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The Current Debate on the Relationship between Sin and Sickness in John 5:14

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Abstract: The article focuses on the understanding of sin in John 5:14, as well as the relationship between sin and sickness presented in this verse. It provides a thorough *status quaestionis* on both of these issues. After examining various hypotheses regarding the meaning of sin in John 5:14, the Johannine notion of sin as unbelief is expounded as the most convincing. This sin encompasses the past, present, and future life of the healed man. Thus, contrary to the exegetical *opinio communis*, the cause-and-effect relationship between sin and sickness does not apply to John 5:14. In light of this explanation, the messages of John 5:14 and 9:2–3 do not contradict each other. Jesus' words in 5:14, intentionally pronounced in the temple, should be understood as an invitation to follow him in faith.

Keywords: sin, sickness, John 5:14, the Gospel of John

1. The Problem and Hypothesis

Referring to the seemingly hopeless attempts made by many authors to explain the function of John 5:14 in its context, Ernst Haenchen confessed that "[e]xegetes have expended a great deal of effort on this saying."[1] The main problematic issue in this verse concerns the unexpected introduction of the topic of sin. The Johannine narrative in 5:1–9 presents the healing of a paralyzed man performed by Jesus. Following Jesus' command to stand up, pick up his mat and walk (5:8–9), the cured man disappeared into the throngs that filled Jerusalem during the feast (5:1). Jesus also withdrew from the scene, mixing with the festive crowd, and the healed man was left with no information whatsoever about the identity of his healer (5:13). After an undetermined period of time, Jesus found this previously lame man in the temple and said to him: "You have become whole. Sin no more, lest anything worse happen to you" (5:14). The reference to sin comes as a surprise to the reader, since in the rest of the narrative there is no mention of any sinful condition regarding this man. It is

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[1] E. Haenchen, *John 1. A Commentary on the Gospel of John. Chapters 1–6* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1984) 247.

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in fact the first occurrence of the verb ἁμαρτάνω ("to sin") in the Fourth Gospel (8:11; 9:2.3), and only the second Johannine mention of the concept of sin at all, after the use of the noun ἁμαρτία ("sin") in 1:29, where Jesus was described as the one who would take away the "sin of the world." There are other intriguing issues connected with Jesus' utterance in John 5:14, e.g., the use of the verb "found," or the temple as the place of the encounter.[2] But, for our present purposes, two aspects seem vital: first, the nature of the man's sin and second, the relationship between sin and sickness.[3]

Jeffrey L. Staley expressed the first puzzling issue well: "The suddenness of Jesus' warning, his failure to flesh out the specifics of the man's 'sin,' and the narrator's disinterest in illuminating the reader, all have the effect of forcing the reader to fill this new gap by attempting to explain the healed man's character flaw."[4] The pressing question then is: what wrong or sin was the cured man guilty of ? The second issue – in my opinion intrinsically connected with the understanding of sin in 5:14 – is the relationship between sin and sickness in this passage. In 1995, John Christopher Thomas argued that despite a good deal of scholarly attention devoted to the pericope of John 5 generally, this aspect of the narrative has not received enough consideration. His contribution was aimed at moving the discussion forward, and it indeed helped fill the gap in the scholarly literature regarding the relationship between the man's infirmity and sin.[5] Interestingly enough, in his four-page exposition of this verse, he did focus on this relationship, but did not discuss the nature of this sin, which, in my assessment, is the key to solving the mystery of John 5:14.

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[2] C. Karakolis, "«Afterwards, Jesus found him in the Temple». Looking for Implicit Motifs in John 5:14a," *LS* 42 (2019) 175–189.

[3] Ernst Haenchen (*John 1*, 247) himself argued that the evangelist has carried over Jesus' saying in 5:14 from his source, damaging the original form of the composition: "the original form of the story ended with the word to the man who was cured to return to his home [v. 9a], and an editor decided to insert a moralistic ending." The existing narrative does not answer the following questions, however: "Of what did the sin that struck the lame man 38 years earlier and laid him low for so long consist, and how young must he have been at that time?" This source- or redaction-critical explanation is shared by a few other commentators. Without denying the attractiveness of this hypothesis, our task consists in explaining the available form of the text, assuming that there is a logical coherence of the narrative produced by its final redactor. Rudolf Schnackenburg (*The Gospel According to St John.* II. *Commentary on Chapters 5–12* [New York: Crossroad 1990] 92–93) argues that vv. 9c–15 should be regarded as "the evangelist's commentary" to the account of the healing itself (vv. 1–9b). In turn, Antoine Duprez (*Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs. Á propos de Jean V* [CahRB 12; Paris: Gabalda 1970] 146, 169) claims that v. 14 is a later insertion into the Johannine text. It was understood as advice or a warning given to newly baptized persons, which reflected the conviction that all falls after baptism result in spiritual death. Marie-Émile Boismard and Arnaud Lamouille (*L'Évangile de Jean* [Synopse des Quatre Évangiles en français 3; Paris: Cerf 1987] 156) opt for the existence of three different strata in John 5:1–18 (Jean II-A, Jean II-B and Jean III), and that vv. 9c–16a.c belong to the second stage (Jean II-B). Urban C. von Wahlde (*The Gospel and Letters of John*. I. *Introduction, Analysis, and Reference* [ECC; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans 2010] 570) deems 5:14 to be part of 5:9b–19, which comes from the second stage of the Gospel's composition, added to 9:1–9a, stemming from the first stage. Within the framework of source-critical analysis, Leonard T. Witkamp ("The Use of Traditions in John 5.1–18," *JSNT* 25 [1985] 27) argued that John 5:14 belonged to the source and constituted the ending of the original story (vv. 1–9a + 14). According to his argument, John could not have used this verse in vv. 2–9 "because he was heading for the sabbath conflict. The theme of v. 14b would have led him away from that purpose, so he had either to cut it away or to postpone it. Obviously, he chose the latter possibility, presumably since he did not want to drop such an important feature of his traditional narrative, the more so since the theme of ζῳοποίησις (5.21!) is already prepared, even present, in the combination of healing and forgiveness of sins." Haenchen was aware that his solution "does not explain everything," because it does not do justice to the present text, namely the author's capacity for building a logically coherent narrative. Nevertheless, Witkamp gave some persuasive reasons for the inclusion of this verse in the Johannine narrative.

[4] J.L. Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Character in John 5 and 9," *Semeia* 53 (1991) 62.

According to the majority of commentators, including John Christopher Thomas, John 5:14 implies that the paralytic's sickness resulted from his previous sin(s). Jesus' words "sin no *more*," referring to this man's future actions, assume that there was a sin or sins related to this man's past actions.[6] The Fourth Gospel itself, however, seems to give contradictory evidence regarding the connection between sin and sickness. On the one hand, it was widely held in ancient times that any ailment, suffering, or even death constituted divine punishment for sin, a view reflected elsewhere within the biblical tradition (Job 5:17–19; Sir 38:15; Acts 5:1–11; 1 Cor 11:29–30; Jas 5:14–16). The passage, John 5:14, could simply be viewed as another illustration of this concept. On the other hand, in John 9:3 Jesus denies the interpretation that illness is retribution for sin, a view that is already found in the Book of Job. This blatant contradiction, evidenced by comparing John 5:14 and 9:3, begs for explanation. Is then any way of reconciling these two texts, actually two pronouncements of the Johannine Jesus? Both were written by the same author and, even assuming the multi-stage evolution of this Gospel, its final redactor would not have left unnoticed such a contradiction. A widely embraced solution to this problem is the view that there is, on the one hand, suffering or sickness not as the result of any sin (as illustrated in 9:3) and, at the same time, suffering or sickness that does stem from human guilt (as exemplified by 5:14).[7] Already Thomas Aquinas, commenting on John 5:14, noted: "Christ mentioned sin only to some he cured and not to all, for not all infirmities are due to previous sins: some come from one's natural disposition, and some are permitted as a trial, as with Job."[8] Here Aquinas himself acknowledged the cause-and-effect logic, meaning that man's illness came to him as a result of his previous sin(s). Besides those modern commentators who fully endorse this causal relationship in John 5:14, there are also those authors who deem it possible,[9] dubious,[10] or reject it altogether,[11] arguing that this text is not addressing this issue directly (e.g. stating that "evidently the man had been lame since birth").[12] This study offers a different take on the relationship between sin and sickness in John 5:14. It is based on the assumption that the understanding of sin in 5:14 has a direct bearing on the existence or non-existence of a causal relationship between sin (guilt) and sickness (suffering). If one understands sin as referring to the primordial fall from the Book of Genesis, then any sickness and suffering is the direct result of sin.[13] If, however, one focuses on the Johannine understanding of sin as unbelief, then it is possible that the very nature of sin, as understood in John 5:14, has nothing to do with the lame man's sickness. The same logic lies behind Jesus' words about the Galileans who suffered a terrible fate at Pilate's hands, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell (Luke 13:1–5). In our opinion, John 5:14 does not focus on the past sins of the crippled man, but on the past, present and future sin of unbelief in Jesus. As a consequence, the causal relationship between sin and sickness is not implied in 5:14.

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[5] J.C. Thomas, "«Stop Sinning Lest Something Worse Come Upon You»: The Man at the Pool in John 5," *JSNT* 59 (1995) 3–20.

[6] To give only a few examples from the last hundred years of scholarship: B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John. Introduction and Notes on the Authorized Version* (London: Murray 1908) 83 ("the connection is implied"); M.C. Merrill, *John. The Gospel of Belief. An Analytic Study of the Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1976) 105 ("«Sin no more» implied that his former state was a direct result of sin"); D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1990) 246 ("The unavoidable implication is that the bad thing that has already happened was occasioned by the sin which the person must not repeat."); Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 16 ("Jesus implies that the man had been ill because he has personally sinned"); C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2003) 643 ("this man's malady apparently stemmed from sin"); G.R. Osborne, *The Gospel of John* (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary 13; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House 2007) 78; U.C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*. II. *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans 2010) 220 ("Here Jesus articulates the opinion, common in Judaism, that the man's physical illness was caused by sinning."); W.F. Cook, *John. Jesus Christ is God* (The Focus on the Bible Commentary Series; Fearn, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications 2016) 94 ("Jesus' words imply that the man's condition had been the result of sin").

[7] For instance, L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John. Revised Edition* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1995) 272 ("Jesus repudiates the idea that disasters like blindness are inevitably caused by sin. But he does not say that they are never caused by sin."); R.A. Whitacre, *John* (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 4; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1999) 122 ("We should […] avoid the view that illness is always

In this article, we will present a detailed exegesis of the crucial phrase in John 5:14, concentrating on its three components: (1) becoming whole; (2) sinning no more; and

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connected to some particular sin [...]. We should also reject the idea that there is never such a connection."); K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium.* I. *Kapitel 1–10*, 2 ed. (TKNT 4; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2004) 201 ("Es gibt unverschuldetes Leiden. Aber es gibt auch verschuldetes Leiden."); A.T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 2005) 196 ("A connection between particular sins and a disease is not accepted as a general rule but it is not excluded in specific cases.").

[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Thomas Aquinas in Translation; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America 2010) I, 266–267.

[9] J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark 1928) I, 235 ("quite possibly"); J.R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2010) 298 ("a distinct possibility").

[10] R. Kysar, *John* (ACNT; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg 1986) 78 ("Jesus' words [...] are not necessarily an indication that Jesus or John embraced the view that illness results from wrongdoing"). David A. Croteau ("Repentance Found? The Concept of Repentance in the Fourth Gospel," *MSJ* 24/1 [2013] 115) notes that the connection between the sin and the disease in 5:14 is "unclear."

[11] C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text. Second Edition* (London: SPCK 1978) 255 ("It is neither said nor implied that the man's illness was the consequence of sin"); G.L. Borchert, *John 1–11* (NAC 25A; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman 1996) 235 ("These words are not meant to be a cause-and-effect statement related to his sickness or paralysis."); G.R. O'Day, "The Gospel of John. Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," R.A. Culpepper – G.R. O'Day, *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 1995) IX, 579 ("it seems wrong to read Jesus' words in v. 14 as embracing the traditional linkage of sin and illness").

[12] B.M. Newman – E.A. Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John* (UBS Handbook Series; New York: United Bible Societies 1980) 150.

[13] Donald Carson (*John*, 246) noted: "It is a commonplace in many strands of Jewish and Christian theology that suffering and tragedy are the effluent of the fall, the corollary of life lived in a fallen and rebellious universe. In that sense, all sickness is the result of sin, but not necessarily of some specific, individual sin."

(3) the idea that there is something worse than sickness which can happen to the cured man. Having rendered different opinions and interpretations of these three elements, we will focus on the understanding of sin reflected in this passage and also the relationship between sin and sickness. Our presentation is aimed at describing an up-to-date *status quaestionis* on both pressing issues, indicating the most convincing solutions.

2. "You have become whole"

The adjective ὑγιής occurs seven times in the Fourth Gospel and refers exclusively to a healed paralytic (5:4.6.9.11.14.15; 7:23). Marie-Émile Boismard and Arnaud Lamouille argue that the number seven is intentionally devised by a second redactor of this textual stratum (Jean II-B).[14] The number seven in antiquity symbolized totality, thus its deliberate use pointed out the wholeness of the healing. In their interpretation, the man was cured "totalement," "tout entire," i.e. "dans son corps and dans son âme."[15] Leaving aside the somehow dubious numerological argument, the five uses of the same word ὑγιής in the same pericope clearly demonstrates an emphasis. In the last occurrence of ὑγιής (7:23), it is said that Jesus made "an entire man whole" (ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγιῆ). The wholeness of healing might also be argued by referring to the semantics. The basic meaning of ὑγιής with regard to persons is "healthy, in good health," although this adjective might be translated as "whole," "intact," as in Lysias' *Against Andocides* (6,12; LCL 244, 121–122) with reference to Hermes, who "was sound and entire" (ὑγιᾶ τε καὶ ὅλον εἶναι).[16] The use of the adjective ὑγιής thus suggests an integral restoration of this man.

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[14] Verse 4 is included in this counting, although, according to Bruce M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2 ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 2002] 179), this verse is "a gloss whose secondary character is clear from (1) its absence from the earliest and best witnesses [...], (2) the presence of asterisks or obeli to mark the words as spurious in more than twenty Greek witnesses [...], (3) the presence of non-Johannine words or expressions [...], and (4) the rather wide diversity of variant forms in which the verse was transmitted." Nevertheless, Boismard and Lamouille (*L'Évangile de Jean*, 157) argue that v. 4 belonged to the original text written by Jean II-B, and its unusual linguistic style (seven non-Johannine words in one sentence) might be influenced by "une certaine façon de parler en usage à propos des sanctuaires païen d'Asie Mineure."

[15] Boismard – Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, 153 and 162–163. In their opinion, this "total healing" alludes to baptism, because Jean II-B was highly interested in sacraments. Interestingly, in the Curetonian Syriac version of John 5:2, the text runs: "there was in Jerusalem a baptistery." It might suggest that "the Bethesda pools was used as a place of Christian baptism, a fact likely enough in and of itself in view of the paucity of places of abundant water in Jerusalem" (J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament. The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church. Revised Edition* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1992] 232). Already Tertulian (d. 240) (*De Batismo* 5,5–6) created a link between John 5 and baptism: angels are present in baptism, which achieves spiritual healing, just as the angel was present at the Bethesda pool, bringing about physical healing. This baptismal interpretation is followed by a substantial number of commentators from antiquity until today, although some authors "find the basis for baptismal interpretation «fragile» or see an antibaptismal motif reflected in the fact that the water was not efficacious" (Keener, *John*, 638).

[16] Cf. F. Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2015) *s.v.* ὑγιής.

According to some commentators, the emphatic use of the term ὑγιής might imply that the healed man is not only cured, but also forgiven of his sins.[17] There are two arguments in favor of this interpretation. (1) In the context of 7:23, where the phrase "an entire man whole" occurs, Jesus compares the practice of performing circumcisions on the Sabbath with his own act of healing the paralytic man on the Sabbath – both, strictly speaking, potential Sabbath violations. John Christopher Thomas asks, "It is, of course, possible that Jesus is contrasting the Jewish action of circumcision, which affects one part of the body, with his healing that affected the entire body. But is it not possible that the use of ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγιῆ signifies more […]?"[18] In fact, circumcision was not a reality affecting exclusively the physical dimension of man. On the contrary, it was an external sign of a dramatic and fundamental change on the spiritual level as the circumcised person entered into a covenant relationship with God and Israel, God's chosen people. (2) It has been noted that Jesus' utterance in 5:14 has a particular structure, described long ago by Michel de Goedt and named "revelatory scheme."[19] It starts with ἴδε after which follows the description of the person, which reveals something new about his status, dignity, identity, or mission (cf. 1:19–34; 1:35–39; 1:47–51; 19:24–27). As John Christopher Thomas noted, "In this case Jesus finds the person, says Ἰδε, and pronounces that he has been made whole. Perhaps this formula is used intentionally to draw attention to the nature of his wholeness."[20] The use of the perfect tense of the verb γίνομαι ("to become") should also be noted. The phrase thus means: "you have become whole and so you *are* whole."[21] The perfect form of the verb indicates that the cure was permanent. The use of this tense might be intentional. As noted by Leon Morris: "No doubt some of the «cures» that were reported from the pool did not last very long. Jesus' healing of the man was not in such a category."[22]

3. "Sin no more"

It has been suggested that the sin linked with the cured man "must be a significant infraction, for Jesus takes the trouble to find him and warn him of a worse fate which could befall him."[23] This conclusion is not self-evident, however, as εὑρίσκει ("he finds") could indeed imply inquiry or search (cf. 6:25; 7:34), but it might also simply mean "came upon him" (cf. 2:14).[24] On the other hand, εὑρίσκω is employed elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel to designate an intentional searching in order to call someone to become a follower of the Messiah, which is also done by Jesus himself: Andrew "found" Simon Peter (1:43), Philip "found" Nathanael (1:45), and Jesus "found" Philip (1:43). In the parallel text (9:35), Jesus similarly "found" the man born blind, at some point after the healing, and the question with which he addressed this man: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" was not a trivial conversation. The similarly essential words, pregnant with theological meaning, occurs in 5:14, when the healed man is later "found" by Jesus. In what follows below, we will first deal with the meaning of the present imperative of the verb ἁμάρτανε in the phrase "sin no more" and then consider the various explanations regarding the nature of this sin.

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[17] Boismard – Lamouille, *L'Évangile de Jean*, 162.

[18] Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 15.

[19] M. de Goedt, "Un schème de révélation dans le quatrième évangile," *NTS* 8 (1961–1962) 142–150.

[20] Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 15.

[21] W.C. Weinrich, *John 1:1–7:1* (ConcC; St. Louis, MO: Concordia 2015) 556.

[22] Morris, *John*, 272.

[23] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62.

[24] M.J. Harris, *John* (EGGNT; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic 2015) 107.

3.1. The Imperative: "stop sinning" or "don't sin"

Jesus addressed the cured man with a short statement: μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε. The adverb μηκέτι ("no longer," "no more," "not for any longer," "not from now on") refers back to the past, "to the previous pattern of sinning or some particular sin that led to the man's illness."[25] Morphologically, the verb ἁμάρτανε is a present imperative. The whole construction μηκέτι ἁμάρταν expresses a prohibition of something that one is already doing, an urging to discontinue an ongoing action.[26] For this reason, the expression μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is translated as "stop sinning," "cease your sinning," "do not continue to sin," "no longer continue to sin," or "do not continue sinning any longer." The corollary is that the cured man has sinned and continues to sin, i.e. at the time of the man's second meeting with Jesus, after the healing, he was still living in sin.

Jeffrey L. Staley argues that the present imperative suggests that the cured man is still living in sin and "perhaps" he has not experienced the forgiveness of sins.[27] The same assumption is fostered by Martin Asiedu-Peprah: the present imperative suggests that "at the time of the second encounter, the man is seen as still living in sin. The initial healing would thus not be related to any forgiveness of sin."[28] As to the issue of forgiveness, I do not concur with this view, because the cured man could be forgiven by Jesus at the moment of his miraculous healing – he was indeed made "whole" – and yet the previously lame man could still be sinning in some way after the miracle. The nature of his sin is, in fact, not specified.

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[25] Harris, *John*, 107.

[26] Ernest De Witt Burton (*Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3 ed. [Edinburgh: Clark 1898] § 165), illustrating his exposition with μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε (John 5:14), argues that the present imperative "forbids the continuance of the action, most frequently when it is already in progress; in this case, it is a demand to desist from the action." In the same vein, Archibald T. Robertson (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3 ed. [London: Hodder & Stoughton 1919] 890) sets a general rule that the present imperative is used with μή "to forbid what one is already doing" and illustrates it with μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε in John 5:14. On the force of the present imperative, see also J.H. Moulton – W.F. Howard – N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburg: Clark 1909) I, 122–126.

