need a law

Is there a possibility of a moral degeneration in the absence of an ethical system of worked out instructions? Obviously there is, but not on account of the absence of an ethical system. The danger lies in flesh and the believer's being lured into doing its works. A worked out system of ethics will not be able to motivate the be-

¹ To be sure, these maxims are specific in what they say. However, they do not specify the sin, the temptation, the burden, about what is being boasted, how God is mocked, etc.

² See Ch. 6, §4.1.4.

liever not to follow its course. Not even the elaborate casuistry of Judaism could do this. The fact that flesh has been crucified does not mean that the believer cannot be enticed into heeding the flesh and frustrating the Spirit. However, no system of law can come to the Spirit's aid in this respect.

What God has provided in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, is the direct and inward dynamism of the Spirit, sensitising the believer to the will of God and moving him through love to service.¹ Further, he has provided his communities of faith to guide and exhort believers in articulating ethical behaviour to God's glory. That there are risks involved and that man does not always pay heed to the Spirit is true. Equally true, this is the only way befitting the gospel of freedom. That man allows flesh to dominate does not render this ethic fallacious, but underlines man's hope of righteousness in the future coming of Christ.

Believers seem to have a propensity towards relinquishing their responsibilities, equally those regarding ethics. Thus, the perpetual move towards regulating behaviour via some system. There is always a danger of casuistry, even in the community of faith. For this reason Paul's letter to the Galatians was written and continues to have profound relevance.

5. CONCLUSION

Clearly, Chapters 5-7, dealing with freedom, new creation and the accompanying ethic, are very closely linked. However, Chapters 6 and 7 are very close, because they are both aimed at ethics in day-to-day practice. Ch. 7 very pertinently deals with the responsibilities and accountability of the believer and believing community on both the horizontal and the vertical levels. It deals with the believer's obligation to live in obedience to God and to serve the community and other fellowmen. The following conclusions on the chapter should suffice.

i) *An ethic of personal and communal responsibility*

Paul's ethic was not primarily individualistic. In fact, he emphasises the role of community. He makes very abundant use of the second person plural when addressing the Galatians in his ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). He also makes good use of the reflexive pronoun (ἑαυτοῦ) and addresses the Galatians in the vocative ἀδελφοί, enhancing communality. Equally, his list of vices and virtues (Gl. 5:19-23) reflect a heavy emphasis on qualities that threaten or enhance unity in the community. His use of family imagery is also extremely important. Family values were decisive in Paul's *Umwelt*. The values of the family to which one belonged determined one's conduct. Inversely, the same family evaluated the individual's actions to determine whether they were good or bad in terms of its set of values. His use of family imagery, especially "household of faith" (Gl. 6:10), confirms the notion that Paul,

¹ Read Bornkamm, 1969, 182-6 on the relation between Spirit and law. He makes special mention of the danger of both nomism and libertinism being anachronistic and robbing the word of grace from its "here-and-nowness" and man from the liberty to bear fruit (186). Birch & Rasmussen, 1989, 181-2, emphasise the absolute necessity of the Bible in Christian ethics. However, they warn against using the Bible to extrapolate all its applicable moral directives. The emphasis should rather be on the role of the Bible and its narratives in forming the Christian's moral character from which he can make responsible ethical decisions.

regarding the community of believers as a newfound family in Christ, did not think individualistically about the believer or his ethic.

We also determined that on both individual and community levels, believers were to take responsibility for their ethical lives. The very first responsibility of the believer was to walk in step with the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who enables and guides the believer in that which is ethically good. Since the believer no longer follows a worked out set of rules, it is his responsibility to keep in step with the Spirit. Equally, the believer, although he is part of a community that seeks God's will through the Spirit, cannot relinquish his own responsibility to that of the community. For the believer, in this case, safety in numbers so as to disappear in the group, is a fallacy. He refers equally to the responsibility of the individual and the community. The two go hand in hand.

ii) *An ethic of restoration*

Paul's ethic, being founded on its christological-soteriological foundation, could not be different from the paradigm set by Christ. Christ did not come to judge or curse sinners. He came to deliver sinners believing in Him from the present evil age in which flesh reigned. He also came to deliver them from the curse that law inadvertently cast on them, because law could only direct them towards God's will, but could not enable them to act accordingly. Christ had brought a solution to the plight of the man of the old aeon. He did this by sacrificing Himself in love. This was the route believers were to follow if one of them were to fall victim to sin. Irrespective of the sinner's irresponsibility or even voluntarily and knowingly sinning, the community of faith was not to pull out the stops and condemn in terms of a magnitude of laws or maxims. It was their task to restore the sinner through love and service. They even had to help him carry his burden with regard to his sin. In fact, Paul admonishes them to do all of this in obedience to the Spirit (Gl. 6:1). Even after sin presented itself they could not deal in terms of law, but had to deal with the sinner through the Spirit of Christ.

iii) *An ethic of burden-bearing and perseverance*

Paul clearly indicates that the Christian ethic is not easy going. One has burdens to bear in the world. Despite this, one has to remain true to the guidance of the Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Added to this is the fact that one's fellow believers and other fellowmen have burdens to bear. Being a believer in the paradigm of Christ, one is obliged to love such people and illustrate it by helping them carry their burden.

He adds that one is always in danger of sinning. There are always temptations (Gl. 6:1). Together with this the Spirit and flesh oppose each other (Gl. 5:17). Add to this the ever present possibility of persecution (Gl. 6:17) and the fact that others do not think highly of the cross (Gl. 5:11). This calls for believers to realise from the start that a life according to the Spirit is not plain sailing. Believers were to accept this together with the responsibility to remain true to the Spirit's lead.

iv) *An ethic of accountability*

When one mentions responsibility accountability obviously follows. Believers were to be able to count on one another to bear another's burdens and to restore a sinner according to the paradigm set by Christ. If a member of the household of faith deviated from the set paradigm, not communicating the love of Christ, that member was accountable to the community. He would probably have to explain why he acted as he did. He might have acted in discord with the paradigm of Christ and would have to be restored. He might well have thought that he acted in step with the Spirit's lead and account for his understanding. He might even convince the community that he took his lead from the Spirit and that he was not at all subjective. Whatever, the believer is accountable to the community and the community to the individual.

