

What Isaiah Has to Say about the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10

Young Namgung
University of Pretoria

Abstract

Galatians 3:10 is a *crux interpretum* in Pauline studies. This article argues in favour of the traditional reading of this text, against more recent proposals by representatives of the New Perspective on Paul. It does so by focusing specifically on echoes to Isa 52:13–53:12, also known as the Fourth Servant Song, in the Letter to the Galatians. With these echoes, it is argued, Paul supplied the readers with sufficient information to understand Gal 3:10 correctly.

Key Terms

Galatians 3:10; Paul; Isaiah; echo; Fourth Servant Song; New Perspective on Paul; Deuteronomy; enthymematic syllogism

1 Introduction

Galatians 3:10 reads as follows: Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά (“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them”).¹ Paul here quotes Deut 27:26, but with influences from Deut 28:58 (see Koch 1986, 164–165; Stanley 1992, 238–243). Yet, neither his use of this quotation nor his larger argumentation is easy to understand in this text. How does one conclude that all followers of the Law are cursed from the claim that people are cursed if they do not abide by the totality of the Law? There seems to be a step missing from the argument, best explained by the deliberate exclusion of a minor premise. Rhetorically

¹ If it is not noted otherwise, English translations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

speaking, Gal 3:10 is an enthymematic syllogism that has left the minor premise unstated. In traditional scholarship, this minor premise has been explained as the assumption that no one can perform everything written in the Law perfectly (cf. Moo 2013, 202). Longenecker (1990, 118) explains that “such an understanding, while not a common Jewish view . . . was present in a number of rabbis and Jewish writers of Paul’s day.” In other words, the logic of the argument, according to traditional scholarship, looks like this:

Major premise: Those who do not abide by the entire Law are cursed (Deut 27:26^{LXX}). Unstated minor premise: No one can perform everything written in the Law perfectly. Conclusion: Therefore, all people under the Law are cursed.

This traditional understanding of Gal 3:10 has come under fire in recent years, especially by representatives of the New Perspective on Paul. These scholars criticise the traditional reading of Gal 3:10 for a number of reasons, which we will consider shortly. The present study argues in favour of the traditional reading and against these more recent critical readings. It does so by focusing specifically on echoes to Isa 52:13–53:12, also known as the Fourth Servant Song, in the Letter to the Galatians.² With these echoes, it is argued, Paul supplied the readers with sufficient information to understand Gal 3:10 correctly. The study therefore takes the literary context of Gal 3:10 seriously, including not only its immediate context in Gal 3:10–14, but also its larger context in the letter as a whole. To summarise, the study argues that echoes to Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song in Galatians support the traditional reading of Gal 3:10 against more recent hermeneutic proposals. Before considering these Isaianic echoes, however, we will first look at interpretations of Gal 3:10 by two representatives of the New Perspective on Paul, namely Jean-Noël Aletti and Michael Bachmann.

2 The New Perspective on Galatians 3:10

Aletti (2011, 185) criticises the traditional interpretation of Gal 3:10 “car la sémantique en est difficile” (because the semantic is difficult).³ According to Aletti (2011, 187), there were some Jews, like the former Pharisee Saul (e.g., Phil 3:6–9), who considered themselves to be blameless before the

² For a definition of an echo and its criteria, see Hays (1989).

³ Scott (1993, 187–221) gives an overview of eight separate scholarly views, excluding his own proposal. Waters (2006, 80–86) also provides various scholarly opinions on this text.

Law.⁴ Such a self-evaluation was possible because faithfulness to the Law was understood as a lifestyle conformed to the Law (Aletti 2011, 186; see Hays 2000). These views are aligned with Stendahl's (1963) classic study, according to which Paul's "robust conscience" allowed him to perceive himself as blameless and righteous before the Law. Stendahl argued that Paul did not suffer from an "introspective," "guilty" or "plagued" conscience that obsessed about sinfulness, as earlier interpreters had assumed. I agree with Maxwell (2013, 149), however, that Paul's claim in Phil 3:6–9 is not about his conscience, but about his "'track record' as a Jew." The conjunction ἀλλά suggests that the phrases ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ("a righteousness of my own derived from the Law") and τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ("the righteousness which comes from God") in Phil 3:9 are antithetical. That is to say, Paul's self-understanding of his Jewish righteousness as blameless stands in contrast to his self-understanding of his Christian righteousness as deriving from God through faith (see O'Brien 1991). This observation also speaks against Aletti's denial of the human incapability to observe the Law perfectly. Aletti (2011, 188) seems to shift the theological (or rhetorical?) impact of Paul's use of Deut 27:26^{LXX} in Gal 3:10b from the *certainty* that humans are incapable of observing the Law fully to a mere *possibility* that this is the case.⁵ Reminiscent of Sanders's (1977, 431–542) reading of Paul in terms of covenantal nomism,⁶ Aletti (2011, 189) claims that Gal 3:10b cannot be used to support the notion that humans are incapable of observing the Law perfectly, "car il y a encore tous ceux qui font leurs délices de la Loi de Dieu, ceux-là mêmes que les Écritures appellent justes."⁷ After discussing Paul's use of scriptural quotations in Gal 3:10–14, Aletti (2011, 194–202) comes to the conclusion that Paul's issue with the Law had to do with the conviction that it does not come naturally from faith. He further finds that the role of Christ (or the

⁴ Aletti (2011, 187): "Que la Loi ne soit pas obéie par tous, c'est un fait dénoncé par les prophètes; mais il existe des juifs, et le pharisien Saul le premier, qui n'hésitent pas à se déclarer irréprochables, et ne sauraient donc admettre la prémisse manquante."