[27] Jeffrey L. Staley ("Stumbling in the Dark," 62, n. 31) noted: "An aorist imperative would have meant, '*Don't start sinning (again)*, or something worse will happen to you,' implying that the act of healing was also an act of forgiving sins and that there was a causal connection between the illness and sin. But the present imperative would seem to imply that the man is still living in sin ('You've been sinning, now don't do it any more'), and thus perhaps that the initial healing was not related to any forgiveness of sins."

[28] M. Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy. An Exegetical Study of John 5 and 9:1–10:21* (WUNT 2/132; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2001) 72.

It must be noted, however, that some authors favor the translation of μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε in an aoristic sense as "don't sin [again]" or in the more general sense "don't sin any more" (NET). In the first case, as argued by Donald Carson, the translation implies that the cured man "had not committed this particular sin since the fateful rebellion that had earned him the illness."[29] The NET translators maintained that the translation "stop sinning" is unlikely, "since the present tense is normally used in prohibitions involving a general condition (as here), while the aorist tense is normally used in specific instances. Only when used opposite the normal usage (the present tense in a specific instance, for example) would the meaning 'stop doing what you are doing' be appropriate."

Daniel Wallace noted that almost all instances of the imperative with μή (or a cognate) in the NT involve the present tense, and there are only eight instances of the aorist imperative in prohibitions.[30] The present imperative, as is more common, seems to express a whole range of possible prohibitions. Wallace also observed that "[t]he present imperative looks at the action from an internal viewpoint. It is used for the most part for general precepts – i.e., for habits that should characterize one's attitudes and behavior – rather than in specific situations. The action may or may not have already begun."[31] That being so, perhaps one should be more cautious in drawing too precise exegetical or theological conclusions and argue instead for a general understanding of the prohibition.[32] For instance, Colin G. Kruse embraces this very solution: "The grammatical evidence for always rendering a negated present imperative as a command to stop doing something is far from conclusive. Jesus' words could be translated just as well as a general command not to do something—that is, 'Do not sin or something worse may happen to you'. In the context of 5:14, where no particular sinful activity of the man is mentioned, Jesus' prohibition is best construed in this general way."[33]

3.2. Various Explanations of the Man's Sin

As to the nature of the man's sin, there is an impressive plethora of scholarly suggestions, which can be grouped into three categories: (1) a general reference to sin, (2) a sin referring specifically to the healed man's life, and (3) sin understood, in light of John's theology, as unbelief.[34] The authors working within the first category, already hinted at above, argue that the reader is unable to pinpoint a precise meaning of "sin" in 5:14. Therefore, the only logical solution is to accept a general understanding of sin in this passage, with no reference to any action (past, present, or future) on the part of the invalid and then cured man.[35] For instance, John Chrysostom dedicated a whole passage of his homily (*Paralyt.* 3) precisely to the fact that Jesus did not make a public exposure of the paralytic's sin or sins.[36] The most numerous suggestions are those identifying sin with the disabled man's life. These interpretations can be further categorized according to the narrative chronology: (a) a sin committed in the past, i.e. before his healing, (b) a sin committed after his healing, and continued at the time of his second meeting with Jesus, and (c) a sin lurking on the horizon of an imminent future at the time of the second meeting. In the discussion that follows, we will also introduce a third category, i.e. sin as unbelief, as it is intrinsically connected with the life experience of the now-healed lame man.

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[29] Carson, *John*, 246, n. 1.

[30] D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics. An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1996) 487.

[31] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 721.

[32] Donald Carson (*John*, 246, n. 1) noted that the translation "stop sinning" in 5:14 "may be a correct interpretation in this instance, but there are too many exceptions to this grammatical 'rule' to base the interpretation on the present sense. It has been shown that the present imperative, the more highly 'marked' tense, regularly stresses urgency."

[33] C.G. Kruse, *John. An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC 4; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 2017) 170. The same view E.W. Klink, *John* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2016) 274.

a) Past Sin

As Charles Kingsley Barrett rightly observed, "the command to sin *no more* suggests that sins up to this point have already been dealt with."[37]

(1) *Unspecified sin(s).* John Chrysostom, at many places in his works, suggested that the paralytic was punished with his sickness for his past sins (*Laz.* 3; *Paralyt.* 2; *Hom. Jo.* 38; 56.1; *Diab.* 1.8; *Hom. Matt.* 43.5). At the same time, however, "by the length of his illness he had also put away his sins" (*Laz.* 3). Chrysostom leaves no room for any doubt that the paralytic committed sins in the past which resulted in his long paralyzing illness. Long illness, as well as healing itself – intrinsically connected with forgiveness elsewhere in the Synoptic gospels (Mark 2:5) – cleansed the bedridden man from his past sins. This interpretation reflects a prominent Jewish concept of retribution, which arises from the Old Testament.

(2) *False doctrine of God.* Kenneth Grayston interprets Jesus' words "Sin no more" as "Give up your appalling doctrine of God." This false doctrine required this man to wait at the pool so long for his healing.[38] One cannot say exactly what the nature of his twisted image of God was, but it could be the image of God who somehow *wanted* this man's sickness and suffering.

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[34] Similarly, Jeffrey L. Staley ("Stumbling in the Dark," 62, n. 33) classified the variety of scholarly attempts to explain Jesus' words in three categories: (1) Jesus' own understanding of sin; (2) the author's theology; (3) the healed man's life.

[35] Kruse, *John*, 151.

[36] John Chrysostom states that Jesus "did not publicly expose his sins. For just as we ourselves desire to draw a veil over our sins even so does God much more than we: on this account He wrought the cure in the presence of all, but He gives the exhortation or the advice privately [see 5:14]. For He never makes a public display of our sins, except at any time He sees men insensible to them. […] This also is what takes place in the case of baptism: for He conducts the man to the pool of water without disclosing his sins to any one; yet He publicly presents the boon and makes it manifest to all, while the sins of the man are known to no one save God Himself and him who receives the forgiveness of them" (*NPNCC* IX, 213–214).

[37] Barrett, *John*, 255.

[38] K. Grayston, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International 1990) 48.

(3) *Dual loyalty.* The disabled man was sitting or lying at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. The evangelist is very careful in describing the place of his healing (5:2).[39] Because some votive objects were found in various locations on the St Anne's complex, identified nowadays as the site of the Pool of Bethesda, some authors claim that this area should be identified as an Asclepion or even Asclepion-Serapeum, a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of Asclepius- Serapis.[40] The proximity of the Antonia Fortress might corroborate this assumption, because Asclepius was worshiped at many Roman military sites. It is a point of contention whether this pool functioned as an Asclepion already at the time of Jesus or only sometime after AD 70, or even starting in the second century AD, after the year 135 when the second Jewish revolt was put down.[41] Anthony Giambrone advanced an interesting thesis that Jesus performed the healing "at what was then simply a large *miqveh* near the Temple," but later Christian and pagan memory of this healing "would itself have helped fuel that site's subsequent transformation into a Roman shrine." In this way, the site was rescued from *damnatio memoriae* at the time of Hadrian's recreating Jerusalem as the pagan Aelia Capitolina (after AD 135).[42] Regardless of the precise dating of the Asclepion on this site, John's description of this pool must have triggered among his readers and hearers (among them both unbelieving and believing Gentiles) associations with the sanctuaries of Asclepius found elsewhere in the Roman Empire, including one of the most famous located in Pergamum, a one-day journey from Ephesus, where the Gospel of John was written. As Robin Thompson noted,

> John specifically focuses on the location of this miracle because it challenges his readers to consider just who Jesus is. The Greco-Roman god Asclepius was known for healing people, and his healing was done

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[39] More on this pool, including the history of its discovery, its subsequent archaeological excavations and the pressing issue of its location and identification, see J. Jeremias, *The Rediscovery of Bethesda. John 5:2* (New Testament Archaeology Monograph 1; Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1966); S. Gibson, "The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and Jewish Purification Practices of the Second Temple Period," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 55/3–4 (2005) 270–293; U.C. von Wahlde, "The Pool(s) of Bethesda and the Healing in John 5: A Reappraisal of Research and of the Johannine Text," *RB* 116 (2009) 111–136; U.C. von Wahlde, "The Pool of Siloam: The Importance of the New Discoveries for Our Understanding of Ritual Immersion in Late Second Temple Judaism and the Gospel of John," *John, Jesus, and History*. II. *Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel* (eds. P.N. Anderson – F. Just – T. Thatcher) (ECL 2; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature 2009) 155–173; S. Gibson, "The Excavations at the Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem: Preliminary Report on a Project of Stratigraphic and Structural Analysis (1999–2009)," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* Numéro Spécial (2011) 17–44; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Saint Anne of Jerusalem. La Piscine Probatique de Jésus à Saladin. Le Projet Béthesda (1994–2010)," *RB* 119 (2012) 429–431; U.C. von Wahlde, "The Great Public *Miqvaot* at Bethesda and Siloam, the Development of Jewish Attitudes Toward Ritual Purity in Late Second Temple Judaism, and Their Implications for the Gospel of John," *Rediscovering John. Essays on the Fourth Gospel in Honour of Frédéric Manns* (ed. L.D. Chrupcała) (Milano: Terra Sacta 2013) 167–272.

[40] S.M. Bryan, "Power in the Pool: The Healing of the Man at Bethesda and Jesus' Violation of the Sabbath (Jn. 5:1–18)," *TynBul* 54/2 (2003) 12; Lincoln, *John*, 193; A. Giambrone, "Jesus and the Paralytics. Memorializing Miracles in the Greco-Roman World of the Gospels," *BibAn* 10/3 (2020) 395–397.

[41] See the discussion and bibliographic references in R. Thompson, "Healing at the Pool of Bethesda: A Challenge to Asclepius?," *BBR* 27/1 (2017) 79–80 and Giambrone, "Jesus and the Paralytics," 396–397.

[42] Giambrone, "Jesus and the Paralytics," 397.

> for no other purpose than simply to restore people to health. John portrays Jesus as healing people, but healing people is not the focus of his mission. When Jesus heals people in John's Gospel, it is always for the purpose of revealing his true identity: the Son, sent by the Father, to do the Father's work (5:36). In fact, the Jewish leaders seek to kill Jesus not just because he was breaking the Sabbath, but also because "he was calling God his own father, making himself equal with God" (5:18). [...] The Gentiles that are a part of John's audience would not have seen a problem with multiple deities – their world was full of deities. [...] While Asclepius could heal people, and he was even said to have raised someone from the dead, he could not permanently circumvent death for those who came to him. But here [5:24] Jesus is promising eternal life, and not just to a few, to but all who believe.[43]

Coming back to the question of the disabled man's sin, his infraction could be identified as his past act of praying to, trusting in, and expecting help from a false god (here, most naturally, Asclepius would come to mind for John's audience).[44] While this invalid man was expecting healing from Asclepius, and by this committing sin, after the miracle he was still committing a similar sin because he still did not believe in Jesus. Craig R. Koester describes the situation of the invalid man as the impossibility of living in "dual loyalties." For the cured man, as well as for John's audience, it was impossible to be loyal toward the Jewish authorities and Jesus at the same time (see 5:10–18). It was also impossible to be loyal simultaneously toward the pagan deities and Jesus. Koester argues,

> The story of the invalid showed that lack of commitment meant betrayal. At the same time, even readers who were not familiar with Bethzatha would have been able to detect the similarities between a place like Bethzatha and the healing shrines scattered across the ancient Mediterranean world. The deities associated with these shrines did not demand exclusive allegiance from worshipers, who could move from one religious cult to another with relative ease. Yet those who assumed that loyalty to Jesus was optional remained in sin and under the threat of judgment (5:14).[45]

Somehow countering the above interpretation, John Chrysostom (*Adv. Jud.* 8.6.4) praises the paralytic for not using magical means to recover his health: "he did not run to soothsayers, he did not go to the charm-users, he did not tie an amulet around his neck but he waited for God to help him. That is why he finally found a wonderful and unexpected cure" (FC 68, 226). Obviously, Chrysostom's view disregards the historical context, unknown to him. Thus, he interprets the passage theologically in light of the angelic intervention suggested by a gloss in 5:4.

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[43] Thompson, "Healing," 83.

[44] Edward W. Klink (*John*, 274) argues that the lame man was looking for healing "in the depersonalized magical waters rooted in superstition and folklore."

[45] C.R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel. Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2 ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2003) 54. Similarly, B. Witherington, *John's Wisdom. A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1995) 146: "the Johannine Christian was not content to have Jesus sit on Mount Olympus as one among many gods and lords."

b) Present Sin

(1) *Unspecified sin.* As the narrative is rather mysterious about the nature of the man's sin, one can argue, as R. Alan Culpepper does, in a very general way: "Jesus may [...] be using the man's release from his infirmity as an occasion to warn him that he needs release from the power of sin even more."[46] The implication is that he was in sin before the healing and still is afterwards. Although, one cannot say anything about its nature.

(2) *Ungratefulness.* Any reader of the narrative easily notices the disabled man's apparent lack of gratitude. I personally wonder whether, in the mind of John's Gentile audience, the cured man's lack of gratitude was not seen as something not both surprising and abominable, or even as sinful. As noted by Craig S. Keener, "ancient ethics despised ingratitude."[47] Seneca (*On Benefits* 3.1.1.) noted that "not to return gratitude for benefits is a disgrace, and the whole world counts it as such" (LCL 310, 127).[48] Not surprisingly, then, certain exegetes like Robert Kysar argued, with reference to the bedridden man: "It is clear that, while he is healed of his illness, he still suffers an illness of the spirit which is reflected in his lack of gratitude."[49]

(3) *The betrayal of Jesus.* Some exegetes maintain that the sin has something to do with the man's previous conversation with the Jews,[50] and more precisely, with the betrayal of Jesus to the authorities.[51] Louis J. Martyn points out the unstable character of the crippled man. When he feels threatened (5:10), he protects himself by informing against his healer.[52] Already Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428), in his *Commentary on John* (2.5.12–15), reasoned that, before his second meeting with Jesus, the cured man demonstrated his inclination to sin by betraying his own benefactor to the Jews. The healed man did not know the identity of his healer at this point (5:12–13), but he was willing to reveal the identity of Jesus anyway, and to cast the blame for breaking the Sabbath on Jesus (5:11): "When he pointed Jesus out to such an enraged and furious people, he did not act as a friend. Rather, in order to comply with the rules of the Jews, he betrayed his own benefactor" (ACT, 47).

This interpretation was alluded to by John Chrysostom (347–407), who in fact rejects such a view: "I know that some slander this paralytic, asserting that he was an accuser of

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[46] R.A. Culpepper, "John 5.1–18: A Sample of Narrative-Critical Commentary," *The Gospel of John as Literature. An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives* (ed. M.W.G. Stibbe) (NTTS 17; Leiden: Brill 1993) 203.

[47] Keener, *John*, 644, n. 87.

[48] Here I am inspired by Robin Thompson's footnote, "Healing," 83, n. 133.

[49] Kysar, *John*, 78. Cf. Borchert, *John 1–11*, 235 ("Not everyone accepts merciful acts with gratitude"); A.J. Köstenberger, *The Signs of the Messiah. An Introduction to John's Gospel* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press 2021) ("it's an inexplicable lack of gratitude").

[50] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 63.

[51] Kysar, *John*, 78; D.A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel. The Interplay of Form and Meaning* (JSNTSup 95; Sheffield: JSOT 1994) 109 ("the man reveals himself as a character who is timid to the point of betrayal"); J.-A. Brant, *John* (Paideia; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2011) 104–105. Cf. also Borchert, *John 1–11*, 235.

[52] L.J. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3 ed. (NTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2003) 74–75.

Christ and that therefore this speech was addressed to him." Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 38) draws attention to the paralytic's actual words to the Jews:

> He did not say: 'He is the one who said, "Take up thy pallet."' Indeed, when they kept bringing forward continually the ostensible charge, he repeatedly came to His defense by once more acknowledging Him as his healer and striving eagerly to attract and win over the others to Him. He was not so unfeeling as to betray his benefactor, after such a favor and encouraging advice, and to say what he did with malicious intent. Even if he were a beast, or some inhuman and stony-hearted monster, the favor done him, and his fear, were sufficient to hold him in check. [...] Rather, if he had wished to slander Him, keeping silence about his restoration to health, he would have spoken of the transgression of the Law and accused Him. This, however, is not so; it is not so. On the contrary, his words reveal great courage and honesty, and proclaim his benefactor no less than those of the blind man did. What did the latter say? 'He made clay and anointed my eyes.' [Jn 9:11] So this man also said: 'It is Jesus who healed me' (FC 33, 372).

Consequently, Chrysostom did not see the paralytic's words as a sign of his betrayal, but, on the contrary, as almost fulfilling an apostolic mission of proclaiming the faith in Jesus. In another place (*De incomp.* 12,41), he commented: "Why did the cured man go off and show himself to the Jews? It was because he wished them to share in the true teaching of Christ" (FC 72, 301). This view is followed by some modern commentators. William C. Weinrich, for instance, argued: "The man is not betraying Jesus. He is announcing (ἀνήγγειλεν) to them the identity of the one who has the power of creation and the forgiveness of sin. In this manner he sets the authority of Jesus over that of the Law of Moses."[53] One can advance a few arguments in favor of this view: (1) Referring to ἀναγγέλλω used in 5:15, it must be noted that this verb, in all four of its occurrences in the Gospel of John, has a positive connotation (4:25; 16:13.14.15; cf. 1 John 1:5).[54] (2) The basic meaning of this verb is "proclaim" and not "denounce."[55] Charles Kingsley Barrett also rejected the interpretation of the crippled man's sin as betrayal, arguing that (3) the text does not identify this sin as such; that (4) this sin of betrayal has already been partly committed (cf. 5:11); and (5) when it is eventually completed (5:15) "no dire consequence is seen to follow".[56] Moreover, as noted by John Christopher Thomas, (6) "when interrogated the man places the emphasis upon the fact of his healing, not upon the command of Jesus to 'break the Sabbath.'"[57] He thus focuses on positive side of Jesus' act, not the controversial one. Finally, as observed by Johannes Beutler, (7) the positive interpretation of the healed man's action "fits in with the fact that the paralytic plays a role in the baptismal cycles of early

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[53] Weinrich, *John*, 569. W.M. Swartley, *John* (BCBC; Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press 2013) 149 ("The man's disclosure of Jesus' identity to the Jews is a desire to witness, even at some risk; he is not a traitor.").

[54] For the more thorough analysis of this verb and its cognates, see P. Bruce, "John 5:1–18 the Healing at the Pool: Some Narrative, Socio-Historical and Ethical Issues," *Neot* 39/1 (2005) 45–46.

[55] J. Beutler, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2017) 152. Cf. Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary*, *s.v.* ἀναγγέλλω ("to bring news," "announce"; "to teach," "make known"; "to proclaim," "to confess"; in the passive voice, which is not the case in John 5:15: "to be reported" *or* "announced," "to be proclaimed").

[56] Barrett, *John*, 255.

[57] Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 19.

Christian frescoes, as is shown by the examples in the Cappella Greca in the Catacombs of Priscilla or the Chapel of the Sacraments in the Catacombs of Callistus, both in Rome."[58]

(4) *Not revealing the full identity of Jesus.* The Johannine narrator noted that the cured man did not know the identity of his healer (5:13). Reflecting upon the meaning of Jesus' utterance in 5:14, Jeffrey L. Staley wonders: "Could Jesus' warning have been precipitated somehow by the healed man's previous response to 'the Jews'? Perhaps he was 'sinning' in not fully revealing the identity of his benefactor."[59] Jeffrey L. Staley also observes that right after Jesus' words "Do not sin," the healed man immediately returned to the authorities with the new information: "It was Jesus (not just anybody) who made me well." Taking into consideration the preceding literary context, where many of the people in Jerusalem are coming to faith in Jesus precisely because of his signs (2:23; 3:1–2; 4:45), it seems that the healed man's intentions were positive.[60] He wanted to inform his interlocutors about the full identify of Jesus.

(5) *Breaking the Sabbath.* Some commentators note that the only sin truly and explicitly mentioned in the narrative is the infringement of the sabbatical regulations by carrying the mat. So Jesus would warn the healed man not to continue his sinful action, namely that he should not carry his mat any longer. Otherwise he might be condemned to death as punishment for breaking the Torah. According to Sjef van Tilborg, Jesus' words would express his protection of the healed man from his attackers: "It is a protection which fits in with the need Jesus has to find the man after he has been interrogated by the Judeans. What Jesus says is not about a general link between sin and sickness, but is an expression of his concern. Jesus has included this man in his love."[61] In the same vein, Colin G. Kruse, regarding this as a possible interpretation, states that the healed man "was flaunting his new-found freedom by carrying his mat around Jerusalem without any regard for the Sabbath law."[62] One cannot exclude that the crippled man was ready to break sabbath regulations, giving priority to Jesus' command. He was then setting Jesus' authority above the Jewish *halakhic* rules.[63] As Willard M. Swartley observed: "the man is a risk taker, obeying Jesus' Sabbath-breaking command."[64] This interpretation is not ultimately convincing, however. First, the healed man, knowing the sabbath regulations and being reproached by the Jews (5:10), could immediately have abandoned his mat. So, even if he were walking with it initially, after the first meeting with Jewish authorities (5:10), he should correct his behavior. Second, it was Jesus who told the man to carry the mat (5:8). It seems strange then that Jesus in 5:14 would contradict himself by forbidding this man from carrying his mat. In Jaffrey L. Staley's

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[58] Beutler, *John*, 152.