However, on a much higher plane of accountability, is the believer's accountability to God. Ultimately, it is about remembering who God is. Paul introduces the letter with God's will and glory (Gl. 1:4-5) and closes it in glorying in the cross of the One God sent to deliver the believers (Gl. 6:14). As the Father of the household of faith God is the supreme Authority on what conduct is expected in different situations. One is accountable to Him. Paul adds that He is nobody's fool (Gl. 6:7). In fact, he emphasises that there will inevitably be a time of reckoning in which one will reap according to how one sowed (Gl. 6:8-9). However, the touchstone in this reckoning will not be some form of law, but whether one sowed according to the flesh or in obedience to the Spirit. It is the responsibility of the believer to live in step with the Spirit. Of this he will ultimately have to account to God.

v) *An ethic involving exhortation, but not nomism*

Finally, the question was put as to whether an anomistic christological-pneumatological ethic could at all accommodate exhortation of some kind. The question itself exposes a misconception. It is often wrongly assumed that the absence of law implies the absence of ethical direction and accountability. The inversion of this position is equally incorrect, namely that when ethical direction is given or believers are admonished, it implies law. We have argued that one should be very wary of an ethic revolving around a specific and even elaborately worked out system of codes of conduct. In fact, even the slightest hint of something of the kind should set off all alarms. This is why Paul wrote to the Galatians in the first place. He feared that they would revert to casuistics once more. The community of faith lives through the Spirit in the new era in which the Spirit does not mediate through the law in whatever form, but guides the believer and community of faith inwardly. True, certain patterns might emerge in a certain community, or even in the broader church, and the guidance of the Spirit is not given to relativism and subjectivism. However, the pattern must always be subjected to the guidance of the Spirit in a new situation. He might lead with a different nuance in a different situation. The moment one sets the pattern as the norm, the Spirit has to mediate through the pattern. This belongs to the previous aeon.

Paul does not shy away from exhortation. He even, at times, comes over as abrasive. However, he goes to great lengths to emphasise the role of the Spirit

in ethical guidance. His maxims are not too specific and he leaves vast opportunity for the Galatians to make responsible decisions for their own situation within the parameters of his maxims. These maxims are there to guide and not to specify.

Interestingly and most importantly, when Paul does become very specific in the letter and spares no one's feelings, it is not about their ethical behaviour, but about the indicative. He leaves no room for interpretation of any kind when it comes to the fact that Christ was crucified and that he was crucified with Him (Gl. 2:20); that they themselves had a vivid notion of his crucifixion (Gl. 3:1); that they had received the Spirit (Gl. 3:3-4) and continued to experience his call to the Father (Gl. 4:6); and that they had been set free (Gl. 5:1). Reversion to law would indicate their severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). He is absolutely clear when exhorting them to remain true to the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Christ who delivered them, but is more cautious in presenting them with specific ethical exhortation applicable to almost any situation. This he would leave to the Spirit in his dealing with the individual and his community.

CONCLUSIONS

Much has been argued and many conclusions have been made in this dissertation, mostly at the end of the respective chapters and sections. At this point a *recapitulation* of some kind is probably in order to put everything in a nutshell. It will be done by way of a few statements by which I wish to briefly summarise my main arguments and add a logical sequence to both the arguments and the main conclusions.

i) *Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians as a matter of great urgency.*

Paul was made aware of the fact that believers in Galatia were being misled into thinking that law had some part to play in their lives. Whether one accepts that the Galatians were led to believe that law had a salvational role to play in a synergistical way; whether they were instructed that it had only an ethical role to play; or whether it was merely about identity markers, it seems that Paul's opponents advocated an ongoing function of some kind for circumcision and dietary and calendar laws. Paul was shocked. For him it was no trivial matter. As far as he was concerned, ascribing any function or importance to these matters, was tantamount to being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4). Not only were these entities, carried over from the present evil age, misfits in the new creation, but destructive of the freedom believers have through Christ's deliverance. It would draw them back into the evil aeon dominated by flesh and devoid of deliverance and freedom.

The point of entry into the debate on freedom was the matter of reversion to law in some form. The latter at least included circumcision and laws regarding diet and calendar. Paul did not limit himself to the matter of law. For him it was about a much bigger issue. Circumcision and dietary and calendar laws were only the thin end of the wedge. He feared that they would ultimately revert to the old dispensation without Christ and his Spirit.

Therefore, he wrote the letter with the greatest sense of urgency. Paul's style and utterances are indicative of this urgency. There could be no doubt, to Paul's mind the gospel itself was at stake. The situation was critical. He wanted to unmask the foolishness of the so-called other gospel that assigned a role to law. The re-introduction of law would rob the gospel of its unique identity, namely its proclamation of deliverance in Christ, which he describes as freedom. If the letter should be dated shortly before the Jerusalem council, as argued in this dissertation, it enhances the urgency and emphasises the profundity of the letter in the development of Christianity. Equally, it presents itself as most relevant for the church today in its endeavour to remain true to the core of the gospel and the foundation of its faith, which Paul describes in Gl. 5:1 as: "For freedom Christ set us free!"

ii) *For Paul the situation was not about trivial ethical or identity matters, but about being and living in Christ or being severed from Him.*

Paul is extremely uncompromising in his letter to the Galatians. He is exceptionally outspoken and profoundly negative about law in Galatians. If he had it in the back of his mind that believers could or should accommodate law in

some form in their ethics, one would have expected him to state clearly in what form it was applicable, and according to what principle one was to decide on what continued to apply and what not. If he was merely concerned for the unity of the congregation and wished them to denounce their Jewish boundary markers, one would have expected him to be clear about this and indeed exhort them to follow the so-called moral law. Given the situation and his clear, unmitigated rejection of an ongoing function for law, if he was merely concerned about their attitude towards law, namely that they should not do it with the wrong intention, without love, void of faith and according to their own capabilities, one would have expected him to state this overtly and unequivocally. The same can be said regarding the notion that Paul was merely concerned about rejecting the cursing element of law.

Paul does nothing of the sort. Using circumcision as the ultimate or principle form of law observance, he clearly states that one's choice in this regard is between law observance and being delivered in Christ. Following law is equal to being severed from Christ. It is equal to choosing for the present evil age dominated by flesh and against new creation through Christ and his Spirit. It is equal to rejecting life and participation in God's kingdom. They were obviously misled. They did not fully understand that they had actually switched times or paradigms in the Christ event. This is what Paul had to contend with.

iii) *Paul used apocalyptic language to radically change the Galatians' mind-sets from that of the old paradigm of the evil age to that of new creation.*

Given the urgency and fundamental importance of the matter, Paul wished to emphasise the radical difference between the old and the new dispensations. Although he made use of salvation-historical elements in the build-up of his arguments (e.g., the Abraham tradition; the plight of the people of God in the OT calling for the solution provided in Christ; the notion of the new creation; the Israel of God metaphor; etc.), he makes abundant use of apocalyptic elements. For instance, he makes good use of the notion of disclosure or revelation by God to him or the Galatians, emphasising the divine initiative of breaking into the known paradigm of the present evil age from outside man's sphere of knowledge and capability. It was something entirely new to man, other-worldly, so to speak. It was something of which he was not capable on his own.