⁵ "c'est pour souligner le sérieux de la situation à tous ceux dont la Loi est la règle de vie: toute transgression fait courir le risque de malediction . . . Paul en souligne le sérieux."

⁶ Gundry (2005, 198–199) criticises Sanders's covenantal nomism: "But if we treat the literatures (the Pauline and the Palestinian Jewish) *materially* not formally, as Sanders does] quite a different impression is gained, an impression of Palestinian Judaism as centered on works-righteousness and of Paul's theology as centered on grace" (italics original).

⁷ My translation: ". . . because there are still those who take delight in the Law of God, who are also called righteous by the Scripture."

Messiah) in relation to the curse of the Law should not be understood in terms of a substitutionary soteriology. In this regard, Aletti (2011, 200) writes: *C'est par solidarité avec les sujets de la Loi que le Christ est devenu malédiction, mais c'est aussi pour leur bien, autrement dit, pour leur libération . . . Prendre au sérieux ce passage interdit de voir en Galates une sotériologie de la substitution.*⁸

For Aletti, Christ (or the Messiah) can be credited as the inclusive representative having a close solidarity with his people (see Wright 1997; Dunn 1998).⁹ The human incapability to observe the Law is no longer Paul's concern. He takes issue with the origin of the Law. Aletti's understanding of the role of Christ as it relates to the curse of the Law appears to be participatory. In other words, humans become beneficiaries of Christ's achievement by participating in it with him. While the notion of a substitutionary soteriology hinges on the certainty that humans are incapable of observing the Law perfectly, the notion of a participatory soteriology highlights the solidarity between Christ and humans. That is to say, he sees the notion of a substitutionary soteriology, in which Christ can be credited as the exclusive representative acting on behalf of his people, out of place in Gal 3:10b, as well as the larger passage (Gal 3:10–14) and its use of Scripture.

Bachmann interprets our text from a rhetorical-critical perspective. Regarding the use of Scripture in Gal 3:10–12, Bachmann (2007, 526) contends that, even though tradition-historical and intertextual considerations are valuable, the focus should be on synchronic considerations.¹⁰ Bachmann's analysis is reminiscent of Vos's study on Galatians, especially when it comes to Paul's sophistic rhetoric of "making the weaker seem like the stronger." According to Vos (2007, 34–37), Paul deliberately altered some texts (eisegetically?) when he quoted from

⁸ My translation: "It is through solidarity with the practitioners of the Law that Christ has become a curse, but it is also for their well-being, in other words, for their liberation . . . taking this passage seriously precludes seeing in Galatians a soteriology of substitution."

⁹ E.g., my understanding of the inclusive representative role of Christ is participatory. For an overview of scholarly viewpoints on the representative role of Christ, see Hofius 1989 (33–49).

¹⁰ Bachmann (2007, 526): "Das würde natürlich mit dem textlinguistischen Prinzip einer gewissen Priorität der Synchronie harmonieren. Dieser Grundsatz soll selbstverständlich traditions-geschichtlichen, insbesondere 'intertextuellen,' Erwägungen nicht prinzipiell die Berechtigung absprechen, aber doch eine methodisch kontrollierte Einbettung von eher diachron erhobenen Daten sichern."

Scripture, adapting them to fit his theological agenda and manipulate his audience. Methodologically speaking, however, both Bachmann and Vos fail to do justice to “die Verwendung und das Verständnis des Alten Testaments bei Paulus” (Koch 1986, 1).¹¹ Based on his understanding of Paul’s use of quotations, Bachmann claims that Gal 3:10 does not presuppose a minor premise, since Gal 3:10–12 features two interlinked syllogisms: one in 3:10a–11a (Barbara), and the other in Gal 3:11b–12 (Camestres).¹² On the one hand, he regards Deut 27:26^{LXX} in Gal 3:10b as a proof-text for the major premise in Gal 3:10a. On the other, he regards Hab 2:4b and Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:11b–12 as supporting texts for the minor premise in Gal 3:11a (Bachmann 2007, 538–539). Accordingly, Paul’s argumentation in Gal 3:10–14 hinges on the proposition that “no one is justified by the law before God” (Gal 3:11a). Like Aletti, for Bachmann, the human incapability to observe the Law was no longer Paul’s concern. Paul’s problem with the Law was that it could not justify the one abiding by it, due to its origin: the Law did not derive from faith (Bachmann 2007, 539–540; e.g., Gal 3:12). Drawing on Dunn’s (1998) claim that the works of the Law should be understood as boundary markers, Bachmann (2007, 542–543) comes to the conclusion that “Paulus gegen das Hochhalten solcher ‘boundary markers’ votiert . . . und zwar als Verstoß gegen Dtn 27.26.”¹³ For Bachmann, Paul’s argumentation in Gal 3:10–14 is not shaped by Jewish Scripture as much as it uses such Scripture as part of its rhetorical arsenal in promoting a certain theological agenda, which includes issues of boundary demarcation.

The studies of Aletti and Bachmann share in common the claim that the human incapability to observe the Law was no longer a concern for Paul. Paul’s concern with the Law was that it had nothing to do with faith. Their studies show that our interpretation of Gal 3:10 hinges on Paul’s understanding of the role of Christ in relation to the curse of the Law.

¹¹ My translation: “Paul’s use and understanding of the Old Testament.”

¹² Bachmann (2007, 538) says that “[d]iese These zur Argumentation von 3.10–12 kommt also ohne die Annahme von impliziten Prämissen aus.”

¹³ My translation: “. . . Paul votes against the adherents of such boundary markers . . . and indeed [views it] as a violation of Deut 27:26.”