[59] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62.

[60] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 63.

[61] S. van Tilborg, *Imaginative Love in John* (BibInt 2; Leiden: Brill 1993) 217–218.

[62] Kruse, *John*, 170. Cf. also Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62: "Perhaps the healed man has been sinning somehow by flaunting his new found freedom from Torah in ways that the narrator fails to disclose—perhaps by parading with his mat around the temple courtyard."

[63] This view is expressed in Bruce, "John 5:1–18," 45; Swartley, *John*, 149.

[64] Swartley, *John*, 149.

words: "Could Jesus be telling the healed man that he is indeed 'sinning' by continuing to do what he had previously asked him to do? Has Jesus gone back on his word?"[65]

(6) *The wrong choice of going to the temple.* In John's Gospel, the sin *par excellence* is connected with the failure to recognize the true identity of Jesus and to believe in him. The narrator indicates that Jesus finds the healed man in the temple. So, according to some commentators, by going to the temple (5:14) the healed man is making the wrong choice: instead of choosing Jesus, the real temple (2:19–21), he is looking for an old and "empty" temple (see 4:21–24). Patricia Bruce states, "I am of the opinion that the sin of which the man is guilty has been to go the temple (v. 14), with all that this choice implied for the original readers of John's Gospel."[66] In the same vein, Jeffrey L. Staley noted: "Maybe the healed man could be sinning simply by being in the temple—a religious site about which the reader already knows Jesus has expressed negative feelings (2:13–22; 4:21–24)." [67]

It must be remembered that the healing took place in a large *miqveh*, just north of the temple, designed for ritual purifications that enabled people to enter the sacred precincts. After the healing, the previously lame man was now able to enter the temple and participate in its daily rites, after 38 years of exclusion from any cultic activities. His presence within the temple precincts can also be seen in connection with the feast mentioned in 5:1. In fact, the temple was the place of sacrifice for sin[68] as well as the place for bringing a thank-offering to God for a recovery (cf. Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14). As John Christopher Thomas noted: "He has, no doubt, gone to celebrate the feast with a special thanksgiving and praise upon his heart."[69] The previously crippled man was finally fully reintegrated into the Jewish social and religious community.[70] From the perspective of the historical reliability of this narrative, his choice of going to the temple would then seem natural and understandable. Edward Klink notes, "The temple is also a logical place for the healed man to be drawn toward, especially after he had just been divinely healed!"[71] From the narratological perspective, the man's choice is also understandable. As Jeffrey L. Staley observed, "the narrator had also said that the healed man didn't know who Jesus was (5:13)."[72] If he did not know the true identity of Jesus, he could not pay any religious reverence to him. However, from the theological perspective, also integrated within the narrator's point of view, after the parting of the ways between the Church and synagogue, and already after the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (so reading the Gospel of John as a "two-level drama"[73]), the man's logical choice would rather consist in professing faith in Jesus and in following him. As already mentioned, the very use of the verb εὑρίσκω ("to find") would suggest the same idea, namely to become Jesus' follower.

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[65] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62.

[66] Bruce, "John 5:1–18," 45.

[67] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62.

[68] Craig S. Keener (*John*, 643, n. 83) observed: "That he went to offer a sin offering for the sin from which his malady stemmed is unlikely; if he acknowledged that sin before Jesus' reproof (5:14), he probably would have made the offering long before, despite his condition."

[69] Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 14.

[70] Karakolis, "Afterwards, Jesus found him in the Temple," 179: "Based on the Jewish perception of disease, a patient so long and so heavily ill is practically a living dead person, someone who has been abandoned by God and, thus, devoid of his grace and his divine life-giving acts, probably due to a heavy sin committed either by himself or even by his parents (cf. John 9:2–3). In the socio-historical context of our text, the idea that God has abandoned a human being leads unavoidably to social and religious marginalization and, therefore, even to the lack of social interaction with other people, as expressed by the lame man's statement ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω (5:7)."

[71] Klink, *John*, 274.

[72] Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 62.

Anthony Giambrone draws attention to one interesting detail connected with the "cultic" interpretation of the man's behavior and sin:

> Jesus' calculated decision not to let the liberated man leave his mat behind […] ensures that credit for the wonder (or blame, as it happens) is ultimately directed to Jesus himself. For were an empty mat simply to lay there where the paralyzed man used to be—an ex-voto trophy in a known site of healing—the abandoned mat would have redounded to the waters' glory. At the same time, the ostentatious portage of the *krabattos* resembles the showy healing of Gorgias and Euhippos. That the man's mattress relic successfully occasioned the recounting of his incredible story is the very premise of John's continued narrative as it develops. In this way, John's account accomplishes for Jesus something similar to what the *Iamata* accomplish for their own institutional interests, forging a memory that magnifies the *doxa* of the divine source of healing (John 5:23; cf. 2:11). Jesus himself has in this way rhetorically displaced the epoch's wonderworking shrines and personally become the locus of healing: beneficiary of the beneficiary's ex-voto souvenir.[74]

The interpretation that the previously lame man seriously erred by being in the temple was already countered by John Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 38), who argued that the man's presence in the temple "is evidence of very great piety, for he did not withdraw to forums and clubs or give himself to luxury and licence, but stayed in the Temple, even though he expected to undergo such an attack and to be driven from there by all. None of these considerations, however, persuaded him to stay away from the Temple." More importantly, however, Jesus never accused this man of being in a wrong place:

> When Christ, then, had found him, even after his conversation with the Jews, He hinted at no such thing [as that he had been His accuser]. If He had desired to make this charge, He would have said to him: "Are you doing the same things again, and have you become no better because of your cure?" However, He said nothing of this, but only reassured him with regard to the future (FC 33, 370).

It must also be noted that Jesus himself encouraged people healed from leprosy to go to the temple to show themselves to the priest and offer for their cleansing what Moses commanded (Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14).

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[73] See the famous paradigm in reading John's Gospel advanced by Martyn, *History and Theology*.

[74] Giambrone, "Jesus and the Paralytics," 399. In other words, "John promotes a memory of Jesus as the sole true and personalized sacred locus" (*ibidem*, 402).

Christos Karakolis likewise claimed that the man's decision to go to the temple is not only understandable but also well founded from a narratological and theological point of view:

> The implied readers could assume that the healed man does not just want to thank God for his unexpected cure, but also that he expects to find answers to the questions that bother him; mainly the identity of his benefactor, as well as the relationship between Torah-observance and his carrying around his bed on a Sabbath. It would seem that he has nowhere else to turn for answers due, on the one hand, to his long-term social marginalization and, on the other hand, to the prejudice of the "Jews" who tend to focus on the violation of the Sabbath-rest while at the same time ignoring the reality of the miraculous cure.[75]

The pious Jew would always direct his steps to the temple in order to hear God's answers to his questions. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is the center and focal point of Jewish cult. He renews and reinterprets the temple's worship. As noted by Karakolis, in all events taking place in the Jerusalem temple, Jesus is the protagonist. Interestingly enough, the hope of the previously lame man was fulfilled: he met and heard God in the person of Jesus. Karakolis argued that the implied reader of the Gospel should interpret this meeting as "a divine revelation along the lines of the Old Testament Temple-theophanies."[76]

(7) *Unbelief.* Some authors have stated that the only real meaning of sin in the Gospel of John is unbelief. In 8:24 and 16:9, sin is explicitly defined as the lack of faith in Jesus. According to 15:24, sin consists in the rejection of the fact that God, the Father, reveals himself and works through Jesus. The immediately following context of 5:14, the ensuing discourse of Jesus in 5:17–47, focuses on the same claim: Jesus is one with his Father and through him the Father is manifested and working.[77] Steven Bryan aptly described the Johannine concept of sin as "the unwillingness to believe that Jesus is the one in whom God – the Father – is revealed and through whom God's power works," and again, "The essence of sin is to see the power of God at work through Jesus and yet refuse to acknowledge that power as evidence of the self-revealing action of God in Jesus."[78] Therefore, it seems that the crippled man after the healing did not achieve the more important cure, namely coming to faith in Christ.[79] David A. Croteau notes, "As the pericope closes, the reader is left viewing the lame man as unbelieving. Jesus confronts one who does not believe with

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[75] Karakolis, "Afterwards, Jesus found him in the Temple," 181.

[76] Karakolis, "Afterwards, Jesus found him in the Temple," 188. He (*ibidem*) states: "some important characteristics of an Old Testament epiphany are implicitly present: the initiative that belongs to God (in our case Jesus), the Temple as the place par excellence of God's (in our case of Jesus') presence, and the manifestation of his glory, the epiphany itself (in our case Christophany) as God's (in our case Jesus') response to the doubts and prayers of his chosen people (in our case the healed man)."

[77] An interesting study on Jesus' intitulation of God as *Abba* and its impact on the idea of God's fatherhood in the New Testament writtings is S. Szymik, "Jesus' Intitulation of God as *Abba:* Its Sources and Impact on the Idea of the Fatherhood of God in the New Testament," *VV* 38/2 (2020) 485–502.

[78] Bryan, "Power in the Pool," 16.

[79] Kysar, *John*, 78.

these words: 'stop sinning.' The context is salvific, not of progressive sanctification."[80] Edward Klink is even more precise in defining the healed man's sin of unbelief: "in this case it manifests itself by regarding God's power as operating in impersonal independence from the working of God, a problem for both the healed man and the Jews."[81] Klink calls it "idolatrous God confusion." Both the healed man and the Jews see divine agency at work in the healing, but they fail to acknowledge its identification with the person of Jesus.[82] Martin Asiedu-Peprah claims that the mention of sin in 5:14 should be interpreted in light of the unique previous reference to sin in the Johannine narrative, namely 1:29. The testimony about Jesus, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (1:29), is connected with two of the Baptist's disciples choosing to follow Jesus (1:37), "who were thus enabled to come to initial faith in Jesus."[83] Martin Asiedu-Peprah explains:

> The narrator may therefore be suggesting to the reader, in a very subtle way, that there is a relationship between Jesus' mission as the one who takes away the sin of the world and the act of coming to faith in him. In other words, the sin *par excellence* which Jesus has come to take away is the sin of unbelief. Those who, like the two disciples, come to faith in him have eternal life while those who persist in their unbelief condemn themselves to death (3:16–18). The context of 1:29–39 may therefore offer a clue to the reader as to how to understand Jesus' admonition in 5:14b. Jesus would be reproaching the healed man for his inability to come to faith in him and would be warning him against the risk he faces if he should continue to sin (i.e., if he should persist in his unbelief).[84]

Against the above interpretation one may hold that the narrative about the healing of the bedridden man would be the first instance in which absolutely nobody comes to faith in Jesus following a sign performed by him (cf. 2:11; 4:46–54). For this reason, it seems unlikely that the man's sin should be defined as his lack of faith. The healing itself may imply forgiveness and belief. Moreover, the use of the phrase "You have become whole" (5:14) might also imply the same meaning of experiencing salvation, which is activated by someone's faith.

c) Future Sin

Already John Chrysostom asserted that Jesus, while not disclosing the nature of the past sins which provoked suffering and sickness, but by his recollection of these past sins ("no more"), put the cured man on alert against future sins ("something worse") (*Paralyt.* 2–3).

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[80] Croteau, "Repentance Found?," 115. In his opinion (*ibidem*, 121) John 5:14, after Isa 6:9–10 in John 12:40, contains the second strongest connection to repentance in the entire Gospel of John.

[81] Klink, *John*, 275.

[82] M.M. Thompson, *John. A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2015) 123 ("In John, since sin is nearly defined as unbelief, Jesus may be warning the man regarding the judgment that follows sin, while inviting him to confess faith in Jesus (8:24)"). Essentially the same interpretation, but in different words, is expressed by William Hendricksen (*The Gospel According to John* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House 1953] I, 195), who defines man's sin as "a state of being unreconciled with God."

[83] Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 72.

[84] Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 72–73.

Barnabas Lindars notes in this connection: "There is no word of blame for the past, but only a concern for the future."[85] That being so, some exegetes have proposed an interpretation in which Jesus' warning about committing sin refers to the future.

(1) *Post-conversion sins.* Cyprian of Carthage (200–258) quotes or alludes to John 5:14 a total of six times.[86] In general, he links healing with baptism, in which one is cleansed from his sins and "made whole," meaning saved. In a few passages, Cyprian illustrates with Jesus' words from John 5:14 the lingering danger of sin after baptism. For instance, he uses this verse to support the view "that even the baptised lose the grace that they have attained, unless they maintain their innocence" (*Ad Quirinum* 3.27; CCSL 3, 122). In another writing (*Hab. virg.* 2), Cyprian quotes John 5:14 and continues,

> He gives the fear [necessary for] life, he gives the law of innocence after he has conferred health, nor permits that one afterwards to wander with free and loosed reins, but more severely threatens him who is again enslaved by those same things of which he had been healed, because it is certainly a smaller fault to have sinned before, when you did not yet know God's discipline; but there is no further pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God (CCSL 3F, 286).

Edwina Murphy, who analyzed all of the six Cyprian's uses of John 5:14, argued that "Cyprian employs the verse to warn against the dangers of taking for granted what one has received. What has been initiated must be fulfilled, and the evangelical precepts upheld, in maintaining the grace of both baptism and confession."[87] The main idea behind Cyprian's use of John 5:14 is that once someone becomes a Christian, he/she should no longer sin, and if he/she does sin, repentance is needed. Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390) also employed this verse to urge the baptized not to sin again: "Do not again be thrown upon your bed by sinning, in the evil rest of a body paralyzed by its pleasures" (*Oratio* 40.33).[88] If we assume that the crippled man, along with the healing, also received forgiveness of his sins, then Jesus' warning in 5:14 might allude to the issue of post-conversion sin.[89] This idea of post-conversion sin, or the second penance (confession), is not so extraneous to John's Gospel, since it might be alluded to in the subsequent narrative about the foot-washing.[90] If we also accept the presence of baptismal overtones in John 5:1–15, it must be remembered that in the early Church the forgiveness of sins gained in baptism "includes the demand to sin no more."[91] Moreover, "early Christianity held that to continue to sin after Baptism, and particularly apostasy, has worse consequences, namely, the fearful prospect of fiery judgment on the Last Day (see Heb 6:4–8; 10:26–27)."[92] It seems then that this interpretation syncs well with the immediate literary context dealing with the future fate of this man ("anything worse" – 5:14) and the future judgment (κρίσις – 5:22.24.27.29.30).

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[85] B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans – London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott 1972) 217.

[86] *Ad Quirinum* 3.27; *De habitu virginum* 2; *De dominica oratione* 12; *De opere et eleemosynis* 1; *Epistula* 13.2.2 (to Rogatianus); *Epistula* 55,26,1 (to Antonianus).

[87] E. Murphy, "Sin no more: Healing, Wholeness, and the Absent Adulteress in Cyprian's Use of John," *REAug* 64 (2018) 5.

[88] See also Augustine, *De fide et operibus* 20.36.

[89] Thomas, "Stop Sinning," 16.

[90] P. Grelot, "L'interprétation pénitentielle du lavement des pieds: examen critique," *L'homme devant Dieu. Mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac.* I. *Exégèse et patristique* (Théologie 56; Paris: Aubier 1963) 75–91; J.C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community* (JSNTSup 61; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1991) *passim*; A. Kubiś, "Interpretacja pokutna Janowego opisu obmycia stóp uczniom przez Jezusa. Cz. 1: Interpretacje sakramentalne na tle współczesnych wyjaśnień J 13,1–20," *BibAn* 8/3 (2018) 379–420; A. Kubiś, "Interpretacja pokutna Janowego opisu obmycia stóp uczniom przez Jezusa. Cz. 2: Argument odwołujący się do antropologii kulturowej," *BibAn* 8/4 (2018) 567–586.

(2) *Unbelief.* According to Silvana Fuzinato, Jesus' warning "sin no more" in 5:14 refers to the future. Here the verb "to sin" is defined as unbelief. Jesus' words in 5:14 should then be interpreted by his words in 5:24: "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." The bedridden man heard Jesus' healing words: "Stand up, pick up your mat and walk" (5:14), and not only heard them but believed in these words. Now, in 5:14, the healed man is invited to continue in his faith in Jesus' salvific words and, most importantly, to recognize God acting through Jesus' works.[93] Eventually, a continuing attitude of believing in Jesus' words, i.e. having faith in Jesus, will gain for this man eternal life. He will be saved from judgment and pass from death to life.[94] The Italian exegete argues that Jesus' words encourage the previously lame man to stop looking back into the past and to start to look toward the future. For this reason, Jesus refers not to the sins committed in the past, but to the sin of unbelief which can be committed in the future. This understanding of sin does not refer to individual evil acts, but rather to the rejection of Jesus, to unbelief. Such a definition of sin in this passage can be corroborated by the fact that the Johannine Jesus does not exercise any power over sin in the entire Gospel, contrary to the synoptic healing stories (Matt 9:2; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20). Instead it always hinges on an action of man, who rejects sin by embracing faith in Jesus. Moreover, there is an implicit contrast in the narrative: The healed man is encouraged by Jesus to continue his life of faith, placing him in clear juxtaposition to the Jews, who are characterized by their unbelief.[95]

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[91] O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (SBT 10; London: SCM 1953) 87.

[92] Weinrich, *John*, 567.

[93] S. Fuzinato, *Tra fede e incredulità. Studio esegetico-teologico di Gv 5 in chiave comunicativa* (TGTS 212; Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana 2014) 137: "Il paralitico che credeva nella forza risanatrice dell'acqua della piscina e che invece è stato guarito da Gesù – fonte dell'acqua viva – grazie alla fede nella sua parola vivificatrice è invitato a non peccare più, cioè a continuare a riconoscere l'azione di Dio nell'operare di Gesù, credendo nella forza salvifica della sua parola."

[94] Silvia Fuzinato (*Tra fede e incredulità*, 266) argues that Jesus' words in 5:14 "è un invito a continuare a camminare sulla via della fede che gli dà vita e non su quella dell'incredulità e del giudizio che lo condurrebbe alla morte."

[95] Fuzinato, *Tra fede e incredulità*, 135–137.

4. "Something worse"

Craig S. Keener observed that "in the ancient world the disobedience of a suppliant for healing could lead to greater suffering than one had experienced before."[96] It is hard to imagine something worse than the thirty-eight years of paralyzing illness, but still Jesus is warning the previously lame man that indeed something really bad can happen to him. What did Jesus mean by "something worse" (χεῖρόν τι)? Even though Jesus' saying might be intentionally vague (and "this indefiniteness heightens the warning"[97]), throughout the centuries commentators have devised at least six possible answers. (1) "Something worse" could be an even more devastating physical ailment. (2) The χεῖρόν τι could be physical death or (3) spiritual death, understood as the lack of faith resulting ultimately in not attaining eternal life. The expression in question might also convey (4) some sort of eternal consequences of sin, (5) eternal condemnation, or finally (6) judgment. Some exegetes avoid giving any precise answer, saying, for instance, that we should speak here of "consequences of sin in a general sense."[98]

Physical illness. Already John Chrysostom contended that Jesus' warning could be understood as invoking the fear of future ills. In *Paralyt.* 2, he states: "the expression 'lest some worse thing happen unto thee' is the utterance of one who would check coming evils beforehand. He put an end to the disease, but did not put an end to the struggle: He expelled the infirmity but did not expel the dread of it, so that the benefit which had been wrought might remain unmoved" (*NPNCC* IX, 213). The identification of "something worse" with physical ailment is shared by some modern commentators as well. For instance, Colin G. Kruse noted: "Jesus might have meant he would suffer a worse physical affliction than the one from which he had just been delivered."[99] This solution has some difficulties. First, it implies the connection between sin and sickness, which does not have to be the case in John 5:1–14. Second, as rightly pointed out by Andrew T. Lincoln: "It does not seem likely that the man is being threatened with a worse physical disease, something more debilitating than thirty-eight years of immobility."[100] It is indeed difficult to imagine a worse physical illness than thirty-eight years of paralysis. Third, as Francis J. Moloney observed, the man's physical sickness is over, therefore χεῖρόν τι "must be of a different order."[101]

Physical death. Some commentators argue that "something worse" should be identified with physical death, seen as a punishment for the man's sins.[102] In support of this view, one might refer to 1 John 5:16, which mentions a "sin unto death," and 1 Cor 11:30, which declares that many had fallen asleep (κοιμῶνται), i.e. had died, because they abused the Eucharist. Given the rather obvious focus of the Fourth Gospel on spiritual realities (and precisely "eternal life" as its main point of interest), and on the larger goal of proclaiming the Gospel (20:31) – to limit the meaning of Jesus' words here to physical death simply does not do justice to John's theology.