Throughout his letter he makes abundant use of terminology akin to apocalyptic, such as his effective use of antinomies, his references to deliverance, resurrection, new creation, (especially) the Spirit, the two Jerusalems, the kingdom of God, persecution, the Israel of God, etc. Importantly, his pre- and postscripts are used well in this regard. It is as if he envelopes his letter in apocalyptic. He most probably made use of the notion of apocalyptic to emphasise the disjunction between the old and the new dispensations. Something radically new had been introduced by God. True, salvation-historically it was expected. However, it was so different to anything they could have dreamt of that it was experienced

as totally new. The explanations of the old paradigm could no longer suffice. It had, in fact, been replaced by the new dispensation.

Paul, knowing that the old paradigm could not explain the new position, made use of apocalyptic to reframe the Galatians' symbolic universe. He wanted them to understand what time it was, salvation-historically. He wanted them to understand that their time of plight was over and that God had provided the solution in Christ. He wanted them to understand that in as much as their salvation was now orientated to the cross of Christ through the Spirit's existential quickening of their insight and motivation, it was also true of their ethics. They could no longer orientate their lives to law. Equally, their ethics would now be determined by their orientation to the cross of Christ and the quickening of the Spirit.

In terms of our subject, freedom, we cannot think merely in terms of freedom from law. The present evil age is about a total symbolic universe holding man captive to flesh with its bondage, slavery, tutelage and immaturity, as well as the accompanying enslaving effect of law and the elements of the world as *secundi* of flesh. Freedom is about being free from an entire earlier age, which was without Christ and his Spirit. It is about a life so absolutely different from the known that God had to reveal it into man's history. The impact was of such a kind that one could not merely make a few piecemeal changes. The old dispensation had to be totally abandoned. Its replacement could in no way be described in terms of the past. It was a new creation.

The freedom of the new creation was eschatological. It was the freedom of the time inaugurated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit. Paul had to reframe the Galatians' mindsets to understand that God's gracious plan for them in Jesus Christ was that they be freed from all bondage of the present evil age. They had to be convinced that they were living in the eschatologically promised time which was totally incomparable with anything they were familiar with in the old dispensation. The promise had become true. They were to understand that as eschatological people of God under the guidance of the Spirit, they could not live their lives in terms of the old paradigm. The new paradigm called for an equally new ethic, radically different from the one akin to the old dispensation.

iv) *The cross of Christ as apocalyptic time switch.*

Paul places an extremely strong emphasis on the cross of Christ. He continually draws the reader's attention back to the cross. Gl. 1:4 clearly refers to the cross event in Christ's giving up of Himself, describing it as the act of deliverance. In Gl. 2:20 Paul applies it to his own life. He himself was crucified with Christ, so that he was now dead to the law and Christ was living in him. Shortly after this (Gl. 3:1) he does the same regarding the Galatians. In Gl. 5:11 the cross is described as a stumbling block for some, whilst he himself wishes only to boast in the cross (Gl. 6:14). In the same way some avoided persecution for the cross (Gl. 6:12), whilst he bore "the marks of Jesus (Gl. 6:17). Clearly, the cross was the defining factor. How one positions oneself with regard to the cross determines on which side of the divide one finds oneself – whether the

paradigm switch has been flipped for the individual or not; whether he still finds himself in the old aeon of flesh and law or in the new creation of Spirit and faith; whether one is in God's will or contradicting it (Gl. 1:4).

- v) *The old dispensation, or present evil age, is a life under siege of flesh and its secundi, namely the elements of the world and law.*

In terms of Paul's apocalyptic allusion, *present evil age* refers to human life before and without Christ. It is about life in opposition to God and sold to flesh – a life of slavery and being consigned to sin. Therefore, it is a life under a curse, ultimately ending in death. We determined that the present evil age is characterised by living according to flesh. Man is frail, transitory, corruptible and corrupted. This is part and parcel of human life. He cannot change it. It is part of his facticity. In keeping with Bultmann we referred to this as life in the flesh, which is morally neutral. However, life in the present evil age is characterised by man living in accordance with these qualifications and disqualifications. Man turned into himself to such an extent that he could not deliver himself from this evil cycle. His life became one big plight from which he could only be delivered, freed, through God's intervention in Jesus Christ.

Galatians makes no provision for an anthropological dualism. We accepted that πνεῦμα and σάρξ (in the sense of life according to flesh) are not anthropological entities. Πνεῦμα refers to the Spirit of Christ and his sphere of influence and σάρξ primarily to the mode of living akin to the present evil age, namely a life of voluntary human submission to the influences of demonic powers acting against God and his will and living for one's own benefit. Importantly, σάρξ should not be viewed as an entity inherent to man. It is a mode of life under influence of sin. Since sin is not original to man's being, and since we rejected Bultmann's fully anthropological and existentialistic approach, it must be accepted that sin and its influence on man, flesh, has its origin outside man on a supra-human level in opposition to God, and therefore evil. However, having denounced any notion of an anthropological dualism, equally, any notion of an original cosmological, ontological or theological dualism must be rejected.

Although sin originates from outside man and influences him to sin, it does not render man blameless for having sinned. Man in his corruptibility allows himself to be influenced by powers and ideas that are not from God's Spirit. In Galatians Paul is concerned about the believers and uses the dichotomy to emphasise that the believer is actually in the sphere of the Spirit and should not allow flesh to influence him. Being in Christ, the believer must continually choose to align with the Spirit and not to allow flesh to have any influence on his life. In Christ and through the Spirit the believer has no reason to sin or even to feel pressurised to do so. The Spirit enables him to know and do God's will.

We concluded that flesh could be viewed from different angles. From an *anthropological angle* flesh refers to man's being merely human, i.e. frail, transi-

tory, corruptible, and corrupted. When man establishes his identity on this disposition and subsequently determines his ethical behaviour in terms of it, he lives according to flesh. From a *cosmological angle* flesh refers to man and mankind's alignment with the evil forces of the present evil age in opposition to God who operates through his Spirit. From a *redemptive-historical angle* flesh represents the old dispensation which has reached its demise in the advent of Christ and his Spirit.

Given man's plight of slavery to flesh in the present evil age and his need not to fall prey to flesh, God graciously provided Israel with law to guide them in his ways and to serve their fellowmen. Tragically, law could not do this, because it was unable to deal with the influence of sin itself. It could provide guidance, but it could not enable believers to act accordingly. Law could not break the power of sin and itself became slave to flesh, even increasing sin (Rm. 5:20; Gl. 3:22).

vi) *Law was the limited guiding principle that God gave to Israel according to which it had to live its life in the flesh.*

A heavy emphasis was laid on the plight of mankind, especially that of Israel, in contradiction to the so-called new perspective following the very influential model of E.P. Sanders, namely that Paul operated in terms of a movement from the solution in Christ back to the plight of Israel and mankind. This dissertation maintains that Paul's line of thought, in keeping with that of the OT and Second Temple Judaism, was from plight to solution. Although we accept Sanders' very important corrective, namely that OT covenant theology was not void of grace, but that the whole covenant was grounded in grace and that law was even given as an act of grace, it cannot be accepted that Israel so abounded in grace that the sacrificial system reduced their plight to non-existence.