3 Isaianic Echoes in Galatians 1–3

3.1 *Galatians 1:4*

3.1.1 Paul's overall purpose with the letter

Galatians 1:4 forms part of the greeting formula in the letter opening (see Jervis 1991, 70). Compared to his other letters, two distinctive features make this greeting formula unique: (1) an echo of Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (that is, Isa 52:13–53:12^{LXX}) in Gal 1:4; and (2) a doxology in Gal 1:5.¹⁴ One would expect the Isaianic echo in particular to inform our understanding of Paul's overall purpose in writing this letter to the Galatians. While considering the epistolary conventions featured in Paul's letters, Jervis (1991, 42) points out that both the opening and closing of his letters provide a glimpse of authorial intentions. Also interesting is Paul's adaptation and expansion of the sender formula in Gal 1:1, describing himself as οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ("not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead"). With this addition, Paul highlights not only the divine origin of his apostleship, but also the work of God the Father in Jesus Christ. Paul's emphasis on the divine origin of his apostleship expresses his awareness that he has been commissioned to proclaim the gospel (Longenecker 1990, 2). Such emphasis is therefore an expression of his apostolic mission to proclaim the gospel, not his desire to elevate himself. Introducing the work of God the Father in the sender formula is unique. Paul must have had a reason to mention at the beginning of his letter to the Galatians the work of God the Father in resurrecting Jesus (see Moo 2013). When compared with his other letters, it is further interesting that Paul omitted a thanksgiving from the opening of Galatians.

These distinctive features of the opening formula in Gal 1:1–5 require explanation. It seems clear that both the comment about the Father's function in resurrecting Jesus and the Isaianic echo pave the way for a better understanding of what the gospel is about. The former may be regarded as an expression of God the Father's vantage point: He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The latter may be regarded as a description of Jesus Christ's

¹⁴ Typically, the epistolary conventions of Paul's letters comprise of the letter opening, the thanksgiving period, the apostolic Parousia and the letter closing. They can all play a constitutive role in establishing authorial intentions. However, in Galatians, the thanksgiving period is missing and the apostolic Parousia is not conspicuous.

vantage point: He “gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν). In other words, the gospel that Paul has been commissioned to proclaim deals with the will and works of God the Father, as well as the faithful obedience of Jesus Christ to the will of God the Father. The two vantage points make clear that Paul’s gospel includes consideration of our sins, of this present evil age, of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and of the resurrection from the dead. Regarding the lack of thanksgiving in the letter opening, a reason for its omission is given in Gal 1:6: Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον (“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel”).¹⁵ Paul learned that the Galatians had started not only turning away from God, the one who had called them, but also turning to a different gospel. This gospel was different from Paul’s own understanding of the gospel, as reflected in Gal 1:1 and 1:4 of the letter opening. As such, it is safe to say that Paul’s main purpose in writing the letter was to defend his idea of the genuine gospel against an opposing gospel (cf. Jervis 1991, 84–85).

These observations are further illuminated by the letter closing. One of the epistolary functions of the letter closing is to recapitulate “the main themes of the epistle” (Brinsmead 1982, 48).¹⁶ As with the letter opening in Gal 1:1–5 and Paul’s rebuke in Gal 1:6–10, the letter closing in Gal 6:11–18 also features, to some extent at least, “the major tensions and essential concerns” running through Paul’s argumentation in the letter as a whole, especially when Paul’s adaptation and expansion of the formal features in the letter closing are taken into account (Weima 1993, 92). These major tensions and essential concerns reveal a number of sharp contrasts between Paul and his Jewish adversaries (Weima 1993, 92–93). The first contrast has to do with boasting. In Gal 6:12a, Paul exposes the hidden desire of his adversaries, accusing them of “wanting to make a good showing in the flesh” (θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί). The second contrast deals with persecution. According to Gal 6:12b–13, their directive to be circumcised is

¹⁵ According to Longenecker (1990, 11), “the rebuke section of Paul’s letter to the Galatians conforms quite closely in its epistolary structure to the θαυμάζω sections of Greek letters of the day.”

¹⁶ Betz (1979, 313) notes that the letter closing in Gal 6:11–18 is “most important for the interpretation of Galatians.”

“simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ” (μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται). Conversely, such a persecution for the cross of Christ may indeed be the result of a concrete lifestyle that is faithful to the genuine gospel.¹⁷ As in Rom 8:18–30, Paul claims that living in accordance with the genuine gospel cannot be divorced from suffering in the present, mainly because believers participate in the so-called *already-not yet* eschatological tension.¹⁸ The third contrast concerns the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal 6:15). For Paul’s adversaries, “the avoidance of persecution for the cross is a legitimate enterprise . . . [and] the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision is of paramount importance” (Weima 1993, 101). Paul, however, dismisses this distinction on account of the new creation in Jesus Christ. To Paul’s mind, God the Father sent his Son to redeem those who were under the curse of the Law by adopting them as his sons and daughters. This opens up an alternative route to salvation, namely through the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ and resurrection from the dead (e.g., Gal 4:4–5). For the believer, both sonship and redemption through the cross give rise to a “new eschatological reality” (Jackson 2010, 109). This new eschatological reality necessitates new internal ethical criteria as part of a new creation (see Jackson 2010). What matters most are therefore not external signs like circumcision. “Paul now lives in the freedom of the new creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ” (Weima 1993, 103). For Paul, following a different gospel and getting circumcised means forfeiting the freedom inherent in his version of the gospel, which constitutes as a new eschatological reality. Taken together, these three contrasts reveal what the genuine gospel is for Paul. It revolves around boasting in the cross, persecution for the cross and new creation through the cross.