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[96] Keener, *John*, 644.

[97] R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg 1961) 372.

[98] Lindars, *John*, 217.

[99] Kruse, *John*, 170. Cf. also G.H.C. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton 1928) 171; R.N. Wilkin, "The Gospel According to John," *The Grace New Testament Commentary*. I. *Matthew–Acts* (ed. R.N. Wilkin) (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society 2010) 386 ("Temporal well being is clearly in view"). As one out of many possibilities: Morris, *John*, 272.

[100] Lincoln, *John*, 196.

[101] F.J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1998) 173.

[102] Dods, *John*, 137. As one possibility: Schnackenburg, *John*, 98; Lincoln, *John*, 196.

Interestingly enough, Sjef van Tilborg asks: "Can we not suppose that Jesus says to the man that he should not continue to sin (μηκέτι), because otherwise worse might happen to him; that the man should not carry his bed any longer, because otherwise he might be condemned to death as punishment for his offence against the law? In such an interpretation Jesus protects the man against his attackers."[103] Physical death, in this view, would be a penalty meted out by the Jewish authorities as punishment for breaking the rules of Sabbath observance. But we have already rejected the explanation of "sin no more" in 5:14 as referring to the offence of breaking the Sabbath. The same argumentation might therefore be applied here, thus Tilborg's suggestion is not convincing.

Spiritual death. The χεῖρόν τι can alternatively be understood as the lack of faith that can deprive the healed man of something much more important, namely eternal life.[104] This meaning is suggested by the immediate literary context focusing on faith in God and eternal life: "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (5:24). Obviously, faith in God implies here faith in Jesus (10:30.38; 14:11; 17:21). It is explicitly said on many occasions that faith in Jesus guarantees eternal life (11:25.26; 20:31). Martin Asiedu-Peprah points out that, taking into account 3:16–18, the reader of the Fourth Gospel is aware of the strict correlation between faith and salvation (eternal life) and, conversely, between unbelief and condemnation (eternal death). The "worst thing" might be then only "a reference to the loss of eternal life (3:16–18) which is the fate reserved for all who refuse to come to faith in Jesus."[105] Rudolf Schnackenburg might be right that "something worse" (5:14), by way of a contrast, might point to "greater works" (5:20). The greater things are to be understood as transmitting eternal life, while "something worse" conveys the loss of this life.[106] Ramsey Michaels draws attention to the analogy between sin and sickness, as they both can lead to death. In 4:49, it is the sickness of a little child, and in 11:4 – the illness of Lazarus. Debating with the Jews, Jesus warns them that they will die in their sin (8:21.24). Thus, "death (whether physical or spiritual) is presumably" intended as "something worse."[107] In Jewish theology, reflected in the Old Testament, sin meant death. If the cured man should commit sin, then he will experience something more dreadful than sickness, namely death. Within Johannine theology, it is not physical death, however, but spiritual, eternal death.[108]

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[103] Van Tilborg, *Imaginative Love*, 217–218.

[104] This view is shared by many exegetes. Cf. Fuzinato, *Tra fede e incredulità*, 137 ("La cosa più grave che gli possa capitare non è una malattia peggiore, ma è l'indredulità che lo priverebbe della vita eterna come verrà messo alla luce nella disputa con i Giudei."); F.J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows. Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1996) 7.

[105] Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 73.

[106] Schnackenburg, *John*, 98.

[107] Michaels, *John*, 299.

Eternal consequences of sin. A few commentators suggest that Jesus' expression χεῖρόν τι most likely refers to the eternal consequences of man's sin,[109] and there are few arguments actually offered in favor of this view. First, a physical handicap is temporally limited, and "something worse" could only be "worse" because of its eternity, its unlimited duration. Second, in the immediately ensuing discourse Jesus is presented as raising the dead, thus giving them "eternal life" and exercising judgment (5:21–24).

Eternal punishment. A few authors are more precise in describing "something worse" and suggest an eternal punishment, understood as eternal damnation, condemnation, and hell. Already John Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 38.1) argued that a reader learns from Jesus' words in John 5:14 that, first, "the doctrine of hell is to be believed" and second, "the long and unending punishment is an actuality" (FC 33, 368). Among modern authors, Rudolf Schnackenburg argues that "eternal damnation" is meant here, "either, in accordance with the Jewish view, in Gehenna (cf. Mt 10:28) or in Hades (Lk 16:23ff)."[110] In the same vein, George R. Beasley-Murray stated that "the 'something worse' that could happen to the man would be to finish up in Gehenna."[111]

Judgment. Following 5:14, in the immediately ensuing discourse Jesus is described as exercising the divine prerogative of judging: "the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (5:22). The Father gave Jesus "authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man" (5:27). Whoever hears Jesus' words (i.e. believes in Jesus) and believes in God (the Father), "he does not come into judgment" (5:24). The judgment will affect those who practiced evil things; they will come out "to the resurrection of judgment" (5:29). Jesus says about himself: "Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just" (5:30). The concentration of the judgment vocabulary corroborates Charles Kingsley Barrett's conclusion: "The χεῖρόν τι can hardly be anything other than the Judgment."[112] This view is shared by a significant number of commentators.[113] Henri van den Bussche noted that Jesus' interlocutors, "the Jews," have to choose between faith and judgment. He refers to a parallel text in 9:35 and 39, where the themes of faith (v. 35) and judgment (v. 39) are explicitly present. In our text, 5:14, they are implicit.[114] Interestingly, Pino di Luccio argued that John 5 reflects a hermeneutic debate regarding the meaning of Lev 19 and 21 and concerning the eschatological priesthood, in this case Jesus' priesthood. Pino di Luccio noted the similarity between the future eschatology as described in John 5:28–29 and the content of 11QMelch (=11Q13). In the latter, Melchizedek, a priest, "will carry out the vengeance of God's judgments" (11QMelch 2:13) according to "all the works of men" (2:8). His judgment will be connected with "freedom from [the debt of] all iniquities" (2:6), understood as a remission, or release, from sins. In John 5, Jesus' words on judgment (5:22–30) follow close upon his injunction about the avoidance of sin (5:14).[115]

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[108] With reference to John 5:14, Raymond E. Brown (*The Gospel According to John (I–XIII). Introduction, Translation and Notes* [AB 29; New York: Doubleday 1966] 218) noted: "To those who are in the realm of death which is sin the Son has the power to grant life, and the only threat to the life that he grants is further sin."

[109] Morris, *John*, 272; Lincoln, *John*, 196.

[110] Schnackenburg, *John*, 98.

[111] G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2 ed. (WBC 36; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1999) 74. See also Whitacre, *John*, 123.

[112] Barrett, *John*, 255.

[113] E.C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (ed. F.N. Davey) (London: Faber & Faber 1947) 253; Lindars, *John*, 217 ("the eschatological judgment"); Carson, *John*, 246; Borchert, *John 1–11*, 235 ("the eschatological correlation between sin and judgment"); Von Wahlde, *John*, 221.

Finally yet importantly, regarding the "something worse" of 5:14, we really have no need to choose one interpretive option over the others. The spiritual condition of rejecting faith in Jesus, as the immediate literary context amply demonstrates, results in spiritual "death" (5:24), the loss of "eternal life" (5:24; cf. 5:25), "judgment" (κρίσις – 5:24), and "the resurrection of judgment" (ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως – 5:29). This reality might also be cast in non-Johannine words, like condemnation, damnation, Hades, and Gehenna.[116] The essential truth is the same: Jesus, as the one giving life and exercising judgment, is presented as equal with God (cf. 5:18).[117]

Conclusion

The conducted analyses have allowed me to reach the following conclusions:

(1) The use of the verb εὑρίσκω ("found") in 5:14 suggests that the meeting between Jesus and the healed man was not a chance encounter. It shows Jesus' initiative and designates the invitation to follow Jesus. The proposal of following Jesus implies the man's belief in him.

(2) A comparison with the healing of the man born blind in John 9 indicates that in both cases, Jesus "finds" the healed person again in order to press the conversation further, so that the healed men would understand and believe in Jesus's true identity. Both of Jesus' utterances, in 5:14 and 9:35 ("Do you believe in the Son of Man?"), turn upon the issue of faith in Jesus.

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[114] H. van den Bussche, "Guérison d'un paralytique à Jérusalem le jour du sabbat: Jean 5,1–18," *BVC* 61 (1965) 24: "Ici [5:14] l'idée de judement reste provisoirement mystérieuse, mais elle est certainement présente."

[115] P. Di Luccio, "Priestly Traditions in the Gospel," *RB* 122 (2015) 94–95.

[116] Cf., e.g., S. Szkredka, "Postmortem Punishment in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19–31): Between Coherence and Indeterminacy of Luke's Eschatology," *VV* 36 (2019) 109–132.

[117] D.F. Ford, *The Gospel of John. A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2021) 127: "These are the two activities that Jews of the time generally saw God continuing on the Sabbath, despite resting. On the Sabbath life continues to be sustained by God, and babies are born; and God continues to judge the quality of worship, love, truth seeking, goodness, and of each of our lives, including those who die on the Sabbath."

(3) The place of the meeting, the temple and its temporal setting (during the Jewish festival) combine to suggest a revelatory moment of God's epiphany toward the healed man and God's communication with him. The revelation and communication focus on (a) revealing Jesus' true identity, (b) inviting man to enter into covenant with God acting through Jesus, and (c) responding spontaneously to this invitation: faith in Jesus.

(4) The temple, as the locus of this revelatory and covenantal meeting, also brings to the reader's mind the concept of Jesus as the true, real temple (2:21) and the legitimate focus of worship (4:21.23).

(5) The phrase "you have become whole" designates the healing of the entire man, including his spiritual component. It might imply the "spiritual resurrection" of this man,[118] which is irrevocable (perfect tense).

(6) The present imperative in the expression "sin no more" reflects a general command against committing any sin. It discourages the reader from searching for a specific disease-causing sin in the life of the healed man.

(7) Jesus's warning "sin no more," regarding its reference to time, is very general, almost timeless. It immediately relates to the past, present, and future. The last component of Jesus' warning, "something worse may happen," refers to the future, yet showing that sin extends from the past *into* the future. The only reasonable identification of the man's sin, from this temporal perspective, is unbelief. This conclusion can be corroborated by the fact that the crippled and subsequently healed man, throughout the entire episode, did not confess his faith in Jesus. Thus, in Jesus' words there is no implicit connection between sin and sickness, understood as a cause-and-effect linkage by which the man's former illness was caused by his past personal sin(s). The very definition of sin in the Fourth Gospel consists in unbelief in Jesus and in his mission as entrusted to him by the Father. This sin is, in fact, present in the whole life of the protagonist of the story. Nor does the narrator focus on the relationship between sin and sickness, but rather on the continuous presence of this sin in the man's life, and on its consequences.

(8) "Something worse" might also be understood through the lens of sin. If sin is defined as unbelief leading to spiritual death (contrary to faith, which gives eternal life), "something worse" should be understood as spiritual death, the lack of eternal life, which might be expressed in several different ways (e.g., damnation, hell, condemnation, Gehenna, Hades). Using the Johannine vocabulary from the immediate literary context, spiritual death might be defined as "judgment" (5:24) and "the resurrection of judgment" (5:29).

(9) The bedridden man was obedient in following Jesus' command to stand up, pick up his mat and walk. This obedience demonstrated his goodwill. Jesus' second intervention, in 5:14, potentially marks another critical stage in the man's life: he is invited to continue following Jesus' words and to make a next step, from unbelief to belief. The healed man stands before a crucial choice: faith vs unbelief. Jesus gives him the freedom to choose and

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[118] Donatien Mollat (*L'Évangile et les Épîtres de Saint Jean* [La Sainte Bible 34; Paris: Cerf 1953] *ad loc.* John 5:14) argues: "Le miracle est donc le 'signe' d'une resurrection spirituelle."

then disappears from this man's eyes once again. It is these two distinct stages in the man's life, integral to Jesus' invitation – to hear and to believe – that are reflected in 5:24. This verse indeed can serve as an implicit commentary upon our text: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever *hears* my word and *believes* him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

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Christian Experience and Paul's Logic of Solidarity: the Spiral Structure of Romans 5–8

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Abstract: This essay investigates key aspects of the rhetorical structure of Romans 5–8 in relationship to Paul's depictions of Christian experience. Taking Romans 5:1–5 as a blueprint for a trajectory of hope in chapters 5–8, I discuss three textual "detours" where Paul interrupts that trajectory: a rhetorical performance of life under sin (7:7–25), a depiction of union with all creation in suffering and hope (8:18–27), and a cry of lament (8:26). These rhetorical interruptions evoke Christian experience in solidarity with all creation—a solidarity that in turn displays Christ's redemptive participation in the depths of all human dereliction, and thereby evokes hope.

Keywords: Christian experience, rhetoric, solidarity, lament, hope

The following essay investigates one aspect of Christian experience as depicted in Rom 5–8: its complex temporal structure.[1] In these chapters Paul sets his auditors on an assured trajectory of hope, yet he repeatedly circles back to describe and enact the experience of life in the realm of sin and death. This temporal complexity, I shall argue, is inseparable from the participatory anthropology and logic of solidarity that threads through these chapters. In support of this thesis, I shall advance three claims: first, the rhetorical *structure* of these

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[1] For fairly recent discussion of the category of "experience" as ingredient to Pauline interpretation, see T. Engberg-Pedersen, "The Construction of Religious Experience in Paul," *Experientia*. I. *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (eds. F. Flannery – C. Shantz – R.A. Werline) (SymS 40; Atlanta, GA: SBL 2008) 147–157; T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Paul's Necessity: A Bourdieusque Reading of the Pauline Project," *Beyond Reception. Mutual Influences between Antique Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity* (eds. D. Brakke – A.C. Jacobsen – J. Ulrich) (Frankfurt: Lang 2006) 69–88; V. Rabens, "Power from In Between: The Relational Experience of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in Paul's Churches," *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology. Essays in Honor of Max Turner* (eds. I.H. Marshall – V. Rabens – C. Bennema) (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2012) 138–155. The approaches and conclusions of Volker Rabens and Troels Engberg-Pedersen differ significantly, but they agree that all experience is interpreted and narrated, necessarily and unavoidably so, and that at the same time it involves "tangible" (Rabens, "Power," 141) bodily events in "the real world, about certain things happening and then being interpreted" (Engberg-Pedersen, "Construction," 156). That "experience" should be a consideration in thinking about Paul's anthropology may seem self-evident, but for a variety of reasons, the scholarly world has resisted taking it up as a topic. See Engberg-Pedersen's helpful review, in "Construction," 147–150. As he notes, emphases on other aspects of Pauline interpretation, including theology, rhetoric, and social-historical considerations, have turned attention away from the topic of experience, yet they need not and ought not do so.

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chapters, in which Paul's confident assertion of new life in Christ is interrupted repeatedly by the vicissitudes of life in the realm of the flesh, evokes and speaks to a parallel *pattern* of experience on the part of Paul's listeners. Second, this pattern depicts the moral transformation of believers as a spiral that arcs upward towards the future, but circles back down to the past, thereby involving continued vulnerability to the hostile powers of sin and death. Third, the downward movements of the spiral display believers' solidarity with all humanity in the domain of sin and death, a solidarity that follows in line with Christ's full redemptive participation in human dereliction. This solidarity is mediated through mortal bodies and enacted interpersonally, reflecting the participatory quality of human experience as embodied and socially embedded.[2]

This paper will proceed in three stages. I will begin by setting the context for reading chapters 5–8 through an overview of the structure of chapters 1–8. Second, closer analysis of key passages within chapters 5–8 will focus on the trajectory of hope and transformation limned in 5:1–5, and three apparent detours from that trajectory, in 7:7–25, 8:18–27, and 8:35–36. Finally, based on the patterns of experience discovered in the text, I will offer some theological reflections and brief pastoral and ethical implications for the life of church.

1. The Spiral Structure of Romans 1–8

In 1995 Leander Keck argued that Romans 1–8 has a repetitive structure related to its content:

> What makes Romans 1–8 'tick' is the inner logic of having to show how the gospel deals with the human condition on three ever deeper levels ... the self's skewed relationship to God in which the norm (law) is the accuser, the self in sin's domain where death rules before Moses arrived only to exacerbate the situation by specifying transgression, the self victimized by sin as a resident power stronger than the law.[3]

Each amplification of this desperate situation of the self alternates with restatements of the gospel addressed to that condition; we might say simply that Paul keeps revisiting and restating the human need for redemption even while he re-preaches God's deliverance through Christ. In Keck's view, Paul's *logic* may move from solution to plight, to use E.P. Sanders' famous terms, but in Romans his *argument* moves from plight to solution.[4] Thus, according to Keck, the first "spiral" is to be found in Rom 1:18–4:25, with the human plight depicted in 1:18–3:20, and the good news in 3:21–4:25. The second spiral is comprised by 5:12–7:6, in which the "yoked tyranny of sin and death" (5:12–21) is overcome by deliverance through participation in Christ (6:1–7:6). The third movement of this gospel proclamation is in 7:7–8:39, wherein the indwelling and lethal power of sin (7:7–25) is displaced by the superior power of the indwelling Spirit of God (8:1–39). Through these three repetitive iterations of the human plight and divine redemption, Paul demonstrates that Christ is the "effective antidote to the Adamic situation" and therefore "there is one gospel for all people, and it becomes clear why Paul is obligated to go even to Spain."[5] Furthermore, the spiral pattern noted by Keck not only "deals with the human condition on ever *deeper* levels," it also *broadens* the scope of redemption from a focus on Jews and Gentiles (Rom 1–4), to Adamic humanity (Rom 5), to all creation, including but not limited to human beings (Rom 8).[6]

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[2] In particular, see Rabens ("Power," 143–144, 150–155) on the relational aspects of the work and experience of the Spirit; Susan G. Eastman, *Paul and the Person. Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2017); S. Zahl, "Beyond the Critique of Soteriological Individualism: Relationality and Social Cognition," *MT* 37/2 (2021) 336–361, who interacts critically and constructively with Rabens and Eastman, particularly in regard to the social construction of emotion.

[3] L. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?," *Pauline Theology*. III. *Romans* (eds. D.M. Hay – E.E. Johnson) (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1995) 3–29 (26).

Keck's model usefully highlights the pattern of repetition in these chapters, but on a closer reading the interplay between dereliction and deliverance is more complex. In the first place, it is not the case that Paul's argument begins with plight rather than solution. Rather, his argument begins with the announcement that the gospel is the power of God for salvation, through which God's righteousness is being revealed from faith to faith (1:16–17). This apocalypse of divine righteousness precedes and frames the apocalypse of divine wrath in 1:18–3:20. Right at the outset of the main body of the letter, therefore, the priority of divine revelation and power means that the repeated progression from dereliction to deliverance noted by Keck is not straightforward; rather Paul's letter progresses in a forward-moving spiral pattern first catalyzed by the inbreaking of God's righteousness through the good news of Jesus Christ, and culminating in the final victory of God's love (8:39). These affirmations of God's saving power encompass as well as punctuate the repeating spirals of dereliction and deliverance in the intervening chapters; in each case, negative descriptions of human culpability, bondage to sin, suffering, conflict, and lament, are embedded in larger frameworks of revelation, grace, hope, and love. Thus, the thematic announcement of the gospel as the apocalypse of divine righteousness in 1:16–17 precedes 1:18–3:20 and is repeated and amplified in 3:21–26. The exhortation to peace with God in 5:1–11, which Keck rather oddly omits from his schema, precedes Paul's exposition of sin and death in 5:12–21; indeed, in 5:15–21, the reign of sin and death brought about Adam's trespass acts as a foil to the surpassing grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. Again, the promise that believers are no longer held captive by the law but rather serve in newness of the Spirit (7:1–6) triggers the depiction of sin's lethal use of the law in 7:7–25 and anticipates the fulsome portrayal of life in the Spirit in 8:1–39. At the same time, that new life in the Spirit is shot through with present sufferings (8:18–25), conflict (8:35–36), and lament (8:36).

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[4] E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1977) 442–443. Keck, "Tick," 24–25.

[5] Keck, "Tick," 26.

[6] Keck, "Tick," 26. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for bringing this pattern to my attention.

Human dereliction and divine deliverance are more intertwined than a simple sequence of plight and solution implies.