It was argued that Paul regarded law as part and parcel of the present evil age. Paul was positive regarding law's divine origin. However, he viewed law positively only within certain limits. The metaphor of the pedagogue proved most helpful in this regard. Law was limited in terms of *time*, *scope* and *function*. Paul is very clear about law having been given for the period between Moses and Christ. Law would be fulfilled in Him. Not only does Paul state this very clearly in Gl. 3:17, but his very profound emphasis on the fulfilling of the time of the old dispensation in Christ's advent (Gl. 4:4) and his use of apocalyptic language (especially *present evil age* and *new creation*) cuts a clear line between the period of law's efficacy and its irrelevance. In Galatians Paul is very clear on the matter: law no longer has a role. Its *function* was equally limited. It was given to curb sin. It was not given because Israel reacted properly to God's grace via the covenant. It was given as a counter-measure for sin. It was given as a guide according to which Israel could glorify God. It could not infuse life and was not supposed to be regarded as a mediator between God and Israel, which it became in many circles. In terms of *scope*, I refer to the fact that it was not given as a super law for all mankind. It was God's special measure to

assist Israel, his chosen. It was for the sake of drawing the boundaries between them and those serving other gods.

The law was good for a specific time, place and function. It was given by God to assist Israel till the time of their plight was over. Sadly, it was not successful in dealing with flesh and became part of Israel's plight of the old dispensation.

vii) *Paul denounces a continued function for law in any form in the new dispensation since the advent of Christ.*

Paul does not distinguish between different categories of law. It is true that he specifically refers to circumcision and dietary and calendar laws. This does not, however, imply that he distinguishes between the laws so as to be negative regarding ceremonial laws and laws on Jewish identity, but still being positive about a distinguishable set of moral laws. In fact, given the contingency of the situation and the contentiousness of the subject, one would have expected Paul to make clear distinctions if he really had such distinctions in view. He simply speaks on law having come to an end. Very importantly, Paul was presented with a specific situation in which the abovementioned requirements were presented by his opponents as additional to the gospel. Paul took his much wider argument concerning deliverance from the present evil age and against law as a whole from the point at hand, namely the matters of circumcision, diet and calendar. Circumcision, especially, was a most prominent matter in Galatians' context. One should also remember that circumcision implied the other laws – the whole system so to speak! It is significant that he refers to circumcision only a third as often as law. He introduces circumcision in Gl. 2:3-9 and only returns to the subject in Gl. 5:2. On returning to the subject his language is very forceful. He moves from his former gentle introduction of circumcision to a passionate denouncement of it. Most significantly, almost 80% of his references to law (νόμος) occur between these two reference points on circumcision (Gl. 2:3-9 and 5:2). Law is enveloped, as it were, by circumcision. Paul rejects circumcision, because he has already rejected law as an entire entity.

The reintroduction of law as an external code of conduct for the Christian community does not originate with Paul. He clearly rejected it in his very first letter, Galatians. Those arguing that Paul denounced only part of law, a certain attitude towards law, or curse brought about by law, certainly cannot motivate it from the letter to the Galatians. It is only possible to arrive at such a conclusion if one follows a certain reading of Romans and Galatians and, subsequently accepts that Paul retracts from his Galatian position in the face of a lacking ethic when writing to the Romans. Together with this, one would have to accept that Romans has precedence over Galatians, so that the latter has to be understood in light of the former. I find no reason why it could not be the other way around, for that matter. One also wonders how the Galatians were to understand Paul's letter to them without having the letter to the Romans available. In fact, it was

not even written at that stage. This is especially applicable if one holds onto the point that Paul regarded the letter as most urgent.

viii) *The elements of the world are those principles and notions according to which man lives his life in the flesh.*

It was accepted that Paul's main bearing on *elements of the world* had something to do with the principles according to which man operates in the world. Although it could have a certain positive bearing in the sense of God's common grace towards all mankind, it has a more negative bearing in Galatians. Because Paul regards law as one of the elements of the world since the advent of Christ, one can accept that his reference to the *elements of the world* is the reality of life without Christ, God's provided salvation. To depend on any entity for salvation or meaning to life other than the Person of Christ, is equal to being enslaved to the *elements of the world*. Any reality excluded from the new salvational reality provided by God in Christ, is part of the elements of the world.

Paul could very well have argued without reference to these elements. Why did he? There are probably two reasons. *Firstly*, he wanted to send the point home that in the new dispensation since Christ' advent, law was as irrelevant to Christianity as the elements according to which the pagans ordered their lives. Law had no ethical priority for Christian life. *Secondly*, in view of our earlier position that Paul not only rejected law, but the whole dispensation with which it was associated, the rejection of the elements of the world broadens the picture to include any element to which man had become enslaved as part of that which he has left behind in becoming part of the new reality of freedom. Freedom indeed entails much more than being free from law. It is about being free from enslavement to any entity or notion outside the new creation of God in Christ Jesus and his Spirit.

ix) *For Paul freedom is a description of the christological-soteriological status of believers living in the new paradigm.*

Freedom in Galatians is often viewed with a limited scope. Because law and works of law occupy such a dominant position in Paul's arguments, freedom is often defined in terms of law. This view is also variegated. Some regard it as freedom from Mosaic law, others as freedom from only ceremonial law, and others even as freedom only from a certain attitude towards law. On the subject of law, many regard freedom as merely being free from the curse that law pronounces on sinners, because they do not live up to God's standard. Christ took that on Himself. In the same vein, it is also regarded as the new ability believers have, namely to be able to deal with flesh, but then, with a view to fulfilling the obligations of law. In short, freedom is sadly often wrongly bound up by many in some relation to law and, consequently, also practised in terms of law – be that as freedom from law, or as freedom to do law! Another angle on freedom is taken from the vantage point of guilt. The believer is free from guilt, be-

cause Christ has taken his sin, guilt and punishment upon Himself. Thus, the believer is relieved from his plight and despair. He can continue his life in hope of living a morally improved life, usually in terms of moral laws of some kind, but also comforted in the fact that there is forgiveness.

Although it is never put in clearly distinguishable categories, a distinction is often made between soteriological and ethical freedom. The intention is to distinguish between the fulfilled and abolished role of law regarding salvation, and law's so-called ongoing ethical function in daily life. With regard to the former it is accepted that the believer is free from law and lives only by faith in Christ. Regarding ethical life following on salvation, however, the believer is free to fulfil law as obedience to faith. This boils down to a duality, not only in terms of the function of law, but equally regarding freedom. This way, the believer is soteriologically free, but not ethically free.