When one considers the opening and closing together, it is clear that Paul’s main purpose with this letter was to proclaim the genuine gospel as he had been commissioned to do. This genuine gospel was centred on what God the Father had done for his children through Jesus Christ, which is described both from God the Father’s vantage point in Gal 1:1 and from Jesus Christ’s vantage point in Gal 1:4. His emphasis on what God the Father had done for us through Jesus Christ distinguished Paul from his

¹⁷ *Contra* Betz (1979, 314), who insists that “this looks very much like a caricature, and we must be cautious in assuming that this is what the opponents really have in mind.”

¹⁸ It harks back to Paul’s claim in Gal 1:4 that Jesus Christ gave himself in order to rescue us from the present evil age.

Jewish adversaries. As a new creation through the cross, Paul boasted in the cross and suffered persecution for the cross.

3.1.2 Echoing the Fourth Servant Song

We now turn to the echo of Isa 52:13–53:12^{LXX} in Gal 1:4 (see Harmon 2010, 56–66; Ciampa 1998). As will become clear, this echo supports Paul’s understanding of the gospel *from Jesus Christ’s vantage point*. According to Lindars (1961, 79), early followers of Jesus faced a fundamental challenge: “Why did God allow Jesus to die, if he is the Lord’s Christ?” For apologetic recourse, these early Christians could turn to the Fourth Servant Song, especially Isa 53:12 (see Bock and Glaser 2012). This text seemed to provide an answer, namely that Jesus was foreordained to fulfil the mission of the suffering servant. Isaiah 53:6 was also relevant to the question above, although this latter text bore “a potential hermeneutical ambiguity or ‘gap,’” failing to indicate whether Christ’s death on the cross should be understood as coercive or voluntary (Ciampa 1998, 53). By reading Gal 1:4 and 2:20 together, Ciampa (1998, 54) argues that Christ’s death cannot be regarded as the activity of “a callous God who requires cruel treatment of an innocent servant,” but that it has to be understood in terms of Christ’s “self-sacrificing love.” While dealing with the topic of suffering from the perspective of the servant¹⁹ in the Fourth Servant Song, Fernández (2010, 257) appropriately poses two interpretative questions: (1) “Is it the fruit of the other’s initiative or of his own?” (¿es fruto de la iniciativa de otros o de la propia?); and (2) “Is it a consequence of his decision or of accepting the will of YHWH?” (¿es la consecuencia de su decisión o la consecuencia de aceptar la voluntad de Yhwh?). Despite their formulation, these are not either-or questions that seek a definite answer. Instead, the questions presume that both God and the suffering servant are simultaneously involved in an unfathomable event, as narrated in the Fourth Servant Song. Fernández (2010, 257) goes on to say that “el pasaje expresa magistralmente la bipolaridad de un hecho complejo.” This is because it revolves around “la combinación de la voz pasiva con la activa.”²⁰ That is to say, harmonised but distinct voices should be heard in the Fourth Servant Song. These voices represent not only the will of God, but also the faithfulness of the suffering servant.

¹⁹ Fernández (2010, 257): “el sufrimiento desde la perspectiva del siervo.”

²⁰ My translation: “the passage skilfully expresses the bipolarity of a complex fact . . . the combination of the passive voice with the active one.”

When it comes to the servant's suffering, the protasis in Isa 53:10 seems to introduce the concept of sacrifice. The Septuagint features this protasis as follows: ἐὰν δῶτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας (if you give an offering for sin). The Masoretic Text has a slightly different version of the protasis: וַיִּשָׂא אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּחִילָתוֹ וְעִוְנוֹתָיו (if [the Lord] makes his life a guilt-offering). Isa 53:10^{MT} is not easy to interpret. The term עִוְנוֹתָיו (guilt-offering) does not occur with the verb וַיִּשָׂא ("put" or "set") in a sacrificial context elsewhere in the OT, except for here. Yet, considering that the verb וַיִּשָׂא is used elsewhere to refer to that which will be done through the servants in Isa 40–55 (e.g., Isa 42:4; 49:2; cf. Harmon 2010, 62 n. 63), it seems probable that the author of Isaiah used the same verb in Isa 53:10 to clarify that a guilt-sacrifice will be included in that which will be done through the servant.

The switch from περὶ ἁμαρτίας (concerning sin) in Isa 53:10^{LXX} to ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (for our sins) in Gal 1:4 is interesting.²¹ The former features much more often in the Septuagint (111x) than the latter (5x). The choice to exchange περὶ ἁμαρτίας in Isa 53:10^{LXX} with ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν in Gal 1:4 is relevant to our understanding of Paul's intention with this text. The phrase ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (for our sins) also appears in 1 Cor 15:3, where Paul explains the traditional understanding of the gospel that he inherited from the Lord to the Corinthian congregations: παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς ("For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"; cf., e.g., Gal 1:23). The provenance of such a traditional understanding is possibly Jesus's own statement in Mark 10:45 (par. Matt 20:28): καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν ("For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"). Jesus himself probably borrowed the language from the Fourth Servant Song to make sense of his own death (cf. Moo 2013, 72). If the latter propositions are granted, it would follow that the phrase ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (for our sins) bears the notion of substitution. The same basic idea, namely that Jesus Christ is both a soteriological representative and substitute, can also be found in Rom 5:8, Rom 8:32, Eph 5:2 and Titus 2:14 (Kistemaker 1993, 529). Harmon (2010,

²¹ I am not persuaded by Breytenbach's (2010, 11–33) argument that the terms περὶ ἁμαρτίας (concerning sin) and ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (for our sins) have no cultic bearing. NT textual variants with περί appear in ⱼ⁴⁶ א D F G Ψ 1739 1881; textual variants with ὑπὲρ feature in ⱼ⁵¹ א¹ B H 0278 (cf. Moo 2013).

62) is therefore correct when he says that Paul intended to “emphasize the broader notion of substitution reflected in the phrase ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.” Ultimately, Isa 53:10 highlights both the notion of sacrifice and the notion of substitution.