These observations do not fully negate Keck's spiral structure, but they do complexify it, such that Paul's repeated depictions of the human plight appear as interruptions in an overwhelmingly hopeful account of Christian experience. They seem to be detours, dead ends that raise a question for the listener: what function do they serve as the letter unfolds, particularly considering my claim that the temporal complexity of Paul's rhetoric is related to Christian experience? I suggest that both the confident proclamation of the gospel and the depictions of human dereliction contribute to the letter itself as Paul's spiritual gift to his Roman audience, a gift intended to strengthen them in their faith through a charismatic mutual participation in Christ (1:11–12). He writes to the Roman house churches, "For I long to see you, so that I might give you some spiritual gift to strengthen you (ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχφῆναι ὑμᾶς)."[7] In temporal terms, the spiral structure of these chapters arcs towards the future yet circles back to the past; in spatial and relational terms, this structure evokes believers' experience as embedded in a lasting union with Christ, yet also remaining in solidarity with all humanity in the wake of Adam's fall. Such an empirical grasp of Christ's encompassing redemption across time and space will strengthen the Roman believers in their faith.

2. Deliverance, Detours, and Hope: Analysis of Key Passages in Romans 5–8

2.1. Deliverance

For the purposes of this essay, I begin with 5:1–5. In Ernst Käsemann's words, "Christian experience speaks here."[8] But in what way, and to what end? This section of the letter draws together key terms and themes from the preceding chapters, and also functions as a kind of précis for the picture of Christian transformation in the following chapters, as Paul speaks of a causal linkage between suffering, perseverance, tested character, and hope "that does not put to shame."[9] The existential basis for this hope is the love of God, which has been poured (ἐκκέχυται) into believers' hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The perfect tense implies a specific past event, perhaps evoking the Roman believers' holistic, bodily experience of baptism.[10] The content of this hope is nothing less than the glory of God. Here Paul clearly sets his listeners on a dynamic trajectory of transformation that anticipates mutual growth into the likeness of Christ's resurrection (6:5).

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[7] For arguments that the "spiritual gift" that will strengthen the Roman believers is Paul's proclamation of the gospel, see G.D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1994) 486–489; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday 1993) 248; R.N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2016) 115–116; S.G. Eastman, "Strengthening the Ego for Service: The Pastoral Purpose of Romans 7,7–25," *Dying with Christ – New Life in Hope. Romans 5,12—8,39* (ed. J.M.G. Barclay) (Louvain: Peeters 2021) 137–164 (137–138). The desire to impart a spiritual gift to the Romans funds Paul's eagerness to visit them; his letter is a down-payment, so to speak, on that gift. That early interpreters saw Paul's missive itself as intended to strengthen its recipients is evident from the text variant in 16:25, which provides an early hermeneutical guide to the letter. See L. Keck, *Romans* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 2005) 380–385.

[8] E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. G.W. Bromiley) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1980) 134. Robert Jewett (*Romans. A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2007] 353) calls attention to the definite article modifying "afflictions," suggesting it indicates specific hardships suffered by the Romans and Paul, not a generic experience.

Right from the beginning, this trajectory involves a typical Pauline conjunction of indicatives and imperatives. Summing up what he has dictated thus far, Paul begins, "Therefore, having been rectified on the basis of faith" (δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως). This rectification is the outworking of the gospel as God's saving *power* (δύναμις θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν) through which God's righteousness is breaking into the world, "from faith to faith" (1:16–17). Lest his listeners forget the power of God's rectification through Christ, Paul reiterates the point in terms of shame—he is not ashamed of the gospel (1:16), and the hope of glory will not be shamed either (5:5). But now he introduces a new aspect to this saving action of God, the love of God poured into the hearts of believers through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is experiential language; Paul can speak in this way because he is confident that the Roman believers share in the knowledge of affliction and also of divine love. Robert Jewett comments perceptively, "The reason for Paul's confidence that the deficit of shame is being filled in the current experience of believers is stated in v. 5b, which opens with the explanatory ὅτι ('because'). … Divine love addresses shame at its deepest level and reveals the motivation behind 'peace' and 'reconciliation.'"[11]

All of this is the indicative assurance of God's gracious action, which grounds the exhortation of 5:1b: "Let us have (ἔχωμεν) peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Despite the strong textual evidence for the hortatory subjunctive that I have adopted here, most commentators opt for the variant indicative reading, ἔχομεν ("we have peace with God").[12] The primary reason for this preference for the indicative seems to be theological; as C.E.B. Cranfield puts it, "Paul regards the believer's peace with God as a fact. It would therefore be inconsistent for him to say here 'let us have peace', meaning thereby 'let us obtain peace'."[13] In addition to the textual evidence, however, the problem with such an argument is that it assumes an implicitly competitive account of divine and human agency. To the contrary, throughout Romans 6 Paul unites indicatives stating God's action with imperatives calling for a corresponding human action.[14] Thus divine action catalyzes human action, such that an imperatival reading of 5:1b in no way means that believers are to obtain peace with God by their own efforts. Rather, as Richard N. Longenecker puts it, Paul is exhorting his listeners to embrace and experience the validity of his gospel proclamation, which has to do with "personal, relational, and participatory ways of appreciating the new 'life' that has come about 'through our Lord Jesus Christ' and is experienced 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit'."[15] Along the same lines, Jewett rightly notes the link between "peace" in 5:1 and the theme of reconciliation in 5:10–11, which clearly has been accomplished by the death of Christ (5:6–10), yet nonetheless requires enactment in the Roman house churches.[16] Paul is setting the stage for his teaching in 6:1–23, where he will encourage believers to claim and live out the new life that has been given to them.

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[9] So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 393; Longenecker, *Romans*, 553–556.

[10] Paul's language may reflect early Christian appropriations of Joel 3:1–2 (LXX): "I will pour out (ἐκχέω) my Spirit on all flesh," with reference to Pentecost (Acts 2:17) and conversion (Acts 10:45). See Jewett, *Romans*, 356. Paul simply assumes that the gift of the Spirit generates experiential effects in and among believers (Gal 3:2–5).

[11] Jewett, *Romans*, 356.

[12] So, e.g., Käsemann, *Romans*, 132–133; J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word 1988) 245, based on "intrinsic probability"; C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; London: Clark 1975) 257, also based on "intrinsic probability"; C.S. Keener, *Romans* (NCCS; Eugene, OR: Cascade 2009) 70; Keck, *Romans*, 135. Jewett, *Romans*, 348–349, however, defends the subjunctive reading (noting the "hortatory character" of 5:1–11), as does Richard N. Longenecker (*Romans*, 554–556), who provides a brief survey of patristic sources who understood the verb as a hortatory subjunctive.

[13] Cranfield, *Romans*, 257.

Setting forth his picture of Christian transformation, Paul continues in verses 2–5:

> Let us boast (καυχώμεθα) in hope of the glory of God (ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ).[17] Not only that, let us boast in the afflictions (καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν), knowing that the affliction produces perseverance (ὑπομονή), perseverance leads to tested character (δοκιμή), tested character leads to hope (ἐλπίς), and hope does not put to shame (οὐ καταισχύνει), because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Numerous terms from this dense passage amplify or reverse earlier themes in the letter. On the one hand, Paul uses terms that *repeat and confirm* believers' distinctive new life "in this grace in which we have come to stand (ἑστήκαμεν)." Δικαιωθέντες (5:1) echoes and affirms the themes of the gospel as the means by which God's righteousness is breaking into the world (1:17), and of justification on the basis of faith (3:21). Πίστις (faith, in 5:1–2) is thematic in 1:16–17 and 3:21–4:25, as the hallmark of a life lived by trust in God. Χάρις (grace, in 5:2) picks up on the grace / gift language in 1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:4, 16. Δόξα (glory, in 5:2) echoes the promise of glory and honor and peace for those who do the good (2:10), as well as the example of Abraham, who was empowered in faith as he gave glory to God (4:20).[18] Shortly Paul will amplify this link between divine glory and God's life-giving power, when he claims: "We were buried therefore with Christ by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we too might walk in newness of life" (6:4). Paul's repeated emphasis on hope (ἐλπίς) in 5:2, 4–5 also aligns Paul's audience with Abraham, the quintessential model of hope and trust in God (4:18).

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[14] On "imperatival grace" in Rom 6, see J.M.G. Barclay, "Under Grace: The Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian *Habitus*," *Apocalyptic Paul. Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (ed. B.R. Gaventa) (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2013) 59–76.

[15] Longenecker, *Romans*, 556.

[16] Jewett, *Romans*, 348–349.

[17] The subjunctive sense of καυχώμεθα correlates with ἔχωμεν in 5:1. So Jewett, *Romans*, 352.

[18] This link between Abraham's faithfulness and his glorification of God contrasts starkly with human falsehood and sin, which in no way diminish God's glory, but which also fall far short of it (3:7; 3:23).

The perseverance (ὑπομονή) learned through affliction links believers with those who, through perseverance in doing good work (τοῖς μὲν καθ᾽ ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν) seek glory (δόξα) and honor and immortality (2:7).[19] In his use of all these terms, Paul aligns the Roman believers with those who do the good and with Abraham as an exemplar of faith.

On the other hand, the dense description of believers' experiential journey in the life of faith *diverges* significantly from the depiction of human culpability in 1:18–3:20. First and obviously, in 2:17–23 Paul calls out a duplicitous and self-deceived "boasting in God" that is really boasting in one's own sense of having a superior moral status through knowledge of the law. By way of contrast, in 5:2–3 the paradoxical conjunction of boasting in hope of the glory of God and boasting in afflictions signals human weakness relying on divine power as the sole source of hope. The difference between these two kinds of boasting is both temporal and substantial. In the first instance, the interlocutor is boasting in his or her *present* standing before God. In 5:2–3, Paul enjoins boasting in hope of *future* glory and *present* afflictions, with the connection between these apparently contrasting states threading through the experience of endurance and growth into tested character. Further, whereas the basis for the hypocritical boasting in 2:17 is possession of the law, the basis for believers' boasting is the love of God poured into their hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the hypocrite in 2:18 "boasts" that he "approves" (δοκιμάζω) what is excellent. In 5:4 Paul says the believer who stands in grace, boasts in afflictions, and grows through perseverance, comes to have a tested or approved character (δοκιμή), which in turn leads to hope. The implicit contrast between the interlocutor in 2:18 and the believer in 5:4 is two-fold. Through elitist boasting about approving the right things, the hypocrite in 2:18 implicitly passes approval on himself, yet in fact he fails the test; his actions do not match his words. Conversely, the believer who perseveres through afflictions "passes the test" and gains a character approved by God. Because *God* has tested and approved the character of the believer, that experience of testing and approval in turn leads on to an assured hope grounded in the experience of divine love.[20] Indeed, the δοκιμή thus demonstrated by the believer is the opposite of the attitude and situation of rebellious humanity, who did not "see fit to acknowledge God" (οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει) and whom God therefore handed over to an "unfitting" or "disqualified mind" (ἀδόκιμον νοῦν) that is incapable of moral discernment.[21] The reversal of this abysmal state of affairs is enacted in Rom 12:2, where the renewal of the mind leads to "proving what is the will of God (εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ)."

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[19] Jewett (*Romans*, 204–205) gives cogent reasons for translating ὑπομονή as "perseverance" in order to get at the sense of "a vigorous form of moral endeavor" here in the text.

[20] See the close parallel in 2 Cor 8:2, where Paul speaks of overflowing joy in the midst of a "test of affliction" (ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς). Elsewhere he speaks of Timothy's "tested character" (Phil 2:22), and of generous giving as a "test of service" through which the Corinthians will glorify God (2 Cor 9:13). See discussion in Jewett, *Romans*, 354–355.

[21] See the discussion in Cranfield, *Romans*, 127–128. One may compare 1 Cor 9:27, where Paul speaks of pummeling his body lest he be disqualified (ἀδόκιμος). Paul seems to use the rare word δοκιμή also to denote "tested, approved, qualified," so it is difficult to ascertain a distinction in practice between δοκιμή and δοκιμός, both of which are cognate with δοκιμάζειν.

Third, we have already noted Paul's repeated emphasis on divine glory as the object of believers' hope. Such anticipated glory not only links believers with Abraham, but it distinguishes them from Adamic humanity's refusal to glorify God (1:21) and contrary exchange of the glory of the immortal God for facsimiles of mortal creatures (1:23). Now, in their journey from hope, through afflictions, perseverance, tested character, and back to hope, the believers are firmly fixed on God's glory as their lodestar.

There is, however, one surprising point of *shared experience* between Paul's addressees and those who will face judgment for their wrong-doing—θλίψις. On the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed, there will be "affliction and distress" (θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία) for everyone who does evil (2:9). The difference between the affliction of believers and that of those who do evil appears to be temporal, a contrast between *future* judgment for wrong-doers, and *present* suffering for believers. Indeed, in 8:35 Paul names θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία among the present hardships suffered by believers. As we shall see, however, such a temporal distinction is difficult to maintain; in 8:19–22 Paul conceives of suffering as encompassing all creation, not just believers. What does seem to distinguish affliction in 2:9 from its appearance in 5:3–4 is its function and valence, whether it will be experienced as divine judgment, or as deepened union with Christ. This topic will come up in more depth in the discussion of Rom 8; here in we simply note the appearance of affliction in both explicitly Christian experience, and more broadly.

To sum up, in 5:1–5 Paul is not speaking hypothetically when he draws a picture of Christian transformation. He is appealing to what both he and his listeners know empirically (εἰδότες), giving them a way to narrate that experience in terms of growth in hope and the knowledge of God's love. His use of the hortatory subjunctive, "let us have peace with God," implies that this description of Christian life is meant to have practical effects in the life of the community of faith, setting the stage for the imperatives of 6:1–7:6. With the possible exception of "afflictions", the characteristics of this future-oriented life in Christ distinguish it sharply from the markers of life in rebellion against God.

This distinction in turn accords with the antithesis Paul sets up in 5:12–21 between Adam's legacy—the reign of sin and death—and Christ as the one man whose grace abounded for the many, a contrast wherein "primal time and end time confront one another in mounting antithesis."[22] With the possibly significant exception of the experience of θλίψις, it seems that Paul locates his listeners firmly and almost exclusively on the forward moving arc of the spiral of dereliction and deliverance. Empowered by union with Christ, corporately indwelt by the Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead, they are firmly ensconced in the text's trajectory of hope (5:4–5; 8:24–25, 38). Alternating between first and second person plural verbs, Paul encourages and exhorts his listeners: Let us boast in hope of the glory of God, let us rejoice in sufferings (5:2–3); we have died with Christ and believe we shall also live with him (6:8). You (plural) must "reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11); "sin will not reign over you for you are not under law but under grace" (6:14). Therefore, "present your bodily members as slaves to righteousness, for sanctification" (6:19).[23] Indeed, walking by the Spirit, Paul's auditors share the mindset of the Spirit (τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος), which is life and peace (8:6). Here is an affective, volitional, and embodied account of moral transformation that appears to proceed in a straightforward linear fashion.

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[22] Käsemann, *Romans*, 142.

Thus, although the spiral structure of Romans 1–8 may indeed display the desperate situation of Adamic humanity on ever deeper levels, the contrasting affirmations of chapters 6 and 8 strongly imply that those in Christ no longer share that human experience. Through his vivid appeals to bodily practices, including baptism and the deployment of bodily members in the service of righteousness, Paul gives his audience powerful, future oriented ways to narrate their shared life in Christ. When he turns later in the letter to practical matters regarding food and fellowship, he further describes their common life in terms of a shared mindset and diverse practices that display the countercultural effects of the Christ-gift in their midst (12:1–13; 14:1–23). Clearly Paul envisions a distinctive ethos, even *habitus*, for the moral formation of believers, with personal and interpersonal dimensions that demonstrate a definite break with the situation of Adamic humanity.[24]

2.2. Detours

Nonetheless, in the "downward" movements of the spiral, Paul repeatedly disrupts his confident affirmations of new life in Christ, with vivid portrayals of human bondage and affliction in the wake of Adam's transgression. Careful attention to these interruptions calls into question a clear binary between those "in Christ" and those in the grip of sin and death, and indeed between the realm of grace and the realm of sin, particularly regarding experience. I will focus on three such interruptions: 7:7–25, 8:18–27, and 8:35–36.

First, in 7:7–25 Paul abruptly introduces a lengthy performance of the experience of the self as indwelt by sin and co-opted by sin's lethal use of the law.[25] The immediate catalyst for this apparent excursus is a need to distinguish between the law and sin (7:7), in light of his negative portrayal of the law in 6:1–7:6. But the following verses go far beyond such an agenda, as Paul deploys first person singular speech, first in past and then in present tense, to perform the anguish of the speaker whose desire for the good is sabotaged by indwelling sin. The experience of the ἐγώ in these verses differs significantly from the experience of life in Christ that Paul limns in 5:1–7:6, and to which he will return in 8:1–39. As noted earlier, the baptized have died to sin (6:2); therefore they must reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (6:11). The imperative is grounded in a strong indicative: "Sin will not rule over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (6:14). Indeed, not only have believers died to sin through union with Christ, they also have died to the law through the body of Christ (7:4). All of these affirmations contrast in the strongest possible terms with the complaint of the speaker: "I am carnal, sold under sin (*ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*)."[26] Again, if the "I" acts against its own wishes, "I am no longer the one accomplishing it, but sin dwelling in me" (7:17, 20), a description which contrasts sharply with that of the Christian community as "indwelt" by the Holy Spirit (8:9, 11). Finally, at the confusing end of the lament of the ἐγώ, despair and hope take turns on the stage (7:24–25), confounding any clear identification of the speaker as one "in Christ": "wretched person that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with the flesh I serve the law of sin." Käsemann expresses a dominant view among commentators when he comments, "What is being said here is over for the Christian according to ch. 6 and ch. 8."[27] Paul has a much more hopeful view of the agency of Christian believers as it is reconstituted in union with Christ; that hopeful view undergirds his admonitions to the Roman Christians to present their members to God as weapons of righteousness (6:13, 19). How then could the experience enacted in 7:24–25, which is one of vacillation, alternating between despair and hope, plight and solution, have any place in Paul's robust confidence about Christians' victory over sin (6:14)?[28]

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[23] In addition to Barclay, "Under Grace," see also J.M.G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2015) 493–519.

[24] Both Barclay and Engberg-Pedersen find helpful the notion of *habitus*, as explicated in Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. R. Nice) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1977), and *The Logic of Practice* (trans. R. Nice) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1990). For Bourdieu, *habitus* denotes the embodied and socially embedded habits of thought and practice that permeate a culture in such deeply ingrained ways that they can be summarized as "what goes without saying because it comes without saying." See Barclay, *Gift*, 506–508; Barclay, "Under Grace" 69–73; Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul. The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) 182–194.

[25] For the purposes of this paper, I set aside the many disputes regarding the interpretation of Rom 7:7–25 and focus primarily on the text's performative rhetoric and its potential effects on the audience. For exegetical defense of the following reading of Rom 7:7–25, see Eastman, "Strengthening the Ego," 137–164.

On the other hand, the fact that Paul repeatedly exhorts his listeners to enact the freedom they have been given in Christ, in the conjunction of indicative and imperative that reaches back to the programmatic affirmation and injunction of 5:1, implies that believers remain vulnerable to the deceptive power of sin, precisely through their embodied and socially networked existence in a world where sin and death still reign. There is an experiential and behavioral gap between the realities of new life in Christ, and their expression in the lives of believers.[29] Thus the theme of hope that runs from 5:1–8:39 "confronts what has aptly been called the 'overlap' situation of present Christian life."[30] Within this overlap situation, the time between the ages, the full identity and reality of those in Christ remains at least partially hidden, awaiting full revelation (8:19–25). Given this eschatological reservation, in Michael Wolter's words, "for Paul the 'new creation' of the reality in Christ here and now is not present in the same way as 'this aeon' or the reality in Adam of the cosmos."[31] We will return to this theme of hiddenness in discussing Romans 8, but here I simply note that both the presence of imperatives indicating a lag between believers' union with Christ and their behavior, and the present elusiveness of God's reign displayed in human lives, puts a question mark over attempts to nail down the identity of the speaker in Rom 7:7–25. Rather, perhaps it is time to propose an alternate approach to this text by considering the potential *effects* of Paul's rhetoric is on his audience, precisely at this point in the letter.[32]

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[26] Noting a similar contrast between *σάρκινός* and *πνευματικός* in 1 Cor 3:1, where Paul clearly is describing immature Christians, Will N. Timmins (*Romans 7 and Christian Identity. A Study of the 'I' in its Literary Context* [SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017] 139–142) argues that in Rom 7:14 *σάρκινός* denotes being "made of flesh" in the sense of having a mortal physical body, rather than "belonging to the realm of the flesh" in an eschatological sense.

[27] Käsemann, *Romans*, 200. Käsemann recognizes the problem 7:25b poses for his reading of the text, and falls back on an interpolation theory: "Here if anywhere we have the gloss of a later reader" (*ibidem*, 212).