Though there are some elements of truth in some of the above views, and although one respects the motives behind these views on freedom, it has been motivated, firstly, that freedom is about much more than freedom from law, and secondly, that the soteriological and ethical aspects of freedom cannot be separated so as to come to a soteriological notion on freedom that functions differently from an ethical notion on freedom. Paul refers to one, indivisible freedom which he applies to the one, indivisible life of the believer.

Fundamentally important, Paul introduces his letter (Gl. 1:4) with a reference to Christ "who gave Himself for our sins *to deliver us* (ὁπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς) from *the present evil age* (τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ)". *Firstly*, it was motivated that ἐξέλῃται is already the introduction of the freedom theme. Paul's statement: "For freedom Christ set us free" (Gl. 5:1), is perfectly in tune with his *prescriptio* in which deliverance is set as the purpose of Christ's mission. Freedom was not a coincidental by-product of Christ's redemptive work. It was the divinely set intention of his advent, cross and resurrection. One can safely assume that freedom is Paul's most prominent soteriological metaphor in Galatians. It is extremely significant, because he advances his ethical section and reasoning from this very metaphor in Gl. 5:1. It enhances the notion that Paul's ethics are founded on his soteriology and that the latter logically advances into the development of his ethics. Freedom is thus an extremely dynamic metaphor on which Paul hinges the movement from salvation to ethics as two sides of a coin.

Secondly, because of this close relation between salvation and ethics on the one hand, and Gl. 1:4 and Gl. 5:1 on the other, the entity from which the believer has been delivered is obviously also the entity from which the believer has been set free, namely the *present evil age* in its entirety. This implies that one cannot think in terms of salvation as deliverance from the entire present evil age and all it entails, but freedom being only from law and the elements of the world. This would be an unwarranted narrowing down of Paul's intention and an undermining of the impact of his notion on freedom. But, equally, espe-

cially against the apocalyptic allusions, it implies, if freedom on soteriological level includes freedom from the entire present evil age together with the elements of the world and unsuccessful law in order to partake in new creation through the Spirit, then that participation cannot include law or any other element as essential, or even only needful in the new dispensation.

The believer has been set free from the entire present evil age dominated by flesh and all the elements it employs to enslave man. This includes even the divinely given law in its entire scope and function, and the curse and guilt law imposes on man, accentuating his plight.

x) *For Paul freedom is equally a description of the pneumatological-ethical life of a believer living in the new paradigm.*

In his argumentative section (Gl. 2:15-4:31) Paul is extremely outspoken against law. To a certain extent one could argue, though wrongly, that Paul's arguments are mainly soteriological and that ethics does not feature strongly, resulting in the notion that Paul rejects law as soteriological entity, but that law still retains its ethical value; of course, minus the ceremonial and ethnic laws. However, this is not possible.

It has been argued that Gl. 5:1 is the hinge on which Paul moves from the soteriological to the ethical section. It concludes and summarises the soteriological arguments in terms of Christ having set the believer free. Equally, it introduces the ethical section as a life in freedom. Paul argued very strongly that the Galatians came to believe not through law, but by faith in Jesus Christ as opposed to the works of the law through which no one could be justified (Gl. 2:16-17). He adds that Christ's cross had made works of law null and void. If justification through law would now be reintroduced, it would render Christ's death null and void (Gl. 2:21). In the immediately following section (Gl. 3:1-5) he considers the same matter, but from the vantage point of the Spirit's advent in their lives. Once again, they experienced the Spirit and miracles not by law, but by faith. Paul goes even further. He makes a strong connection between the beginning of their life of faith, the revelation of Christ into their lives, and the reception of the Spirit. It is all one event. Faith, Christ and the Spirit are aligned against law and flesh. He does this even more pertinently in Gl. 5:4-5 where he opposes justification through works of law with hope of righteousness through the Spirit and faith, adding that faith should find its purpose in acts of love (Gl. 5:6).

He makes the profoundly important statement in Gl. 5:18: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law." He clearly moves from the soteriological to the ethical section without changing or even slightly adapting his alignments, culminating in the fruit of the Spirit (Gl.5:22-23). Once again, he points to law as having been denigrated to the status of a spectator applauding from the pavilion, but no longer being part of the believer's life.

The Spirit was given to believers to sensitise them regarding God's will and how He is to be glorified. But not only does He sensitise and guide believers, He also enables them to do that to which He sensitises them and in which He guides them. This is the point where law fell short. It could point out sin, sensitise and even guide to a certain extent, but with all its elaborate expansions up to the time of Second Temple Judaism, it could not enable believers to do the right thing, neither could it motivate believers to love from within. The Spirit would do this, as promised.

The christological-soteriological new life of freedom from all that the present evil age entails, including law, has as divinely intended flip-side, a pneumatological-ethical life of freedom in the new creation, equally devoid of law or any other notion reminding of the present evil age.

One should not take Paul's paradigm switch lightly. Everything changed radically in the advent of Christ and his Spirit. Soteriology could never again be viewed other than as a divine act through which Christ brought salvation, which the Spirit imparted to the believer's existence through faith, without law. Equally, ethics could never again be viewed other than as a life in the paradigm of Christ made possible in individual believers through his Spirit, through faith and without law.

xi) *Paul's christological-pneumatological ethic of freedom is anomistic.*

There are two very important matters underlining the description of Paul's ethic as anomistic, namely his use of the phrase *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2) and the threefold reference of the believer's relationship with the Spirit as to *live by the Spirit* (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι - Gl. 5:25), to *walk by the Spirit* (πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε - Gl. 5:16) and to *keep in step with the Spirit* (πνεύματι στοιχῶμεν - Gl. 5:25).

In view of Paul's use of apocalyptic to enhance the notion of a radical paradigm switch from an age dominated by flesh and its secundi (law and the elements of the world) to new creation characterised by life in the Spirit, Paul's very clear remark in Gl. 5:18 ("If you are led by the Spirit you are not under law") makes it impossible to qualify ethics in this new life with law. For instance, to refer to Paul's ethic of freedom as christological-pneumatological nomism, would be tantamount to employing Christ and his Spirit in service of law. This would make law paramount once more. It would also be un-Pauline to refer to his ethic of freedom as nomistic, christological-pneumatological ethics, as if law is indispensable and needed to support the Spirit or fulfil Christ's mission.

It is my contention that in the very contingent situation in Galatians, in which clear guidance was called for and aimed at by Paul, this very explicit remark by him should be taken at face-value and in no way be softened by interpreting "under law" as "under the curse of law", "under slavery of law", "under ceremonial law", or any such notion. Law as such had come to an end, together with its curse and bondage.