Let us start with the notion of sacrifice. Based on the syntagmatic repetition of the word יִשְׁפָּן (his life) in vv. 10, 11 and 12 of Isa 53^{MT}, it is clear that the servant’s life revolves around (1) עֲשָׂה (a guilt-offering); (2) לָמַד (a suffering or toil); and (3) מָוֶת (a death) (Fernández 2010, 263). Fernández (2010, 264) points out: “Así pues, עֲשָׂה tendría que ver con una entrega a la muerte que contiene algo de oneroso y violento (Isa 49:4).”²² Hence, in Isa 53:10, the term עֲשָׂה (guilt-offering) denotes a violent death as a substitution for guilt. Paradoxically, the negative ordeals of the suffering servant act as a catalyst for receiving God’s positive promises. In other words, the עֲשָׂה (guilt-offering) of v. 10 refers in the context of Isa 53:10–12 to the servant’s act of handing himself over to a humiliating death so that God’s salvific promises may be fulfilled. It follows that in the Fourth Servant Song, the death of the suffering servant should be understood as a sacrificial death.

Both textually and theologically, the Septuagint’s version of Isa 53:10–12 differs from the version in the Masoretic Text. One notices almost immediately that the term ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν (your soul) does not feature in the protasis of Isa 53:10^{LXX}, so that the threefold syntagmatic repetition of יִשְׁפָּן in Isa 53:10–12^{MT} is not replicated by Isa 53:10–12^{LXX} (see above). Moreover, Sapp (1998, 176) points out that “*the LXX has made the Lord’s vindication of the Servant and his righteousness the dominant theme in v. 11b, not the Servant’s justification of sinners*” (italics original). Whereas the Masoretic Text of Isa 53:10 focuses on the suffering servant, the Septuagint’s version focuses on the addressees and the Lord (cf. Ekblad 1999, 240). Unlike the author of Isa 53:10–11^{MT}, the Septuagint’s translator deliberately differentiates between ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν (your soul) in Isa 53:10b and τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ (his soul) in 53:11a. This is done not only to associate the addressees of Isa 53:10b^{LXX} with the “we” group of the rest of pericope (see below), but also to indicate that “[t]he servant is clearly a separate individual who is radically identified with people’s condition, vicariously suffering for them” (Ekblad 1999, 250). Harmon (2010, 145) agrees with Ekblad by saying that “the Isaianic Servant is the one who accomplishes the comforting of his people, is vindicated, and bears the sin of many (Isa 53:4–

²² My translation: “Thus, עֲשָׂה would have to be understood as a delivery to death that contains something onerous and violent.”

5, 10–12).”

These observations would suggest that, although Gal 1:4 seems to draw on the Septuagint’s version of Isa 53:10–12 (cf. Wagner 2003, 179), Paul would have been acquainted with theological interpretations of the Fourth Servant Song prevalent in “pre-Masoretic” texts like 1QIsa (cf. Sapp 1998, 170–192; *contra* Morales 2010, 84–85). Sapp (1998, 188) is of the opinion that these differences between the Septuagintal and Masoretic versions of Isa 53:10–12 explain why Paul did not quote directly from Isa 53:10–12^{LXX} in either Galatians or his other letters (see *Loci citati vel allegati* in NA²⁷). Nonetheless, he goes on to say that “Isaiah 53 (LXX), except for vv. 10–11b, still carried many statements implying atonement that could be used when explaining the Christian gospel” (Sapp 1998, 188; see Finlan 2004; Morales 2010). Drawing attention to one of these verses in particular, Harmon (2010, 59) argues that “Paul has made explicit a substitutionary understanding of the death of Jesus that at best might be considered implicit in Isa 53:6.” In this context, one should keep in mind that the echo of the Fourth Servant Song in Gal 1:4 represents Paul’s understanding of the gospel *from Jesus Christ’s vantage point*, namely the *Hingabe* (“submission”) of Jesus Christ. Conversely, Gal 1:1 represents Paul’s understanding of the same gospel *from God the Father’s vantage point*, namely God’s vindication of this *Hingabe*. As such, God’s vindication of the servant in Isa 53:10–12^{LXX} would have been appropriate for Paul’s rhetorical intent with the letter opening, which included explaining the nature of the servant’s suffering (see the relevant questions of Fernández above). In the Masoretic Text of the Fourth Servant Song, the author deliberately featured harmonised but distinct voices, thereby giving expression not only to the will of God, but also to the faithfulness of the suffering servant. It would seem that those responsible for the translation of the Fourth Servant Song in the Septuagint made the latter aspect, namely the faithfulness of the suffering servant, more explicit, while making the former aspect, namely the will of God, more implicit (see Ekblad 1999, 242). It should therefore not come as a surprise that Paul made an explicit link between “the self-sacrificial death of Jesus and God’s will” on the basis of “his reading of Isa 53:10” when he explained his understanding of the gospel at the outset of this letter (Harmon 2010, 64).²³

²³ Since it cannot be determined whether Paul’s echoes of the Fourth Servant Song derive from “pre-Masoretic texts” or the Septuagint, it is perhaps better to conclude in terms of “both-and,” instead of “either-or.”