[28] Throughout the history of interpretation, many commentators who defend 7:14–25 as exclusively depicting Christian experience tend to see 7:25 as portraying an inner division between the body's vulnerability to sin, and the mind as devoted to God. See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans* (trans. F.R. Larcher) (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine 2012) 200; J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (trans. J. Owen) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1955) 263, 267, 274. More recent commentators who interpret 7:7–25 as explicitly describing Christian experience include Cranfield, *Romans*, 344–370; C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London: Hendrickson 1991) 140–143; Dunn, *Romans*, 396–399; Timmins, *Romans 7*, 205–210.

The rhetorical turn to first person singular speech in 7:7 signals not a shift in subject matter per se; after all, Paul is at least initially addressing a question about the law, raised by his harsh description of the law in 7:1–6. Rather, the grammatical shift signals a change in genre, from exhortation and description to a performative rhetoric of pathos.[33] Like the psalms, Paul's first-person speech draws the hearer into the experience of the speaker. As Beverly Gaventa puts it, the *ego* "is shaped by the 'I' of the Psalter as it is reinterpreted by the gospel. This new 'I' in turn may shape the audience to identify with Paul's analysis of the enslaving power of Sin and its capacity to take even God's holy Law as its captive."[34] Gaventa's observation rightly shifts the focus of interpretation from questions about the identity of the speaker, which Paul has left elusive, to questions about the identities of the listeners as they are brought to identify with the ἐγώ.[35]

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[29] This gap, as indicated by the presence of imperatives in Rom 6, receives particular attention in Timmins, *Romans 7*, 66–91. Timmins (*ibidem*, 74–91) in particular notes the importance of 6:12, 19, highlighting the "mortal body" as the site of the struggle with sin. Eastman (*Paul and the Person*, 85–108) argues extensively for a Pauline understanding of embodiment as participatory mode of existence entailing vulnerability to the larger environment.

[30] B. Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 2007) 163.

[31] M. Wolter, *Paul. An Outline of His Theology* (trans. R. Brawley) (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2015) 186. For thorough discussion of the gap in terms of what is "hidden" and what is "revealed" in relationship to Christian moral identity, see M.A. Mininger, *Uncovering the Theme of Revelation in Romans 1:16–3:26* (WUNT 2/445; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2017).

[32] For exegetical defense of the following reading of Rom 7:7–25, see Eastman, "Strengthening the Ego."

[33] Stanley K. Stowers' argument (*A Rereading of Romans. Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1994] 273) for reading 7:7–25 as "speech-in-character" focuses attention on the question of genre, but nonetheless also proposes a specific referent for the speaker, as a Gentile attempting to live by the law. For a cogent critique of Stowers, see Timmins, *Romans 7*, 12–34.

[34] B.R. Gaventa, "The Shape of the 'I': The Psalmist, the Gospel, and the Speaker in Romans 7," *Apocalyptic Paul. Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (ed. B.R. Gaventa) (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2013) 81, n. 12.

These questions press in upon readers of Romans. Whose experience is this? I rather doubt the question will ever be settled to the satisfaction of all Pauline scholars! But perhaps the question is the wrong one. Perhaps this highly charged performance shines the spotlight on the listeners, by inviting them to locate themselves within the drama. To take a seat among the Roman Christians and hear this invitation is to turn away from endlessly disputed questions about the identity of the *speaker*, and instead to attend to one's identity as a listener: who am I and where am I in this scenario? When the listener finds herself caught up into the pathos of the ἐγώ, she also finds herself directly addressed by the promise of 8:1–2: "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you (σε) free from the law of sin and death."[36]

In other words, here Paul's rhetoric not only persuades and informs; it elicits identification and response from his listeners, and it does this precisely when depicting the experience of the self in sin's realm. If Paul's goal is simply to exonerate the law by distinguishing it from sin, why use such audience-involving rhetoric, *precisely at this point*? After all, he has just reminded his listeners of their union with Christ and death to sin in baptism (6:1–4), and indeed this is the very reason most scholars deny any possibility that the "I" could represent believers. I agree, *insofar* as on a logical and ontological level, the speaker's experience of captivity to sin (7:14) cannot depict the ultimate reality of believers' status in Christ. Yet we still have to ask: what is the *effect* of this speech on Paul's listeners, not only cognitively but affectively? Is it not possible that the speech of the ἐγώ is in one sense a *retrospective* account of life under the law and the power of sin, but that it also functions to acknowledge and address the *present* struggles of believers whose experiences and behavior have not "caught up" with the reality of their new situation in Christ?[37] If so, this apparent "detour" has a positive function in Paul's depiction of Christian existence in chapters 5–8, by preparing the way for a fresh hearing of the gospel in chapter 8.[38]

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[35] So, for example, although Engberg-Pedersen and I may disagree as to the constitution and identity of the "I," we can agree that, as he puts it, "the whole point of Paul's account seems to lie in making his readers themselves experience the experiences of the self that he is recounting" (Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 168).

[36] As Stowers (*Rereading*, 282) puts it, "The character's speech ends when Paul addresses him in words of encouragement". See also the discussion in S.G. Eastman, "Double Participation and the Responsible Self in Romans 5–8," *Apocalyptic Paul. Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (ed. B.G. Gaventa) (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2013) 98–99.

[37] Timmins (*Romans 7*) arrives at a similar reading, but he identifies the speaker as Paul speaking personally, representatively, and explicitly as a Christian believer.

[38] Centuries of interpretation have affirmed such an understanding of Rom 7; does readers' experience have any role to play in the interpretation of a text? The question is complicated when we consider the hermeneutical circle operative in Paul's interpretation of texts; it seems clear that he interprets Israel's scriptures in the light of his experiences of Christ and the Gentile mission, even as he narrates those experiences through a scriptural lens. The question arises whether and how such a hermeneutical circle continues to affect interpretation today. For a judicious discussion of the relationship between experience and historical-critical method in biblical

The second "interruption" is in 8:18–27, where Paul punctuates his account of living "according to the Spirit" with the statement, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning and suffering labor pains until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (8:22–23). Although Paul speaks here of παθήματα rather than θλίψις, there are close thematic as well as textual links between these verses and 5:1–5. In the overlap of the ages affliction and suffering seem to be shared by believers and the rest of the created order. In 8:23–25 Paul continues with a probing exploration of hope that amplifies his earlier description of a progression from affliction to perseverance (ὑπομονή) to character to hope (5:4–5). Now he qualifies hope as waiting with perseverance (ὑπομονή) for what is *not yet seen* (8:25), and through and in such long-suffering waiting in the dark, so to speak, joining with the shared groaning and labor of all creation (8:22–23).

Whereas a majority of scholars interpret creation (κτίσις) in 8:19–23 as limited to the non-human natural order, there are several reasons to see it as including Adamic humanity as well.[39] In Paul's uses of κτίσις elsewhere he surely has human beings in mind (Gal 5:17; 2 Cor 5:17). Here in Rom 8:20, the unwilling subjection of creation to futility picks up on Paul's depiction of divine judgment for humanity's primal refusal to honor God: they "were made futile (ἐματαιώθησαν) in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened (ἐσκοτίσθη)" (1:21). The verbs are divine passives, indicating that futility is not a chosen or "willed" condition, but an unanticipated consequence of idolatry. Similarly, in 8:20, God is implied as the one who subjected creation to futility, "not willingly" because such subjection was not chosen by those thus subjected.[40] Furthermore, this creation suffers birth pangs (8:22), a descriptor often applied to Israel when suffering under divine judgment (Mic 4:10; Isa 26:17; 66:8–9; Jer 4:31; 6:24). Indeed, God's judgment means the natural order suffers together with Israel (Jer 4:23–31), so that the sufferings of the created order are inseparable from those of God's people. These observations strongly suggest that the suffering and groaning of creation in 8:19–23 include the suffering of fallen humanity under the judgment of God.

Astonishingly, those in Christ share in this suffering and yearning for redemption, precisely through the intercession of the Spirit of God (vv. 26–27). Apparently, groaning, yearning, waiting, and enduring, in union with the whole created order, including fallen humanity, is also "living according to the Spirit."[41] Furthermore, this experience of suffering, hope, and intercession is shot through both with what "we know"—the groaning of

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interpretation, with particular reference to Rom 7:7–25, see M. Carson, "Deep Heat and Bandages? Historical Criticism, Bounded Indeterminacy, and Pastoral Care," *EQ* 82/4 (2010) 340–352.

[39] S.G. Eastman, "Whose Apocalypse? The Identity of the Sons of God in Romans 8:19," *JBL* 121/2 (2002) 273–277.

[40] So Käsemann, *Romans*, 235: "The verb, which has the specific send of 'to be subject', according to apocalyptic tradition refers to the consequences of the fall... We have here a backward glance at the παρέδωκεν of 1:24."

[41] Dorothea Bertschmann ("'The Silence of the Lambs': Suffering, Meaning-Making, and Lament in Romans 8,18–39," *Dying with Christ—New Life in Hope. Romans 5,12–8,39* [ed. J.M.G. Barclay] [Leuven: Peeters 2021] 231) speaks here of "an oscillating agency between the Spirit-bearers and the Spirit itself: though

creation (8:22) and the promise that God works for good (8:28)—and with what "we do not know" (8:26), which is what and how to pray. Here is an account of believers' experience that has cognitive, affective, and bodily aspects, conjoined with the longing of Adamic humanity for release from enslavement to decay (8:21).[42] Dorothea Bertschmann perceptively sees here Paul's description of

> the experience of an open-ended life, which is vulnerable to the powers of death and destruction. … The experience of ongoing suffering under the signature of assured salvation moves the believers into a liminal territory, where they do not know what (τι) to pray. … [T]here is a crisis of knowing, a crisis of language, even prayer language, driven by the liminal experience where the most assured hopes and the most disheartening suffering face each other.[43]

Paul's description of believers in a situation of liminal unknowing highlights the logic of solidarity that permeates his language and the constraints such solidarity places on any linear account of transformation. Drawn by the Spirit into fellowship with creation's powerless suffering in subjection to futility and bondage, including the futility to which Adamic humanity has been subjected by God, believers must share with all others in eagerly awaiting the final redemption (8:19, 23), which includes not only "the apocalypse of the sons of God", but the liberation of creation from its bondage to decay. "The unity of suffering points to the unity of redemption."[44]

Thus, if the interruption of 7:7–25 gives voice to believers' lingering struggles with sin and despair, only to announce the good news that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:9), the incursion of 8:18–27 reminds believers that they still wait, together with all creation, for the full liberation promised in Christ. Finally, in 8:35–36 a psalm of lament suddenly intrudes into Paul's confidence that nothing can separate believers from divine love. This lament follows immediately after a catalogue of conditions that threaten to do just that (8:35). The list begins with "affliction or distress" (θλίψις ἢ στενοχωρία), which Paul earlier threatened as precisely the future awaiting those who "do not obey the truth" (2:8), but which believers experience now. It is worth noting that just as Christ was "handed over" to death (4:25; 8:32), sharing the judgment pronounced on human suppression of the truth (1:24, 26, 28), so here those in Christ share in the situation

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the Spirit has been sent into the hearts of believers and has become part of their innermost person (Rom 5:5; Gal 4:6), it has an agency, which does not annul but expands and perhaps transcends human agency."

[42] Drawing on 1 Cor 14:15, Gordon D. Fee (*God's Empowering Presence*, 575–586) argues that στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις in 8:26 refers to inarticulate, Spirit-inspired private prayer. Käsemann ("The Cry for Liberty in the Worship of the Church," E. Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* [trans. M. Kohl] [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1971] 122-137 [135]) famously argued that Paul is speaking of *glossolalia* in public worship, expressing solidarity with unredeemed creation: "Paul certainly does not say, *simul justus, simul peccator.* But he allows the sons of liberty to be those who die and, as those who cry for redemption, to be at one with unredeemed creation." In either case, Paul assumes his listeners will know whereof he speaks.

[43] Bertschmann, "Silence," 230.

[44] Eastman, "Apocalypse," 274.

of disobedient humanity, under the shadow of affliction associated with judgment.[45] They are not exempt from suffering that Paul elsewhere associates with divine judgment; rather their affliction is part and parcel of their union with Christ in solidarity with their fellow human beings who still await redemption. For this very reason, this fellowship of sufferings is named in the context of rock-solid assurance that such afflictions cannot separate them from their Lord; indeed, the end result of this litany of threats, and the conflict it evokes, is to magnify the victory of God's redeeming power and love. Such certainty about the victory of divine love gives Paul's account of Christian experience its forward moving thrust.

But not without the cry of the oppressed! "For your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter!" (8:36 / Ps 43:23 LXX). The psalmist protests loudly, vociferously, "Do not forget our suffering! Do not sweep it under the rug!" In Paul's citation of the psalm, the tone of the complaint stands in jarring contrast to the confident hope that precedes and follows it in 8:31–35, 37–39. Without being harmonized, without being assimilated, the lingering present experience of severe suffering punctuates even the confident affirmation of a secure future. Apparently, this too is a part of Christian experience.

3. The Spiral Structure of Experience and the Logic of Solidarity

We have seen that Paul establishes his audience firmly in the new realm of life in Christ, a realm where union with Christ's death through baptism, and the promise of resurrection, fund the apostle's exhortations to transformed behavior. We have also seen that this union with Christ does not create immunity to either sin or suffering, nor does it separate believers from the present depredations of a world still in bondage to sin and death. Rather, to be in solidarity with Christ is to be drawn into solidarity with an as yet unredeemed world. Vulnerability to sin, the reality of affliction, the longing for a redemption that remains unseen, the cry of the oppressed, all subvert a clear-cut antithesis between the experience of the old age and the new, between the realm of sin and death, and the realm of life in Christ. Their interpenetration at the present time is a sign of the overlap between the ages, even as Paul anticipates the final and complete victory of Christ. As Käsemann puts it:

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[45] This is not simply a rhetorical ploy on Paul's part; the last threat in this short list is "the sword," which at the least implies the danger of physical violence and death. While it is impossible to ascertain the actual circumstances of which Paul speaks, the list makes clear the reality of conflict in which Paul sees himself, his co-workers, and possibly his listeners in Rome living out their life in Christ. These enemy forces, which Paul depicts in cosmic terms in 8:38–39, would indeed have power to separate Paul and his listeners from their life in Christ, were it not for the power of the surpassing divine love in Christ (8:35; 8:39) that brackets the lament. In this context, Beverly R. Gaventa ("Interpreting the Death of Jesus Apocalyptically: Reconsidering Romans 8:32," *Jesus and Paul Reconnected. Fresh Pathways into an Old Debate* [ed. T. Still] [Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2007] 125–145) persuasively explores the military connotations of "handing over" (παραδίδωμι) in 8:32 and 4:25, in relation to God's three-fold "handing over" of disobedient humanity in 1:24, 26, 28.

> The old aeon has not simply vanished with the inauguration of the new. It still radiates temptation and mortal peril. But precisely this is the sphere which the new aeon invades. In the time ushered in with Christ the two aeons are no longer separated chronologically and spatially as in Jewish apocalyptic. The earth has become their battleground.[46]

This interweaving of the two ages, both temporally and in terms of competing realms of power, is the arena in which Christian experience and transformation take place. This is why Paul uses the imperatives to exhort his listeners, even though they already are "in Christ." And this is why, in my view, the entirety of Rom 5–8 depicts the Christian journey, while also repeatedly blurring the boundaries between the experiences of life in Christ and apart from Christ. Christ's movement into the old age where sin and death penultimately reign generates a logic of solidarity that runs through these chapters—solidarity in union with Christ and fellow believers, corporately indwelt by the Spirit, but also a degree of solidarity with suffering, including suffering under judgment for sin, in the whole created order.

Thus, I suggest that the repeated disruptions in the progression of the letter, narrated in richly experiential language, subvert a strictly linear understanding of transformation through union with Christ. Rather, the spiral structure of these chapters draws the reader into a pattern of *life in Christ* that oscillates between plight and solution even as it is propelled forward by the sure victory over all that threatens separate humanity from God. Ultimately, the telos of this pattern of life is profound confidence in the love of God, precisely because it reveals the scope of divine love encompassing all creation through all time.

4. Theological Reflections and Pastoral Implications

4.1. Theological Reflections

In closing, I will comment briefly on some theological and pastoral implications of this oscillating yet forwardly dynamic structure of Christian experience. In the first place, despite the sharp contrast between believers' past life under the power of sin and death, and new life "under grace," God is on both sides of that divide.[47] Similarly, as the intercession of the Spirit demonstrates, God is on both sides of the disparity between believers' assurance of salvation and creation's hunger for redemption. There can be no time or place apart from God, as is evident above all in Paul's radical language about Christ's participation in human dereliction to the point of execution as a criminal.[48] Christ's decisive and continued movement into the world pulls believers into that movement as well. As the intercession of the Spirit demonstrates, God laments from the depths of *all* afflictions, including both Christian experience and all human and non-human suffering.[49]

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[46] Käsemann, *Romans*, 134.

[47] For the way in which Paul narrates the action of God encompassing his whole life, including his life prior to the "apocalypse" of Christ in him (Gal 1:15–16), see J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul's Story: Theology as Testimony," *Narrative Dynamics in Paul. A Critical Assessment* (ed. B.W. Longenecker) (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2002); S.G. Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue. Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2007) 33–37.

The Christology that undergirds this spiral depiction of Christian experience is deeply incarnational. It is Christ's participatory union with humanity, to the depth of being "made to be sin, although he knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21), that enacts God's love and empowers growth in Christ. In Rom 5:12–21, the christological center of his picture of Christian experience, Paul establishes this divine solidarity through antithetical parallelism linking Christ and Adam. The antithesis between Adam and Christ dominates the pericope: Adam is the one whose primal transgression provided the opportunity for sin and death to enter the world (5:12). His trespass led to death for "the many" (5:15), bringing the judgment that results in condemnation (5:16, 18). Through his disobedience the many were made to be sinners (5:19). In every respect, Christ is the opposite of Adam, bringing super-abounding grace and the free gift of righteousness, such that those who receive his grace and gift "reign in life" (5:17–21). Both Adam and Christ carry humanity's destiny as representative figures, but Christ's legacy of acquittal, surpassing gift, and life, far surpasses Adam's legacy of condemnation and death.

Yet the saving effect of this antithesis between the reigns of Adam and Christ relies on an underlying connection between them: Adam is a τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, a "type of the one who was to come", that is, Christ.[50] Taking the most basic meaning of τύπος as Paul's sense here, Adam is an imprint of Christ, or the hollow left by Christ's imprint, rather like a footprint or the mark of a signet ring. Such an imprint will inevitably be the reverse of the original, just as Adam is a mere reverse copy of Christ. Without Christ Adam would not exist, any more than a τύπος could exist without the original. Neither, however, would Christ's actions be effective for Adam's heirs, without such an intimate correspondence between them. As Paul emphasizes repeatedly in 5:6–11, Christ's reconciling death on behalf of Adam's heirs—the ungodly, weak, sinners, and enemies—is precisely the power that overcomes Adam's legacy. Here is the christological enactment of God's saving solidarity with humanity *in extremis*, yet without effacing Christ's divine identity.

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[48] This divine participation in human dereliction is clearest in Pauline texts which speak of Christ interchanging places with humanity: Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21; 2 Cor 8:9; Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7–11. The classic discussion of this theme is M.D. Hooker, "Interchange in Christ," *From Adam to Christ. Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge 1991) 13–25. A probing exploration of Christ's identification with humanity under sin in Rom 8:3 is offered by Vincent P. Branick, "The Sinful Flesh of the Son of God (Rom 8:3): A Key Image of Pauline Theology," *CBQ* 47 (1985) 246–262.

[49] Noting that Paul speaks of suffering and death, the legacy of being "in Adam," in terms of life in union with Christ, Hooker ("Interchange," 24) suggests, "Can it be that these Adamic sufferings have been pulled over (or baptized) into Christ? Man is created again in Christ, but he is not yet free from physical limitations: yet precisely because Christ is fully one with man in all his experiences, these can now be understood in terms of life in Christ."

[50] "For all the antithesis there is also correspondence between them. This is expressed by the word τύπος." Käsemann, *Romans*, 151.

One thinks here of the theme of recapitulation in Irenaeus, drawing on his reading of Rom 5–8:

> For in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from Him through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us? Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God. … For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death. For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally molded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life, so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation. … God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.[51]

This notion of recapitulation implies that Christ incorporates all human experience, the past as well as the present and future, into himself and recasts it into a new life of communion and fellowship with God. As Michael Steenberg describes Irenaeus' recapitulative and restorative soteriology, "What the incarnate Christ is, he is for all humankind, as all humankind."[52] Insofar as Rom 5:12–21 depicts such a saving movement by Christ, it undergirds Paul's subsequent depiction of the whole of Christian experience, including experiences of sin, suffering, and oppression where God seems to be absent, as enclosed within God's redemption. To journey in union with such a Lord is to circle back to the past and down to the depths, even while eagerly anticipating the promise of future glory.