Law of Christ is not a clandestine phrase by which Paul wished to introduce some form of law or compelling system of ethics through the backdoor. It is intended to describe the bearing of the burdens of others as intrinsic to the new paradigm inaugurated by Christ and his Spirit. It was intended to characterise Christian action and ethics as in line with the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ was the bearing from which Christians had to determine their position and the direction in which they were to move ethically. Their decisions had to be taken in terms of the cross of Christ, even though it might at times be in contradiction to what the world and law expected – scandalous, as it were! Paul's use of the term "law" in this phrase is not indicative of moral law or externally compelling morality, but of how foundational the new dispensation is. It is absolutely fixed in Christ and cannot be undone. Equally, the life involved in this new dispensation is fundamentally different to the previous one. It is a profound way of stating that law as such was now part of a bygone age.

Law's demise did not leave an ethical void. The Spirit, who brought life to the Galatians by existentially imparting that which Christ did for them in their lives (soteriologically), was also the One who would guide and enable them ethically. He is not an ethical system, but the living Spirit of Christ who circumcises the heart of the believer, quickening him to know and do God's will. For this reason the believer's ethical life cannot be described in terms of works of external codices. It is much rather a fruit produced in his inner being by the quickening of the Spirit. This is even more convincing if one considers the promises of the OT that Israel would be endowed with the Spirit in the fullness of time. Thus, the believer was not called upon to learn and abide to a set of pre-determined rules and regulations, however well intended. His ethical choices would largely be determined by the interaction with the Spirit. This was his first responsibility. He was to live in and walk according to the Spirit's guidance. It was about an intimate relationship with the Spirit from which ethically correct action would stem like fruit from a tree. Although it would not be effortless, it would not be characterised by a never ending struggle moreover ending in defeat, guilt and curse. It would be more spontaneously born from the intimate relationship in which the Spirit helps the believer call to God: "αββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6).

In this regard one is once more reminded of Paul's profound emphasis on divine disclosure. Torah was originally and in its basic meaning and form about a revelation of God in answer to the individual's prayer for guidance. Similarly, Paul makes much of God's revelation of the salvation in Christ. He makes specific mention of God's revelation to the Galatians as if Christ were crucified in their very presence (Gl. 3:1).

In short, the advent of the Spirit had brought an element of immediacy into their ethical guidance and actions that lacked to a large extent in the previous dispensation in which law was prevalent. God's will was now pneumatologically revealed in their hearts, and law no longer had a role to play. They were free

from the flesh and law. The ethic of the new dispensation can therefore be described as an *anomistic christological-pneumatological ethic of freedom*.

xii) *The anomistic ethic of freedom involves obligatory obedience to God.*

Paul's rejection of law does not in any way imply that obedience to God's Spirit and his will is optional. The believer is obliged to live in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit. This can be illustrated by taking only a few key issues from Galatians. *Firstly*, there are the very closely related issues of the *law of Christ* and the *faithfulness of Christ*. It has been argued that although for modern ears the term "law" in the first phrase could sound like a reintroduction of some form of law related to Christ's teaching, it is not the case. In terms of Paul's argumentation in Galatians, it fits well to rather view it as a rhetorical mechanism. He aims at convincing the Galatians that one dispensation has been replaced by another. These two dispensations are totally different. The one is the fulfilment of the other. It is a dispensation operating in terms of the fulfilment of God's promises. Now, the first dispensation was characterised by a life according to flesh. In that dispensation, as a temporary measure till the fulfilment of the promise, law was given to direct man according to God's will. True, it was given within the parameters of God's gracious covenant, but, under duress of the flesh it became Israel's ethical, and in many cases, soteriological focus. In keeping with his aim of helping the Galatians to let go of the first dispensation and fully accept the new, he takes his departure from the well-known concept of domination in the old dispensation, i.e. law as characteristic feature of the old paradigm according to which they lived. He attaches the term to Christ as the One on whom the new dispensation or paradigm is founded. His aim is not to have them choose between two sets of laws. It is more profound than that and cuts much deeper. It is about a choice between being justified by and living according to law, or being justified by and living according to the faithfulness of Christ. It is about being ruled and driven from outside one's being like a slave, or being renewed, sensitised, guided and empowered from within by the Spirit of Christ who introduces one to an intimate relationship with God Himself, and through whom one calls "αββα ο πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). Being part of this new dispensation and paradigm, the believer has no other option, but to live according to the Spirit. Although it is not forced on him and he does indeed make wrong choices, his obligation to God's will to love his neighbour comes from inside his being through the Spirit's mediation.

In tandem with this, one must take Paul's emphasis on the cross of Christ and one's own crucifixion very seriously. It was accepted that Paul's use of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in Gl. 2:16, and most instances in Gl. 3, should most probably be translated as a subjective rather than as an objective genitive. Thus, referring not to faith in Christ, but to the faithfulness or obedience of Christ. Although there are more than enough instances where faith in Christ as instrument of acceptance of God's grace is indicated, the essential meaning

of ἔκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in Gl. 3-4 is indicative of Christ's faithfulness as foundation of the believer's life. This means that Christ's faithfulness even up to crucifixion, was the divinely appointed switch to bring about the paradigm switch. This having been existentially implemented in the life of the believer, it also implies that Christ's faithfulness becomes the paradigm according to which he designs his life and ethics. Christ's faithfulness and the believer's holding onto and focussing on his faithfulness, makes it impossible for the believer to regard a life of reciprocating faithfulness as optional. It is obligatory.

Secondly, and in keeping with the above, *living by and walking in step with the Spirit* is also indicative of a new life which cannot possibly shed itself from being renewed or from the responsibilities accompanying this new life. The Spirit is the one who created existential faith in Christ in the believer, renewing him to be a new creation. Equally, he sensitises, guides and empowers the believer. In as much as He was able to break down the believer's resistance in order to believe in Christ and accept his justification, He is also the One who convinces the believer to live a life in which he sows to the Spirit and bears his fruit instead of choosing the flesh. Thus, the Spirit of Christ in the believer convinces him to oblige to God's will.

Thirdly, Paul's use of the *metaphor of slavery* enhances the obligatory element of the Christian ethic of freedom. He refers to himself as a slave of Christ (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος - Gl. 1:10) while he had the term διάκονος available and indeed used it in Gl. 2:17, although in a different sense. He used δοῦλος to emphasise man's service as essential to his faith. Being in a relationship with God in Christ involves that the believer serves Him as a matter of necessity. Although the Owner of the slave is kind and merciful and no slave-driver, the believer is voluntarily a slave putting his own will on hold to serve the Master. Paul goes even further, calling on the Galatians to be slaves of one another through love (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δου-λεύετε ἀλλήλοις - Gl. 5:13). Once again, the love of the neighbour as ethical directive is not optional. It is all about a new disposition in which the believer finds himself because of his being in Christ and being led by his Spirit.