We move on now from the notion of sacrifice to the notion of substitution. In addition to Paul's replacement of *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* (concerning sin) with *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν* (for our sins), the broader literary context of Isa 52:13–53:12 also supports a substitutionary understanding of Jesus's death in Gal. 3:10. This literary context indicates that the sacrificial death of the fourth servant relates to the sins of Israel, not his own sins (see Janowski 1993, 1–24; Fernández 2010). Isa 53:12 closes the servant song with the following declaration: “and he himself bore the sins of many” (MT: *וְהוּא חָטָא רַבִּים נַפְשָׁם*; LXX: *καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν*). Despite this unambiguous declaration, scholarly opinion on the notion of substitution or *Stellvertretung* in Isa 52:13–53:12 still varies. Although most scholars would agree that the Fourth Servant Song gives expression to the notion of *Stellvertretung*, there is disagreement about the kind of *Stellvertretung* intended by the text, given the theologically loaded nature of the concept. Much of the disagreement seems to be influenced by the Kantian belief that it would be nonsensical to transfer one's guilt to another party. In the Fourth Servant Song, however, the notion of *Stellvertretung* acts as an alternative to the Kantian belief in the non-transferability of a person's guilt to someone else (see Janowski 1993, 1–24). Within the narrative flow of Isa 52:13–53:12^{LXX}, an *epistemological change* takes place in Isa 53:4 that involves the relation between “us” or “we” and the suffering of the servant: “He bears our sins, and is suffered for us; and we considered him to be in trouble, in suffering and in affliction (my translation).”²⁴ Previously, this “we” group had thought that the servant had suffered on account of his own sins, but subsequently they came to know that the servant had suffered on account of *their* sins. From the “we” group's vantage point, the sacrificial death of the suffering servant is now understood as substitutionary or *stellvertretbar*. Fernández (2010, 251) points out that this epistemological change follows from the acknowledgement of the radical novelty of salvation. At first glance, however, the radical novelty of salvation seems like an oxymoron, since such a modality of salvation is beyond all understanding.²⁵ From the servant's vantage point, the sacrificial death represents his voluntary and faithful obedience to the will of YHWH. From YHWH's vantage point, then, the sacrificial death represents his initiative to reconcile the “we”

²⁴ οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει.

²⁵ Fernández (2010, 251): “[L]a salvación emerge de un intercambio de bien y de mal . . . Con el oxímoro se indica la radical novedad de la salvación cuya modalidad de actuación supera todo entendimiento.”

group with Himself. As far as Gal 1:4 is concerned, all the vantage points reflected in the Fourth Servant Song should be included in our understanding of Jesus Christ's vantage point. Paul's understanding of the gospel, as reflected in Gal 1:4, can thus be articulated as follows: God the Father took the initiative to redeem us from the present evil age by sending his Son. Viewed from the "we" group's vantage point in the Fourth Servant Song, Paul felt it necessary to declare in the opening of his letter to the Galatians, as part of his understanding of the gospel, that Jesus Christ bore our sins vicariously by giving himself in a sacrificial death for our sins, on the basis of his voluntary and faithful obedience to the will of God the Father. As a result, believers came to be redeemed from this evil age by being reconciled with God. This notion of *Stellvertretung* is consistent with the "exclusive representation" discussed earlier. It is for this reason that Finlan (2004, 183) criticises Hofius's (1989, 33–49) advocacy of an "inclusive substitution" (*inkludierende Stellvertretung*), claiming that "Hofius has undervalued the prophetic viewpoint, and overvalued a ritual gesture." Finlan (2004, 166–192) also criticises Breitenbach's (2010, 11–33) view that Paul's use of the term ἁμαρτίας (sin) bears no cultic metaphor. In a generic sense, Finlan (2004, 118) comes to the conclusion that "sacrificial metaphor inevitably implies that the Deity is *conciliated* by a cultic or economic transaction" (*italics original*).²⁶

How do these observations relate to Gal 3:10? Most obviously, the echo of the Fourth Servant Song in Gal 1:4 seems to support a substitutionary soteriology. This is crucial for Paul's understanding of the role of Christ in relation to the curse of the Law. Reading Gal 3:10 in light of Gal 1:4 and its echo of the Fourth Servant Song leads to the conclusion that believers could not, according to Paul, have avoided the curse of the Law without the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Like the suffering servant of Isa 52:13–53:12, but in a holistic way, Jesus Christ bore the sins of believers (past and present) when he gave himself as a sacrifice unto death, thereby redeeming them from this evil age by reconciling them with God the Father. As Gal 3:11 continues to explain, a new eschatological reality is realised in the process, requiring new internal ethical standards. What matters most in this new creation is therefore not external expressions of piety or belonging like circumcision, but faith. To Paul's mind, the

²⁶ When it comes to sacrifice as a metaphor in the Second Temple period, Söding (2005, 382) is of the opinion that "das Opfer ist deshalb nicht Teil des *do ut des*, sondern dankbar Ausdruck verheißener Vergebung" (my translation: "the sacrifice is therefore not a part of *do ut des*, but a thankful expression of promised forgiveness").

substitutionary, sacrificial death of Jesus Christ has freed believers from the curse of the Law. Hence, it would seem that a proper reflection on Gal 1:4 and its echoing of the Fourth Servant Song supports the traditional reading of Gal 3:10.

As a final observation, it is worth noting that Gal 3:13 resonates strongly with Gal 1:4 (see Harmon 2010, 142–143). Speaking specifically about these two verses, Harmon (2010) comments:

The parallel nature of these statements within the same letter encourages interpreting them in light of each other. Thus Christ becoming a curse for “us” can be understood as explaining how Christ gave himself for “us.” *In his self-sacrificial death* Christ became a curse for all who would be identified with him *by faith*.²⁷ (p. 143)

This supports not only the case that Gal 1:4, and its echo of the Fourth Servant Song, prepared the way for a correct interpretation of Gal 3:10–14, but also the case that the traditional interpretation of Gal 3:10 should be preferred.