4.2. Pastoral Implications

Here I will name briefly two implications of the foregoing analysis for the pastoral work of the church. First, the spiral structure of experience "in Christ" creates room for, and indeed requires, acknowledging the enmeshment of believers and the church in actions and attitudes that belong to the realm of death, not life. To acknowledge this pastorally may include the retelling of wrongs both done and suffered, lament, disruptive cries of protest, and radical questioning of the goodness and providence of God. All of these have an insistent voice in Romans 5–8. Repetition and interruption mandate expressing these difficult realities, whereas a purely linear account of transformation would run the danger of sweeping them under the rug. Real transformation requires both the retelling of the wrong and the assurance that it does not have the last word, in a communal context contained by the gracious love of God in Christ.

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[51] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III.18.7 (*ANF* I).

[52] M.C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man. Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (London: Clark 2009) 49.

Finally, Paul's logic of solidarity and the spiral structure of experience go together. Because the self is always a self-in-relation, there can be no transformation of the individual apart from the transformation of the relational matrices that hold and constitute the person. The reverse is also true: there can be no real growth in the life of the community when some individuals or groups are excluded or left behind. The good of the part and the good of the whole belong together. As Paul's cosmic vision of redemption in Romans 8 makes clear, this means that the good of the church and the good of the whole created order also belong together. Rowan Williams has stated this memorably, and I will draw to a close with his words:

> We are all to find who we are in the light of God in Jesus, and that finding *is* the process of living in a community struggling to discover means of mutual empowering and affirming, in the conviction that we shall not live or flourish if we consider any person or group dispensable, or merely functional for our own self-definition. And behind the life of such a community stands the event—and the *power*—by which it lives. To understand the Church, we must look at what generates it.[53]

"Behind the life of such a community stands the event—and the *power*—by which it lives." The community of faith ends, as it starts, in the experience of a real encounter with Christ as the divine Other who *presses in* upon Paul—and Paul's audience—reminding, renewing, unsettling, interrupting, and transforming.

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[53] R. Williams, "Nobody Knows Who I Am Till the Judgment Morning," R. Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell 2000) 287.

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Body, Mind, and Passions in Romans: Paul's Alternative View within His Philosophical and Religious Context

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Abstract: Most ancient thinkers believed that passions corrupted rational thinking, and that reason should control passions; Jewish apologists, however, often chided Gentiles for being ruled by passion, and sometimes offered Jewish law as a way to achieve genuine mastery over passion. Using language familiar to his contemporaries, Paul argues that human passions have corrupted reason's ability to control them, and even right knowledge of God's law cannot deliver one from this enslavement. For Paul, however, Christ by the Spirit liberates from bondage to passion, enabling a relationship with and life pleasing to God.

Keywords: passions, Spirit and flesh, Romans 7:14–25, reason versus passion, Paul and the body, mind of the Spirit

This paper surveys some aspects of Paul's anthropology in Romans in light of some of its ancient context. Paul lacks any Platonic dualism between body and soul, but neither does he articulate his anthropology in ancient Israelite/OT.[1] Of course, Paul could not employ common modern holistic approaches to the human person today, yet, interestingly, Pauline anthropology is not so much partitive (as in Platonism), but rather functional. His anthropological approach is not, however, intended to provide a fully consistent vocabulary:[2] sometimes he distinguishes body and spirit (1 Cor 5:3, 5; 7:34; cf. Col 2:5; flesh and spirit, 2 Cor 7:1), body and mind (Rom 7:23; cf. flesh and mind, 7:25; Eph 2:3), mind and spirit (1 Cor 14:14–15; cf. Rom 8:5 with 8:16), and perhaps (albeit with a holistic emphasis) spirit and soul (1 Thess 5:23).

More to the point of this particular essay, Paul, like many of his contemporaries, sometimes contrasts right reason with bodily passions. While he does not argue, with some of his contemporaries, for complete suppression or annihilation of all passions, he regards illicit ones (cf. Rom 7:7, citing Exod 20:17//Deut 5:21) as present among both gentiles (Rom 1:26) and his fellow Jews (Rom 7:5). Paul envisions the renewed mind in Christ and the Spirit (Rom 6:11; 8:5; 12:2) as liberating the mind from its subjection to passions.

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[1] For which, see e.g., H.W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1974).

[2] Cf. e.g., N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives. Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2013) 455–473.

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I adapt here material from my much larger book, *The Mind of the Spirit*,[3] so I ask pardon in advance for the context in ancient sources, especially in Paul's letters outside Romans, that I must here omit.

1. Body

Some ancient Christian interpreters, presumably influenced by Platonism's influence in late antiquity, heard in Rom 7 a struggle between the body and the soul.[4] Such a reading has various problems, not the least of which is that Paul never uses the term translated "soul" in this manner.[5] Nevertheless, ancient interpreters' recognition that Paul connected the mortal body with vulnerability to vice[6] picks up on an idea in Paul that modern interpreters sometimes seem too hasty to avoid. Whatever the reasons, Paul in Romans sometimes does connect sin with the behavior, desires and mortality of the body:

- the "body of sin" (6:6)
- the "desires" of the "mortal [death-destined] body" (6:12)
- "sinful passions" working in bodily members (7:5)
- "the body of this death" (7:24)
- the present body is "dead because of sin" (8:10)
- resurrection hope for "mortal bodies" (8:11)
- one has hope of life if one puts to death the body's works (8:13b)

Associations of sin (7:18, 25) and death (8:13a; cf. 8:6) with "flesh" also seem relevant.

This is not to say that Paul regards the body itself as evil. For Paul, sin also pervades even the law-informed mind (7:23, 25), revealing its vulnerability to sin as well. Paul allows, with many philosophers and Jewish thinkers, that reason *should* choose to control desires when they contravene moral law (cf. again 7:23, 25). For Paul, however, this consistent success of reason appears even more hypothetical than Stoicism's ideal sage.[7] (For most Jewish sources, almost the same could be said for achieving sinlessness.)[8] Nevertheless, Paul argues that one is *reckoned* as the ideal in Christ; even before attaining full maturity behaviorally, the ideal (or eschatological destiny) has somehow become the premise rather than the goal (Rom 6:1–11; 8:3–11).[9]

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[3] C.S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit. Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2016). Thanks also to this article's anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions.

[4] Severian, *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church* on Rom 7:24 (in G. Bray [ed.], *Romans* [ACCS NT 6; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1998] 198).

[5] See Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 267–278. Admittedly, his language of the "inner person" probably reflects Platonic influence on popular philosophic language; see Plato, *Resp.* 9.588A–591B (esp. 588A–589B); S.K. Stowers, "Paul and Self-Mastery," *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J.P. Sampley) (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International 2003) 526–527; C. Markschies, "Die platonische Metapher vom 'inneren Menschen': eine Brücke zwischen antiker Philosophie und altchristlicher Theologie," *ZKG* 105/1 (1994) 1–17; H.D. Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul," *NTS* 46/3 (2000) 315–341; D.E. Aune, "Anthropological Duality in the Eschatology of 2 Cor 4:16–5:10," *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen) (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox 2001) 220–222; E.A. Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens. Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity* (ed. A. Nobbs) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2010) 60.

[6] E.g. (in Bray, *Romans*, 197–198), Ambrose, *On the Death of his Brother Satyrus* 2.41; Jerome, *Against Rufinus* 1.25.

[7] For the elusiveness of which cf. e.g., T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox – Edinburgh: Clark 2000) 61–62.

Stoics focused not primarily on the bodily character of passions but on the danger of false beliefs.[10] Paul may be closer to the Stoic understanding on this point, though his views are not identical with those of Stoics. Contrary to Stoic expectations, Romans 7 emphasizes that merely correct belief about right and wrong cannot adequately address passion.[11]

This was true even for correct belief based on moral teachings of Scripture. Whereas among Gentiles who lack sufficient revelation the mind ends up party to "fleshly" desires (1:25–28; cf. Eph 4:17–19), the law-trained mind can refuse to assent to such desires and yet find itself unable to extirpate them (Rom 7:22–25). For Paul, the cognitive therapy of rational religion falls short of transformation available in Christ.

2. Flesh[12]

Paul's use of "flesh" would not be completely novel in a Greek context. Occasionally Greek sources already spoke of the "flesh" (σάρξ) as worthless.[13] Some scholars suggest that the usage stemmed originally from reaction against Epicurus.[14] Epicureans claimed that those made of flesh (σάρκινον) naturally viewed pleasure positively.[15] For one Stoic from this era, the divine consists purely of reason, not flesh (σάρξ),[16] and excellence belongs to moral purpose rather than to flesh.[17] For a later second-century Stoic, one should "disdain the flesh: it is naught but gore and bones and a network compact of nerves and veins and arteries."[18] A third-century Neoplatonist warns against descending "into the flesh [σάρκα]."[19]

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[8] See e.g., *Jub.* 21:21; 1QS 11.9; *1 Esd* 4:37; *4 Ezra* 7:138–140 (68–70). Some exempted a few persons from sin, such as perhaps Abraham (PrMan 8; *T. Ab.* 10:13 A); Moses (*b. Shab.* 55b), Jesse (*Tg. Ruth* to 4:22), or Yohanan ben Zakkai (*Ab. R. Nat.* 14A).

[9] See discussion in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 31–54.

[10] Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 540.

[11] Hans Hübner ("Hermeneutics of Romans 7," *Paul and the Mosaic Law* [ed. J.D.G. Dunn] [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2001] 208) rightly emphasizes in Rom 7 the "many verbs of understanding" (7:7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23) and (212–213) verbs of "willing" (7:15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21) but (212) focuses on the inability to understand in 7:15.

[12] Although I adopt the conventional English translation "flesh," σάρξ has been translated a variety of ways (S. Creve – M. Janse – K. Demoen, "The Pauline Key Words πνεῦμα and σάρξ and Their Translation," *FilolNT* 20 [2007] 15–31); for important lexical considerations, see J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1998) 62–73 (esp. the warning on 70); I.H. Marshall, "Living in the 'Flesh,'" *BibSac* 159 (2002) 387–403.

[13] Despite the partly correct warning about later usage in W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology,* 4 ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1980) 18. For ὕλη and ψυχή, see e.g., Philo, *Cain* 61.

[14] Epicurus sometimes applied σάρξ to the location of desire (E. Schweizer, "Σάρξ in the Greek World," *TDNT* VII, 99–105 [103]), often followed by hellenistic Judaism (105).

[15] Plutarch, *R. Col.* 27, *Mor.* 1122D. Plutarch also complains of those who view the entire person as fleshly, i.e., bodily (Plutarch, *Pleas. L.* 14, *Mor.* 1096E), and notes that the flesh by nature is susceptible to disease (*Pleas. L.* 6, *Mor.* 1090EF). But even as late as Porphyry, *Marc.* 29.453–457, negative "flesh" pertains primarily to externals, so the issue is more "body" and especially "matter."

[16] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.8.2.

Especially given Paul's contrast between "flesh" and (God's) "Spirit," however, Paul's language echoes Jewish usage much more clearly. Scholars have sometimes jumped too quickly from the usual OT holistic usage to Paul's usage[20] as if Paul were simply writing to ancient Israelites using equivalent Greek terms.[21] Against the expectations of some, the LXX often uses σῶμα with physical connotations.[22] Jewish sources sometimes commented on the difference between bodily and nonbodily parts or aspects of a person;[23] although this is more common in Diaspora Jewish sources, even one Tanna attributed the soul to heaven and the body to earth.[24]

Despite some similarities of language elsewhere, Paul's contrasting use of "flesh" and "Spirit" in Rom 8:4–6, 9, 13,[25] reflects especially his background in Judean thought, such as in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[26] The contrast appears in Scripture in Isa 31:3 but most notably in Gen 6:3,[27] a section of Scripture highly influential in early Jewish thought.[28] In these sources the contrast is between mortal creatures (such as humanity) as flesh and God's own Spirit.[29] In the OT, humans as flesh were mortal and prone to weakness.[30]

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[17] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.23.30; cf. similarly 3.7.2–3, also against an Epicurean.

[18] Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 2.2 (LCL 58, 26f.).

[19] Porphyry, *Marc.* 9.172–173 (SBLTT 28, 55); instead, one should flee from the body (ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος; 10.176), gathering the dispersed elements of one's soul up from the body (10.180–183).

[20] See e.g., F.C. Grant, *Ancient Judaism and the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan 1959) 62; S. Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press 1978) 178.

[21] D. Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes 1988) 63. Commentators after Bultmann (with his commendable modern appreciation on the whole person) have often shied away from such non-"Hebrew" ideas. Thus Hans Conzelmann (*The Theology of St Luke* [London: Faber & Faber 1960] 176) emphasizes holism in Paul; nevertheless, on 177 he acknowledges a sort of anthropological dualism.

[22] See R.H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology. With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1976) 16–23. John A.T. Robinson (*The Body. A Study in Pauline Theology* [London: SCM 1957] 31) treats σάρξ as humanity distanced from God but σῶμα as humanity "made for God." Gundry, *Sōma*, 50, sees σῶμα as "the physical body, roughly synonymous with 'flesh' in the neutral sense."

[23] See G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1927–1930; reprint New York: Schocken 1971) 451 (though also the qualification on 502).

[24] *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.2; later, cf. *Gen. Rab.* 8:11.

[25] See also Gal 3:3; 4:29; 5:16–17; 6:8; Phil 3:3; cf. Rom 7:14; 1 Cor 3:1. Sometimes in contrasts with the Spirit σάρξ refers simply to the body (John 3:6; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18; 4:6), as also when the contrasted spirit is human (Mark 14:38; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 2:5; *2 Clem.* 14.5; Ign. *Magn.* 13.1; Ign. *Trall.* pref.; 12.1; Ign. *Phld.* 11.2; Ign. *Smyrn.* 1.1; Ign. *Pol.* 5.1).

[26] See J. Frey, "Die paulinische Antithese von 'Fleisch' und 'Geist' und die palästinisch-jüdische Weisheitstradition," *ZNW* 90/1–2 (1999) 45–77; Flusser, *Judaism*, 64–65. John Pryke ("'Spirit' and 'Flesh' in the Qumran Documents and Some NT Texts," *RevQ* 5/3 [1965] 358) understood it as good vs. evil spirits.

[27] Though the Hebrew is worded differently in 4Q252 1.2, the LXX of Gen 6:3 uses the same words for "flesh" and "Spirit" that Paul does.

[28] Cf. also *Jub.* 5:8; *1 En.* 106:17. Even in Philo, *Heir* 57, the Spirit alongside reason, contrasted with fleshly pleasure, is the divine spirit.

Paul often uses "flesh" as weakness[31] but also goes somewhat further,[32] yet in a way consistent with some Jewish circles' development of the language. Unlike some other early Jewish sources,[33] the Qumran scrolls develop the sense of weakness in a moral direction, including susceptibility to sin,[34] a sense that the roughly equivalent Greek term often bears in Paul.[35] Clearly when Paul contrasts flesh and the Spirit in Rom 8:4–9, 13 he speaks of God's Spirit, as the full context shows (cf. also 1:3–4; 7:6; 1 Cor 5:5; Gal 3:3; 4:29; 5:17; 6:8; the clear Pauline exceptions being 2 Cor 7:1 and Col 2:5).[36]

2.1. Bodily Desires in Ancient Thinking

As noted earlier, some philosophic approaches highlighted the classic struggle between reason and the passions—passions that were merely generated biologically and sociologically shaped, not guided by sound reason.[37] In Jewish teaching, the law was supposed to liberate or protect one from passion's control.[38] In Rom 7:14–25, however, Paul depicts the law as facilitating the identification and thus power of biologically-driven passions, suppressed but not defeated.

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[29] Robinson, *Body*, 11–14, argues that the Old Testament was so holistic that it lacks a term for "body" and a distinction between "body" and "soul" (perhaps an exaggeration; cf. Isa 10:18 in Masoretic Text and LXX). Humans are flesh also in traditional Jewish sources such as e.g., *Jub*. 5:2; Sir 28:5; physicality seems implied in e.g., Gen 17:11–14; Jdt 14:10.

[30] F. Baumgärtel, "Flesh in the Old Testament," *TDNT* VII, 105–108; Davies, *Paul*, 18.

[31] For flesh as humanity, e.g., Rom 3:20; 1 Cor 1:29; Gal 1:16; for weakness, e.g., Rom 6:19; 8:3; 1 Cor 7:28; 2 Cor 1:17; 5:16; 7:5; Gal 4:13–14; for mortality, 1 Cor 15:50; 2 Cor 4:11; Phil 1:22, 24.

[32] With G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (trans. D.M.G. Stalker) (New York: Harper & Row 1971) 133.

[33] The decomposition of flesh (*m. Sanh*. 6:6; *M. Q.* 1:5), even understood as atoning for sin (e.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah*. 11:23; *b. Sanh*. 47b), does not suggest that the body was viewed as evil.

[34] R. Meyer, "Flesh in Judaism," *TDNT* VII, 110–119; G.R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls. The Problem and a Solution* (Oxford: Blackwell 1965) 532; M. Wilcox, "Dualism, Gnosticism, and Other Elements in the Pre-Pauline Tradition," *The Scrolls and Christianity. Historical and Theological Significance* (ed. M. Black) (London: SPCK 1969) 94–95; E. Best, *The Temptation and the Passion. The Markan Soteriology* (SNTSMS 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1965) 52; esp. Flusser, *Judaism*, 62–65. See 1QS 3.8; 4.20–21; 9.9; 11.7, 12; 1QM 4.3; 12.12; 1QH 4.29–32; 9.14–16; 13.13; perhaps CD 1.2; 4Q511 f48–49 + 51.4; as in Scripture, its range of meaning remains extensive, sometimes referring simply to kinship (CD 5.9, 11; 7.1; 8.6), humankind (1QM 15.13; 17.8; 4Q511, frg. 35.1; 1Q20 1.25, 29) or to physicality alongside the heart (spirit; 1QM 7.5). In Greek, in *T. Job* 27:2 (*OTP*)/27:3 (R.A. *Kraft et al.*, *The Testament of Job according to the SV Text* [SBLTT 4; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press 1974]), Satan contrasts himself as a spirit with Job as "a fleshly person," i.e., weak and mortal.

[35] James D.G. Dunn (*Romans* [WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word 1988] I, 370) correctly notes that "it is precisely the weakness and appetites of 'the mortal body' (= the flesh) which are the occasion for sin." Likewise, "The problem with flesh is not that it is sinful *per se* but that it is vulnerable to the enticements of sin—flesh, we might say, as 'the desiring I' (7.7–12)" (Dunn, *Theology*, 67).

[36] Paul thinks not of "two 'parts'" of people but rather of "two modes of existence" that characterize the old aeon and the new aeon (H.N. Ridderbos, *Paul. An Outline of His Theology* [trans. J.R. de Witt; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1975] 66).

[37] Although the human mind's activity is more connected to neurochemistry than ancient thinkers imagined, and many concrete expressions of instinct are influenced by human experience and choices, ancients were right in recognizing sexual instincts, sudden fear reactions, and other innate drives as somehow connected to the body. They could not of course have anticipated the complexity of the connectedness in terms of hormones, the amygdala, or even how the brain adapts to new stimuli in conjunction with thinking.

Many ancient thinkers, not limited to but especially reflected in the Platonic tradition, connected passions with the body.[39] (While Stoicism was more dominant in northern Mediterranean discourse in Paul's day, the eclectic Middle Platonism of prominent Diaspora Jewish thought reflected in Wisdom of Solomon and Philo suggest that Paul would need to engage such ideas as well.) A Cynic text, for example, has Socrates insist that a philosopher "disdains the demands of the body and is not enslaved by the pleasures of the body."[40] Elsewhere Socrates reportedly asks who is less enslaved by passions of the body than he.[41]

The Platonist tradition disparaged the body more than did many other thinkers.[42] Platonists expressed concern about bodies distracting people from divine reality;[43] Plato himself complained that "the body and its desires" lead to violence for the sake of money and, worst of all, distraction from philosophic study.[44] A second-century orator with Middle Platonist predilections warns that, "The function particular to the flesh," which humans share with animals, "is Pleasure, that particular to the intelligence is Reason," which mortals share with the divine.[45] Most pervasively in ancient sources, the body, often in contrast to true being, was mortal.[46] Some spoke of the body as a prison or chains detaining the soul.[47]

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[38] *4 Maccabees*, perhaps with apologetic for potential Gentile hearers in view, depicts the deliverance more strongly than the rabbis' in-house discussions, though for the latter the Torah remains an antiseptic for sin.

[39] E.g., Plato, *Phaed.* 66CD, 83CD; Aeschines, *Tim.* 191; Cicero, *Resp.* 6.26.29; Seneca Y., *Dial.* 2.16.1; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.115; 13.13; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 7.7; 33.7; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 7.26; Proclus, *Poet.* Essay 6, Bk. 1, K121.14–15; Iamblichus, *Pyth. Life* 31.205; *Letter* 3, frg. 2 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.5.45); Porphyry, *Marc.* 14.243–244; 33.506–507; Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.161. Cf. matter in Iamblichus *Soul* 8.39, §385; *Letter* 3, frg. 4.5–6 (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.5.47). Even Epicurus thought the mind superior to the flesh (σάρξ), because mind grasped proper pleasure best (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 10.145–120).