Fourthly, the *family metaphor* emphasises the obligation of the members of the household of God to do good (Gl. 6:10). The children in a family did not have the option of living the family ethos determined especially by the father. They were obliged to do what pleased him and reflected positively on the honour of the family. This was important regarding actions aimed at those outside the family as well as those in the family. Like the child is obliged to do what the father wills, the believers are obliged to do the will of the Father in the same way as Christ proved his obedience (Gl. 1:4).

Fifthly, those of faith in the cross have one overriding aim in life, namely *to glorify God*. It was illustrated that Paul places a very heavy emphasis on seeking God's glory. He begins and ends his letter with this theme. He wishes only to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gl. 6:14).

It should be clear that a life of ethical high standard is not optional for the believer. Paul emphasises the absolute necessity for those of the new paradigm in Christ to live as faithfully as He did. However, Paul does not call on believers to do such with the help of law or ordinances from outside. It was about the Spirit moving man to call to God: “αββα ὁ πατήρ” and to live accordingly. The ethical obligation for which Paul advocated was not nomistic, but truly the anomic ethic of the free belonging to Christ through his Spirit.

xiii) *The ethic of freedom is about both individual and communal responsibility and accountability.*

It is only in being truly free from the present evil age and all it entails that one can really be fully responsible and accountable for one's deeds. As long as there is some form of external code according to which one must or should act, it robs one of a great deal of responsibility to figure out for oneself what God's will is in a given situation. The believer's ethical responsibility is not to a set of external codes. The believer should not be put in the position where he has to motivate or rationalise his actions in a given situation, only because it deviates from the set rules or predetermined norms. The believer is primarily responsible for doing God's will in every given situation. There might be guidelines of which he is aware or not. Whatever the guidelines, his responsibility is to love his neighbour and concretely prove it in every situation. Thus, the believer is called to be responsible on a vertical level (relationship with God), always finely tuned to the Spirit's walk, so that he can truly fulfil his horizontal responsibility to love his neighbour.

Obviously, being part of a community of faith, the believer is not an island and cannot claim to have all wisdom, or to be the only one guided by the Spirit. He is accountable to his community of faith for ethical decisions he makes. They do have the responsibility to measure the correctness of his actions. However, once again, their measuring stick cannot be an external code of conduct. This itself has to be responsibly scrutinised. Their ultimate norm must be, once again, whether God was served and his glory honoured by the love of the neighbour. Did the fellow believer act according to the guidance of the Spirit, or did he sow to the flesh?

Ultimately, the believer and the community of faith are not accountable to any mediating set of rules, but to God who proved his faithfulness in the obedience of Christ. This was something totally incomprehensible to those living in the old paradigm, but the only way of living for those of the new. To try to combine the two would be as disastrous as severing oneself from Christ (Gl. 5:4).

Obviously, as soon as one speaks of accountability to the community of faith and also of the community of faith's responsibility to assist its members to seek and do God's will, it becomes almost humanly impossible to operate without a set of guidelines. These guidelines usually have a history within a certain tradition. This in itself need not be a problem, if certain warnings are heeded. *Firstly*, the guidelines should never obtain the status of fixed, unchanging and inflexible laws applicable to

the same extent in each individual situation. Although certain guidelines are broadly defined and almost always applicable in unaltered form, it does not mean that its application is always obvious. There might be room for interpretation or even for a nuance. For instance, all Christian communities accept that murder is a grievous sin, but they do not always and in all circumstances agree on the definition of that sin. Some accept abortion and the death penalty in certain circumstances, whilst others regard it as organised murder. All regard theft as sin, but in certain circumstances some might accept a homeless person's theft of a loaf of bread as pardonable and even as a charge against society. The same can be said of telling a lie to save a life and so preventing a worse felony. In short, if ethical guidelines become unbending dictates excusing believers from the sometimes arduous task of seeking God's will for a certain situation, or excuses him from taking situational decisions in responsibility to the situation, those in it and the God he wishes to serve, they would be out of touch with Paul's view on freedom.

Secondly, ethical guidelines should themselves be subjected to responsible examination. If this is not done it leads to such guidelines obtaining divine status and even becoming mediatory of God's grace.

Thirdly, the fear of relativising ethics to the unacceptable level of doing merely what seems practical and practicable as if God's will is equal to the lowest ethical common denominator, is to deny the entire christological-pneumatological paradigm in which Paul's concept of freedom and his ethics and exhortations operate. The role of the Spirit in revealing God's will for every situation should be honoured. If this element is removed from ethical guidelines one falls prey to an ethic of the letter in distinction from an ethic of the Spirit.

Paul himself illustrates that his exhortations are not authoritarian. He leaves the responsibility of discernment in the hands of the believers. There must always be room for honest discussion, be that between contemporaries or even between present views and tradition. Under the guidance of the Spirit such open discussion of οἱ πνευματικοί leads to a fruitful ethos in responsibility and accountability to others and God.

Ultimately, believers are accountable to God Himself for their ethical decisions and actions. The touchstone always being whether the fruit of the Spirit had been concretised in its different shades of loving service.

xiv) *The ethic of freedom is situation-orientated, participationist and creative.*

This aspect has been touched on in the previous statement. The concern here is for intertextuality. Any ethical guideline, contemporary or inherited from tradition, should be regarded as a precious partner in a new dialogue under the guidance of the Spirit. Paul, making use of ethical maxims from contemporary pagan philosophy, illustrates that the community of faith is not an island. Much can be learnt from other traditions – even from secular communities. The origin of the maxim is not as important as the use it is put to under the Spirit's guid-

ance and the effect it has in a given community. How it is put to Christian use is absolutely dependent on how the Spirit guides the believing individual and community.

In this regard the Church in modern Western Civilisation should be wary of too easily imposing its ethical views onto other civilisations. A given ethos in a society in Africa, Asia or South America might seem unacceptable to traditional Western Christian ethics. However, although it might be unacceptable even to the Spirit, responsible ethical practice would probably be to enter into dialogue so as to allow those in the wrong to discover God's will through the Spirit in the Spirit's good time. Equally, dialogue might even have the effect that the Spirit guides along a way that the original bringer of the message did not expect to be taken.

The same is applicable to ethical dialogue between different denominations in the church. No single church can lay claim to the whole truth and consequently canonise its ethical views. By entering into dialogue they have much to offer one another from long and rich traditions of reflection. Examples abound regarding churches falling prey to certain ethical stances in support of an ideal, whilst other churches had a different view and even warned them. Churches in Germany and South Africa can testify to the disgraceful situation in which certain churches provided the respective regimes with theological-ethical foundation for their demagogic policies, whilst they encapsulated themselves from the influence of other churches to the contrary. An ecumenical approach to ethics therefore seems wise and in keeping with Paul's participationist approach.