3.2 Galatians 3:2, 5

Galatians 3:1–5 contains a series of five rhetorical questions centred on sharp contrasts between faith and the works of the Law. In vv. 2 and 5 of Gal 3, Paul uses the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (from a hearing by faith), which probably echoes Isa 53:1^{LXX}: κύριε τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη; (my translation: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”). While the noun ἀκοή denotes a passive action by hearers, namely a “report,” in Isa 53:1^{LXX}, it is possible to regard the same noun as denoting either a passive action by hearers, namely a “report,” or an active action by hearers, namely a “hearing,” in Gal 3:2, 5.²⁸ Understood as a passive action, the noun would reference the gospel message proclaimed by the Lord’s herald. Understood as an active action, the noun would reference the way in which the herald’s message is received by his hearers, namely through faith (cf. e.g., Rom 10:16).²⁹ On the one hand, the rhetorical questions in Isa 53:1^{LXX}

²⁷ Italics mine.

²⁸ E.g., NIV, TNIV and NRS interpret it as a report, while ESV and NASB regard it as a hearing.

²⁹ For the comparison with Rom 10:16, see Harmon 2010 (131–132).

expose Israel's failure to believe. On the other hand, Fernández (2010, 291) points out that “el cuarto canto en el complejo deuterisaiano constituye el punto decisivo para que se produzca el paso a la consolación.”³⁰ This paradox between Israel's failure to believe and God's consolation explains to some extent why Paul put forward faith as the *modus* through which a new eschatological reality needed to be realised. The echoing of Isa 53:1^{LXX} in Gal 3:2, 5 supports the idea that for Paul faith was integral to the gospel he had been commissioned to proclaim. As the “we” group's epistemological change illustrates (see above), it is likely that the Fourth Servant Song “reflects the perspective of a community that recognises its own guilt and responsibility before God for failing to live up to his standards” (Ciampa 1998, 60). In addition, the Isaianic echo in Gal 3:2, 5 shines light on Paul's interpretation of the Abraham story in Gal 3:6–9,³¹ which in turn forms a counterpart to the catena of scriptural quotations in Gal 3:10–14. Briefly put, Paul's claims in Gal 3:6–9 indicate that “[j]ust as, then, it was Abraham's faith that led to his being considered ‘in the right’ before God, so it was the faith of the Galatians that led them to be ‘declared right’” (Moo 2013, 188).

In this way, the echoes of the Fourth Servant Song in Gal 1–3 assist in understanding Paul's use of scriptural quotations in Gal 3:10–14. The paradox in Isa 53:1^{LXX} between Israel's failure to believe and God's consolation underscores the importance of faith. Faith is the means through which the new eschatological reality is to be realised, not works of the Law. Conversely, the echoing of Isa 53:1^{LXX} in Gal 3:2, 5 supports the traditional understanding of Gal 3:10 insofar as the consolation originates from God, because no one, including his servant Israel, can perform the Law perfectly.

3.3 *The suffering servant and the Deuteronomistic pattern*

Galatians 3:10 should be understood in terms of Paul's engagement with Deut 27–30 as a whole (see Wright 1991, 144–148; Waters 2006, 93–103). This latter text has a strong Deuteronomistic slant (Morland 1995, 33). It is well-known that much of the OT is influenced by a Deuteronomistic outlook, according to which the history of Israel can be understood as a repeated pattern of sin-punishment-repentance-forgiveness-return. This pattern has sometimes in scholarship been referred to as the Sin-Exile-

³⁰ My translation: “. . . the fourth song in the Deutero-Isaiah complex is the decisive point at which the way to consolation is produced.”

³¹ For the Abraham story of Gen 15:6 in Paul's letters, see Watson 2004 (174–193).

Return pattern. The latter term is misleading, though, since God's specific form of punishment did not in most individual cases include exile.

Be that as it may, scholars like Wright (1991, 144–148) and Waters (2006, 93–103) understand the phrase “under a curse” (ὑπὸ κατάραν) in Gal 3:10 as referring to the curses of Deut 27–30. According to Waters (2006, 100), “both Deut 27:26 and, in view of Paul's citation form at Gal 3:10b, Deut 27–30 play an indispensable role in Paul's conception of the law's curses.” According to Wright (1991, 147), the implied minor premise of Gal 3:10 is that Israel *in toto* failed to keep the Torah, seeing as the curses of Deut 27–30 connote a continuing Exile for Israel. Yet, Waters (2006, 96–97) points out that this particular proposal by Wright not only lacks textual support, but also delimits the purview of Gal 3:10 to Jews only.³² Alternatively, Waters (2006, 97) understands Gal 3:10 as maintaining that it is impossible for those who are subject to the works of the Law to comply fully with the demands of the Law. This line of interpretation ultimately leads Waters (2006, 99) to conclude as follows: “It appears that the traditional ‘implied premise’ view is a correct explanation of Paul's use of Deut 27:26.”

Given the importance of Deut 27–30 for interpreting Gal 3:10, it is not insignificant that the Fourth Servant Song, together with the rest of Deutero-Isaiah, presupposes a Deuteronomic pattern (cf. Harmon 2010, 144–145). References to the Exile are abundant in Isa 40–55 (e.g., Isa 42:22–25; 45:13; 49:14–21, 24–26; 50:1–2; 52:2–4). According to Isa 43:24b, Israel has burdened God with her sins and wearied Him with her offences; and according to Isa 50:1, Israel was sold into Exile because of her sins and transgressions. Yet, despite the sinfulness of Israel, Exile is not the final word. As in Deut 27–30 (esp. 30:1–10), the narrative does not conclude with Exile and collapse, but culminates in the benevolent restoration of Israel by YHWH (Barker 1998, 302). In accordance with the Deuteronomic pattern of Sin-Exile(Punishment)-Return, God's promises of restoration are communicated to Israel (e.g., Isa 43:1–7; 44:1–5, 21–23). God will take care of Israel's sins and transgressions (e.g., Isa 43:25; 44:22). This restoration will be carried out for the sake of God's own name (e.g., Isa 48:11). Given both the prevalence of a Deuteronomic stance in Deutero-Isaiah and the impact of Deut 27–30 on Gal 3:10, it seems highly

³² Wright (1991, 146) states: “For Paul, the death of Jesus, precisely on a Roman cross which symbolized so clearly the continuing subjugation of the people of God, brought the exile to a climax. The King of the Jews took the brunt of the exile on himself.”

likely that Gal 3:10 would have been influenced by the servant songs in Isa 40–55, especially the Fourth Servant Song in Isa 52:13–53:12.

Crucially, the works of the suffering servant in the Fourth Servant Song are integral both to God’s promises of restoration and his dealings with the sins and transgressions of Israel. In this regard, Chisholm Jr. (2012) says:

So we see that Isaiah’s fourth Servant Song is indeed a rags-to-riches story, about a despised Servant who is eventually exalted because he was willing to suffer for sinners and endure the horrible consequences of their transgressions. But embedded within the Servant’s story is another rags-to-riches story, about wandering sheep, hardened rebels against God, diseased and destined for destruction, who, because of the Servant’s suffering, end up being healed and transformed. (p. 193)

In other words, the suffering servant acts as a substitute for the sinful servant Israel when he experiences the curse of the Law invoked upon Israel (e.g., Deut 28:19). God’s promise to the suffering servant in Isa 53:10b resonates with God’s promise of restoration in Deut 30:6.³³

Deutero-Isaiah further introduces a number of novel elements to the Deuteronomistic pattern if compared to texts like Deut 27–30. Firstly, in addition to a return from Exile (in the spirit of a new exodus³⁴), Isa 40–55 also foresees the restoration of Abrahamic promises (e.g., Isa 54:1–3). The references to a “guilt-offering” (חַטָּאת) and to “seed” or “offspring” (זָרַע; σπέρμα) in Isa 53:10 are reminiscent of Abraham’s story in Gen 22:17–18 (Euler 1934, 120). That is to say, the Abrahamic promise, which is revoked in Deut 28:62 due to the curse of the Law, is restored in the Fourth Servant Song through the works of the suffering servant, who follows in the footsteps of Abraham. In this way, the suffering servant completes the Deuteronomistic pattern of Sin-Exile-Return. Secondly, the “return” phase of the Deuteronomistic cycle is accomplished through a suffering servant. While the servants representing Israel in Isa 42–48 fail their mission as a result of their idolatry and sinfulness (see Harmon 2010, 142–143), a separate servant succeeds in bringing about salvation in the novel way of vicarious suffering (see Watts 1990, 49–56). Thirdly, the return from Exile

³³ Deut 30:6: “Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

³⁴ For the notion of the New Exodus in Isaiah, see Watts (2000).

is accompanied by God's outpouring out of his Spirit (e.g., Isa 43:16–21, 44:1–5, 48:16). This is especially true of the suffering servant, who is not only filled with the Holy Spirit, but also works together with the Holy Spirit. Fourthly, in accordance with Israel's belief in a divine monotheistic sovereignty, restoration goes hand-in-hand with the blessing of the nations (e.g., Isa 49:6; 51:1–5, 10; 52:11–12). As Isa 52:15 makes clear, the nations' blessing is included in the purview of the works of the suffering servant: "Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand." Israel and the nations will be beneficiaries of the same redemptive works of the suffering servant (e.g., Isa 54:1–3).

All of these novel features are in some way or another represented in Gal 3:10–14. Paul deliberately recalls the Abrahamic promise in Gal 3:14, mentioning "Abraham" (Ἀβραάμ) expressly. The irreplaceable role of Christ as the redeemer in Gal 3:10–14 is reminiscent of the exclusive role played by the suffering servant in redeeming Israel. In this regard, the following phrase in Gal 3:13 is particularly appropriate: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα). The mentioning of the Spirit (πνεῦμα) in Gal 3:14 is further very unlikely to be coincidental in light of the role played by the Holy Spirit in Isa 40–55. It is finally not surprising to see "the Gentiles" (τὰ ἔθνη) mentioned in Gal 3:14 when the universalistic perspective of Deutero-Isaiah is taken into consideration. This universalistic perspective is particularly reflected in the prospect that "the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles" (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἢ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται). It is further significant that "the Gentiles" are syntactically emphasised by appearing first in the Greek sentence. Taken together, these features create a very strong case for reading Gal 3:10 not only in light of Deut 27–30, but also in light of Isa 40–55. In turn, a reading of Gal 3:10 in light of Isa 40–55 almost forces one to accept the traditional reading of this Pauline text, according to which Christ suffered a sacrificial, substitutionary death for the sins of believers.

4 Concluding Remarks

This study has taken a closer look at the presence of Isaianic echoes in Paul's letter to the Galatians, including particularly the Fourth Servant Song in Isa 52:13–53:12. It was argued that these echoes support a traditional reading of Gal 3:10, according to which this Pauline text presupposes the unstated

minor premise that no one can perform everything written in the Law perfectly. An important implication of the traditional reading of Gal 3:10 is that the death of Jesus should be understood as a substitutionary, sacrificial event during which Jesus compensated for the sins of humanity. These findings go against more recent proposals by representatives of the New Perspective on Paul, who deny not only that Gal 3:10 presupposes an unstated minor premise, but also that Paul understood the death of Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice. Although an appeal to Isaianic echoes does not “prove” the traditional reading of Gal 3:10, it does provide additional support for such a reading, strengthening it appreciably.

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kilisuto@gmail.com

P. O. Box 1170, Newlands 0049, South Africa