The broad church should also be wary of playing the role of sole ethical guide to the world. From Paul we learn that there can be no compromise regarding the Christian indicative that God has provided a new paradigm to life in Christ and his Spirit. Man has been freed from the present evil age in order to live freely. This is what the church has to communicate fervently and without reserve. This is the unique message that only the church can convey to the world. The church should not compromise in any way when appealing to the world to accept this indicative as the only truth. This soteriological imperative is the gospel truth, and therefore the only truth! However, when it comes to the ethical imperative, the responsible way in terms of Paul, is not to proclaim an ethical tradition to be the gospel, but together to responsibly seek what the God of the gospel wishes for his church and believers in their given situations under the guidance of his Spirit.

xv) *The ethic of freedom is restorative rather than judgemental.*

Regarding the very real possibility of believers sinning, the matter was put forward as to how sin is identified as such without law, and how one should deal with the sinner in view of his being part of the new dispensation. It was acknowledged that Paul does not deal with the matter of how sin is identified, but

that there are enough indications of how Paul's ethics would probably have dealt with the matter. *Firstly*, action that is *out of step with the Spirit*. The Spirit is the One who guides the believer in the law or paradigm of Christ. Transgression is equal to being out of step with his guidance. This does not occur only when it is in a specific wrongdoing, but as early as when the believer ignores the guidance of the Spirit and in so doing creates disharmony between himself and the Spirit and follows the desires of the flesh.

Secondly, a transgression would be an action that is *incompatible with the fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22-23) and *in line with the works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19-21). It was indicated that Paul emphasises the love of the neighbour as yardstick for measuring ethically good behaviour (Gl. 5:6 & 13-14). Equally important is Gl. 5:22-23 where Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit. He wraps the different qualities in ἀγάπη and ἐγκράτεια. All the qualities are included in the notion of love that is illustrated up to the point of sacrificing one's own pleasures and needs for the sake of others. In other words, being in step with the Spirit results in reflecting the love and faithfulness of Christ with which he initiated the new paradigm.

Thirdly, actions that cause *disharmony in the community of faith* are not in step with the above. The vices Paul mentions in Gl. 5:19-21 illustrate a large degree of disharmony in the faith community. Gl. 6:1-10 illustrates a very heavy emphasis on service in the community and community directedness in general.

Fourthly, and probably the overall measure of ethical behaviour in the community of faith, is that actions should *seek God's glory*. Pauline ethics is based fully on his theology and not on his anthropology. It always seeks God's glory in the way that Christ did it in his faithfulness.

Now, regarding how the community of faith was to deal with a transgressor in terms of the above touchstones. Because law was not involved, this would obviously be a completely different kind of action than that known from the old evil age. The emphasis would not be on the judgment, punishment or condemnation of the sinner, but on how he could be restored in his relationship with God, the believing community and other neighbours from the broader society. This is obviously in keeping with the paradigm in which the believers live, namely that Christ gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil age. On the grounds of Christ's restoration of believers to the status of new creation, the community of faith had to seek the restoration of that sinner's status to its full glory. In keeping with Christ's faithfulness with a view to restoration, the community of faith had to be equally faithful in restoring the fellow believer. In fact, Paul even refers to it as the bearing of the sinner's burden. The sinner could never be written-off, as it were. He was the burden of the community in line with his being Christ's burden. In terms of the family imagery, it involved the community being collectively saddened and shamed, and collectively accepting some of the guilt. The overall intention of the restoration endeavour would be that God's glory be served.

xvi) *The ethic of freedom is longsuffering and persevering.*

The fact the Paul explains his ethic as the fruit of the Spirit, is indicative of the intimate relation between the indicative and imperative of faith and faithful living. Ethics is not the supplementary human effort after the initial action by God through Christ and the Spirit. The idea is to illustrate the “logical” and almost automatic following on of ethics to soteriology. However, Paul does not give the impression that it is fully effortless. The believer is in Christ and is guided by the Spirit, but he is not a programmed, unthinking, involuntary automat. Together with this, the believer still has to contend with flesh till the time of the *parousia*. It is a beaten foe, but has not yet been removed from the scene.

Therefore Paul admonishes the believers not to grow weary in well-doing (Gl. 6:9). Considering instances such as Gl. 1:6-10; 3:1 and Gl. 4:9; Paul’s mention of Peter’s “apostasy” (Gl. 2:11-14); the possibility of severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4); yielding to bad influences (Gl. 5:9); being hindered (Gl. 5:7); and even persecuted by those regarding the cross as a stumbling block (Gl. 5:11), life in the Spirit would never be plain sailing. There would be burdens to bear (Gl. 6:2, 5) and falling prey to sin would remain a possibility (Gl. 6:1, 4).

Walking in step with the Spirit is not a walk in the park, so to speak, but the taking up of one’s burden like Christ did when he introduced the new paradigm. Obedience and loving service, even to the point of persecution, was expected of believers. The good news was that it would never be a curse, because of the guidance and enablement of the Spirit. Thus, they were to bite the bullet!

* * * * *

In a final word, Paul did everything in his power to convince the Galatians, and for that matter all believers, that the advent of Christ and his Spirit had ended flesh’s reign in the *present evil age*, once and for all. A fundamentally new and totally different situation had arisen, so different that he describes it as new creation and does his best to impress how radically different it is from anything known to their symbolic universe till then.

In Christ’s advent and resurrection a new dispensation had arrived. The believer had been set free from the totality of the evil age and all it involved: flesh and its secundi. This freedom was not only freedom from law. It was one of Paul’s most dynamic and encompassing descriptions of redemption and salvation. Freedom is primarily freedom from the dispensation of flesh and sin – from evil itself!

Because law had been given as an interim measure till the advent of Christ and his Spirit, the Spirit had now made law totally irrelevant for the new dispensation. The Spirit would enable and guide the believer and the believing community inwardly. Whatever exhortation was needed within the community of faith, it would have to be true to the new paradigm, and therefore in accordance with

the Spirit's guidance. The community of faith would always have to guard against allowing its ethical patterns from becoming new systems of law replacing God's direct work through his Spirit.

As a community partaking in the freedom for which Christ set them free, the household of faith may never allow that it is robbed of its *freedom* and *responsibility* to act on the Spirit's guidance, however subtly. Ultimately, the household of faith is *accountable* to only one, Yahweh, who, since the advent of his Son, guides through his Spirit and is not in need of any form of law to convince man to serve in love. Believers are free from the old dispensation of flesh. They have been freed by the faithfulness of Christ to live faithfully according to the Spirit's guidance, and so, to glorify God.

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