[40] Socratics, *Ep.* 14 (SBLSBS 12, 257, 259).

[41] Xenophon, *Apol.* 16, ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμίας.

[42] Seneca, for example, thought that the body, though temporary, can be of service to the mind (*Dial.* 7.8.2; cf. Rom 6:13). Stoics viewed everything, even spirit (πνεῦμα) and virtues (Arius Didymus, *Epit.* 2.7.5b7, p. 20.28–30) as "bodies."

[43] Plutarch, *Isis* 78, *Mor.* 382F; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 11.10; Iamblichus, *Letter* 16, frg. 2, lines 1–2 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.1.49). Any particularities weakened the original, universal whole (Proclus, *Poet.* Essay 5, K52.7–19, 23–24).

[44] Plato, *Phaed.* 66CD (LCL 36, 231).

[45] Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 33.7 (trans. Trapp, 266); cf. 6.1, 4; 41.5; see also Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.3.3; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.2. For the true nature of deity being intelligence rather than "flesh" (σάρξ), see Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.8.2. For passions vs. reason ruling lower animals, see e.g., Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.2.13, 1254b. Philosophy thus converts a person from a beast into a god (Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 4.16).

[46] E.g., Cicero, *Resp.* 6.26.29; Seneca Y., *Dial.* 1.5.8; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.19.27; Iamblichus, *Pyth. Life* 32.228; Marcus Aurelius 4.4; 10.33.3.

[47] E.g., Plato, *Gorg.* 493AE; *Phaed.* 82E; *Cratylus* 400B; Heraclitus, *Ep.* 5; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.9.11–12; Maximus of Tyre *Or.* 7.5 (recalling *Rep.* 514A–516B); 36.4; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 7.26; Iamblichus, *Letter* 3, frg. 2 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.5.45); *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 464 (in A.J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation. A Greco-Roman*

With its limitations, materiality itself sometimes became a problem. Even some Stoics depicted people as souls who did not even own their bodies;[48] whereas the heavens were pure, bad things happened on earth because it consisted of corruptible matter.[49] Far more, later Platonists sought to purify their immortal souls from passions and attention to perishable matter.[50] Some later sources developing the Platonic tradition even present love of the body as evil.[51]

Such attitudes toward the body, ranging from ambivalent to hostile, naturally could lead to asceticism. Carneades, a second-century BCE Skeptic, ascetically neglected his body, supposing that this would increase his intellectual concentration.[52] For a mildly ascetic later Christian source, it is love of pleasure that makes the body unbearable for the soul.[53]

Hellenistic Jews did not escape the influence of such language. Thus they could associate the body with passions.[54] Philo, an influential Jewish Middle Platonist, speaks of the soul entombed within a body in this life;[55] death was an escape.[56] "Flesh" (σάρξ) is alienated from what is divine.[57] The soul is presently enslaved to the body through its passions.[58]

Sourcebook [LEC 4; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster 1986] 110). Thus a philosopher being ground to death "declared that he himself was not being ground, but only that thing of his in which, as it chanced, he had been enclosed" (Dio Chrysostom [Favorinus], *Or.* 37.45 [LCL 376, 45]).

[48] E.g., Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.11–12 (though Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind. From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* [New York: Oxford University Press 2000] 215, commenting on 1.22.10, suggests that such ideas may have been Epictetus's innovation).

[49] Hierocles, *How Should One Behave toward the Gods?* (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.9.7).

[50] Iamblichus, *Soul* 8.39, §385; 8.43, §456. Cf. earlier Plato, *Rep.* 10.611C.

[51] Porphyry, *Marc.* 14.244–250; 25.394–395 (though the real source of evils come from choices in the soul, 29.453–457). Love of the body is ignorance of God (13.227–229), and one must hold the connection with it lightly (32.485–495). Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.8, on the secondary negativity of the body; matter is evil (1.8.4), worthless (2.4), and unreal (3.6.6–7). Many gnostic thinkers also apparently found matter problematic (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.28; 7.20).

[52] Valerius Maximus 8.7. ext. 5; cf. a later Neoplatonist in Eunapius *Lives* 456 (albeit reported differently in Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 11.113). Seneca indulged the body for health, but otherwise was hard on it to subdue it to his mind (Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 8.5); cf. even the rhetorical claim in Fronto, *De Nepote Amisso* 2.8.

[53] *Sent. Sextus* 139a–139b. Passion is dangerous and must be suppressed in *Sent. Sextus* 204–209. In *Ep. Diogn.* 6.5–6, σάρξ wars against the soul (cf. 1 Pet 2:11). Later Christian asceticism drew from existing trends in late antiquity (see e.g., Judge, *Jerusalem*, 223).

[54] E.g., Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 2.28; *Abel* 48; *Cain* 96, 155; *Immut.* 111; *Husb.* 64; *Planter* 43; *Abr.* 164; *Mos.* 2.24; *T. Jud.* 14:3.

[55] Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 1.108; *Immut.* 150; *Conf.* 78–79; *Laws* 4.188; cf. *Alleg. Interp.* 3.21; *Heir* 85; so also the Christian work, *Ep. Diogn.* 6.5.

[56] Philo, *De Cherubim* 114.

[57] Philo, *Giants* 29 (usually employing σῶμα in this way, but using σάρξ here because he quotes Gen 6). It is our fleshly nature (σαρκῶν φύσις) that hinders wisdom's growth; souls "free from flesh and body [ἄσαρκοι καὶ ἀσώματοι]" can celebrate with the universe (*Giants* 30 [LCL 227, 460–461]); flesh prevents people from being able to look up to heaven (*Giants* 31).

[58] Philo, *Heir* 267–269 in Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Commentary* (trans. S.J. Hafemann) (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1994) 109, who compares the cry for liberation from the body in Rom 7:24; see further H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 4 rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1968) I, 433. In terms of rational command, one would normally envision the body as slave to the mind (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1.4, 1252a; 1.2.10, 1254a; cf. Cicero,

For others, drunkenness allowed pleasure to stir the body to adultery.[59] Satan blinded one "as a human being, as flesh [σάρξ], in my corrupt sins" until he repented.[60]

2.2. Paul and the Body

When Paul speaks of the "flesh" or associates passions with the body, he adapts some of the language of his day to argue his point. But does Paul, like later Neoplatonists and many gnostics, view the body as evil? Does he envision a conflict between body and soul? Despite pagan criticisms,[61] and against some gnostic thinkers, even patristic writers defended materiality in the "flesh."[62]

Paul's language sometimes distinguishes elements in human personality,[63] but such distinctions can be overstated. Some of Paul's ancient interpreters suggested that he desires liberation from the body and its passions in a way resembling the thinking of Platonic philosophers.[64] This comparison certainly risks exaggeration, especially in view of Paul's expectation of the body's resurrection (8:11, 13, 23; perhaps 7:24b–25a),[65] a Jewish expectation more evident in Judean than Diaspora Jewish sources.

In Paul, the body, guided by a renewed mind (Rom 12:2–3), can be used for good (Rom 12:1; cf. 6:13); but under other circumstances, the body can also be used for sin (Rom 1:24; 6:12–13; 7:5), and even be closely associated with it (Rom 6:6; 8:10, 13; cf. 7:24). Relevant to a discussion of the "fleshly mind," bodily passions may war against the mind (7:23). Though the mind might disagree with bodily passion (7:23, 25), it can find itself subject to it and corrupted by it (1:28). Thus the frame of mind shaped by the flesh, by human frailty susceptible to temptation, cannot please God (8:8). In this context, only new life in the Spirit can free one (8:2).

Resp. 3.25.37; Sallust, *Cat.* 1.2; Heraclitus, *Ep.* 9; Philo, *Abel* 9; reason ruling the senses in Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 66.32), all the more when some called slaves "bodies" (A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, reprint [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1978] 165; *BDAG* cites e.g., Tob 10:10; 2 Macc 8:11; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.321).

[59] *T. Jud.* 14:3.

[60] *T. Jud.* 19:4 (H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A New Translation and Introduction," *OTP* I, 800; Greek in: R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Edited from Nine Manuscripts Together with the Variants of the Armenian and Slavonic Versions and Some Hebrew Fragments* [Oxford: Clarendon 1908] 95). The Lord accepts repentance because people "are flesh [σάρξ] and the spirits of deceit lead them astray" (*T. Zeb.* 9:7; Kee, "Testaments," 807; Charles, *The Greek Versions*, 128).

[61] Some pagans critiqued Christians for their high view of the body (e.g., Origen, *Cels.* 8.49; J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 2002; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2000] 113).

[62] Scholars cite here Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 15; Chrysostom, *Hom. Cor.* 17.1; *Hom. Rom.* 11 (on 6:13); Theodoret of Cyr, *Interp. Rom.* on 6:13 (PG 82, 109); and Augustine, *Contin.* 10.24. Still, cf. Augustine, *C. Jul.* 70.

[63] E.g., C.J. de Vogel, "Reflexions on Philipp. I 23–24," *NovT* 19/4 (1977) 262–274; G.M.M. Pelser, "Dualistiese antropologie by Paulus?," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 56/2–3 (2000) 409–439; earlier, T.R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus* (London: Student Christian Movement 1925; reprint Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 2002) 20.

[64] A. Schlatter, *Romans. The Righteousness of God* (trans. S.S. Schatzmann) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1995) 3, 157 (but cf. 167).

[65] Schlatter himself makes distinctions between Paul and Platonism here (*Romans*, 167).

For Paul and for the Jewish tradition he follows, creation and bodily existence are good. One is not delivered from some bodily limitations, such as mortality, until the resurrection (Rom 8:11), but the presence of the Spirit nevertheless gives life in the present so the body can be an instrument for good rather than evil (6:13, 19). By itself, however, bodily existence is susceptible to a range of drives (to use modern language) that are not themselves cognizant of right and wrong. These necessary drives can intersect with what Jewish people considered fundamental behaviors of pagan life, such as sexual impropriety or eating food offered to idols (1 Cor 10:6–8).[66]

No one, including Paul, would have denied that virtually everyone has such biological passions as hunger, necessary for survival, or urges that promote procreation, necessary for propagation of humanity.[67] Nevertheless, whereas in principle reason can veto the proposals raised by passions, the pull of these passions pervade the functioning of the intellect, a pervasiveness exposed all the more plainly by the law. One might avoid acting on covetousness, but covetousness itself arises in the heart before the law can suppress it. Indeed, by exposing right and wrong the law appears to spotlight it rather than root it out (cf. 7:5, 7–11).

For Paul, the "flesh" and the Spirit generate contradictory desires, although Paul seems more often comfortable associating the language of "desire" especially with the predilections of the flesh (Gal 5:16–17; cf. 5:24; Rom 6:12; 13:14; Eph 2:3). Although in principle believers' desires are dead (Gal 5:24) as believers are in principle dead to sin (2:20; Rom 6:2–10), in practice one must continue to address these desires when they arise (cf. Rom 6:2–13; Gal 5:13–16; 6:1; Col 3:5), not least by reckoning them dead (Rom 6:11). Increasingly identifying with Christ and the Spirit one may embrace the Spirit's desires; a life with the Spirit would protect one from living merely for physical impulses (Gal 5:16–17). In any case, Paul does not treat the divided person as the ideal (cf. Rom 7:14–25).[68]

Paul affirms the body, whose destiny is resurrected glory (Rom 8:11, 23; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:42–54; Phil 3:21), but flesh is connected to a side of existence dominated by bodily passions, some of which if unrestrained lead to violation of God's law. Translating such language into modern terms might help us understand more concretely the sorts of concepts that Paul was articulating, although at many points ancient and modern psychologies lack exact correspondences. Today we understand that someone who develops a chemical dependency will have a craving for those chemicals on a physical level; because of neuroplasticity, our brains also adapt chemically to other stimuli.

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[66] Cf. e.g., Rev 2:14, 20; Acts 15:20; *Sib. Or.* 3.757–766; *t. Abod. Zar.* 8:4; *b. Sanh.* 56a, bar; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:1.

[67] Cf. the positive side of the *yetzer hara* in later rabbinic thought; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 32.3.1; *Gen. Rab.* 9:7; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:11, §3; Davies, *Paul*, 22; cf. good sexual desire in *T. Reu.* 2:8; Musonius Rufus 14, p. 92.11–12; frg. 40, p. 136.18–19, in C.E. Lutz, "Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates,'" *YCS* 10 (1947) 3–147.

[68] I lack space to elaborate, but see discussion in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 91–93. The divided self is more Platonic (see Sorabji, *Emotion*, 303–305; E. Wasserman, "Paul among the Ancient Philosophers: The Case of Romans 7," *Paul and the Philosophers* [eds. W. Blanton – H. de Vries] [New York: Fordham University Press 2013] 82) and Aristotelian (Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 52); early Stoics viewed the self as unitary (Sorabji, *Emotion*, 303, 313–315; T. Brennan, "The Old Stoic Theory of Emotions," *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy* [eds. J. Sihvola – T. Engberg-Pedersen] [TSHP 46; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic 1998] 23), though a Stoic could also acknowledge wavering minds (Seneca Y., *Dial.* 9.2.10). Stoics regarded wrongdoing as based on wrong belief and ignorance, rejecting the common Platonic idea that irrational elements vie with reason in the soul (S.K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans. Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1994] 262–263; T.H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts. The Argument of Romans* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 2004] 234).

Religious convictions do not automatically change patterns in the brain; one may be disgusted by and reject habitual responses on the level of one's conscious will, but the predilection or "temptation" remains. Paul seems aware that mere religious practice, of whatever kind, by itself does not ordinarily alter such patterns; elsewhere, he can even associate the flesh polemically both with religion (Gal 3:2–3) and sinful behavior (5:16–21, 24). The best that mere religion can do is recognize right from wrong, cover over the wrong, and insist on different behavior.

2.3. Thoughts Corrupted by Passions

Many ancient thinkers opposed reason to the passions; the wise would overcome passions through truth. In Rom 1:18–32, Paul paints a more complicated picture of reason and passions, one that fits Jewish condemnations of paganism. Most ancient thinkers believed that passions corrupted rational thinking, and that reason should control passions; Jewish apologists, however, often chided gentiles for being ruled by passion, and sometimes offered Jewish law as a way to achieve genuine mastery over passion.[69] In Rom 1:24–27, in keeping with Jewish polemic against idolatry,[70] humanity's corrupted thinking subordinates them to irrational passions (1:24, 26).

In ordinary conversation people might use the language of passions or desires positively.[71] Nevertheless, many intellectuals considered desire a fundamental evil; thus one philosophically-informed second-century orator opined, "The greatest human evil is desire."[72] Many therefore warned against passions and desires;[73] such cravings were, they felt, insatiable.[74] Many thinkers spoke of slavery to passions and sought freedom from their tyranny.[75] Overcoming desire was thus praiseworthy,[76] and some philosophers were said to have worked to rid the world of passion.[77] The ideal Stoic sage was supposed to lack passions, at least in the form of negative emotions;[78] Stoics valued this objective because passion was a kind of impulse not subject to reason.[79] Later Platonists warned that passions defiled the soul.[80] Even Epicureans affirmed that controlling the passions leads to happiness.[81]

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[69] Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 531–534. For Paul, however, "Only identification with Christ ... can bring about sinlessness and self-mastery" (Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 536; cf. Stowers, *Rereading*, 82).

[70] For discussion of such polemic, see C.S. Keener, "The Exhortation to Monotheism in Acts 14:15–17," *Kingdom Rhetoric. New Testament Explorations in Honor of Ben Witherington III* (ed. T.M.W. Halcomb) (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock 2013); C.S. Keener, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2013) II, 2159–2162.

[71] E.g., Aelius Aristides, *Defense of Oratory* 432, §146D–147D; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 2:17. Cf. desire for wisdom in Wis 6:13–20, esp. 6:13, 20.

[72] Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 24.4 (trans. Trapp, 203); cf. *Apoc. Mos.* 19:3. For the sake of brevity, I am treating together ἐπιθυμία, which Paul often uses (even in Romans: 1:24; 6:12; 7:7–8; 13:14), and πάθος, which appears in Pauline literature rarely (only Rom 1:26; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:5).

[73] E.g., Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.1.10; Iamblichus, *Pyth. Life* 31.187; Porphyry, *Marc.* 27.438.

[74] Galen, *Grief* 42–44, 80; Iamblichus, *Pyth. Life* 31.206; Porphyry, *Marc.* 29.457–460; cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 9.52.6; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 36.4. Passions spawned all crimes (Cicero, *Sen.* 12.40) and illnesses of the soul (Porphyry, *Marc.* 9.157–158). Vice proliferates passion (Lucian, *Nigr.* 16), and one can become psychologically ill through addiction to pleasures (Arius Didymus 2.7.10e, p. 62.20–23).

Stoics counted pleasure (ἡδονή) a fundamental form of passion.[82] Although ordinary people surely often viewed pleasure positively,[83] Stoics viewed it indifferently or negatively.[84] Many other thinkers also viewed it negatively, although especially when embraced in excess.[85] Epicureans demurred, valuing pleasure, but this was partly because Epicurus defined it differently from others; Stoics and others often criticized Epicurean views of pleasure.[86]

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[75] Xenophon, *Oec.* 1.22; Musonius Rufus 3, p. 40.19; Pliny, *Ep.* 8.22.1; Plutarch, *Bride* 33, *Mor.* 142E; Arius Didymus 2.7.10a, p. 58.15; Iamblichus, *Letter* 3, frg. 3.4–6 (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.5.46); Porphyry, *Marc.* 34.522–525; *4 Macc* 13:2; *T. Jos.* 7:8; *T. Asher* 3:2; pleasure in Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 25.5–6; 33.3; 36.4.

[76] Xenophon, *Hell.* 4.8.22; Polybius, *Hist.* 31.25.8; Publilius Syrus, *Sent.* 40, 181; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.20; 9.12; *T. Reu.* 4:9; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.328–329. Alexander as an example (as in Arrian, *Alex.* 7.28.2) was not possible outside eulogy (Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 113.29–31; Plutarch, *Flatt.* 25, *Mor.* 65F; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.4, 60; cf. *b. Tamid* 32a).

[77] Apuleius, *Flor.* 14.3–4, on Crates the Cynic.

[78] T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Paul, Virtues, and Vices," *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J.P. Sampley) (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International 2003) 612–613. For a Stoic list of negative expressions of desire, see Arius Didymus 2.7.10b, pp. 58.32—60.1. Controlling emotion naturally appealed to Roman traditions of discipline (see e.g., Valerius Maximus 4.1. pref.; 4.1.13).

[79] Arius Didymus 2.7.10, p. 56.1–4; 2.7.10a, p. 56.24–25; 2.7.10b, p. 58.17–18. As a type of passion, pleasure also disobeyed reason (2.7.10b, p. 58.29).

[80] Porphyry, *Marc.* 13.236–237.

[81] Cicero, *Fin.* 1.18.57–58.

[82] Arius Didymus 2.7.10, p. 56.6–7; see also Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 311, n. 32.

[83] E.g., Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 2.8.3. On positive Epicurean views of pleasure, see e.g., Cicero, *Fin.* 1.9.29; Plutarch, *R. Col.* 27, *Mor.* 1122D; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 12.546e; A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy. Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (New York: Scribner 1974) 61–69; H.-J. Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2003) 395–398. Epicurus's own views appear more moderate; see Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.21.50; Diogenes Laertius 10.145–20. For intellectual pleasures in Plato, see R.C. Lodge, *Plato's Theory of Ethics. The Moral Criterion and the Highest Good* (New York: Harcourt, Brace – London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner 1928) 27–31.

[84] Negatively, e.g., Cicero, *Fin.* 2.12.35—2.13.43; Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 59.1; *Dial.* 7.11.1; Arius Didymus 2.7.10, p. 56.13–18; 2.7.10b, p. 60.1–2. Earlier Stoic tradition apparently viewed it among the *adiaphora* (indifferents); see Arius Didymus 2.7.5a, p. 10.12–13; as not a good, Musonius Rufus 1, p. 32.22; at least when associated with what is dishonorable, Musonius Rufus 12, p. 86.27–29; frg. 51, p. 144.8–9; see Brennan, "Theory," 61–62, n. 31.

[85] E.g., Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.23–24; 4.5.3; *Hell.* 4.8.22; Cicero, *Sen.* 12.40; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 1.13; 3.34; 8.20; Pliny, *Ep.* 5.5.4; Plutarch, *Bride* 33, *Mor.* 142E; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 7.7; 14.1–2; 25.5–6; 33.3–8; 38.6; Menander Rhetor, *Treat.* 2.10, 416.19; Proclus, *Poet.* 6.1, K121.14–15; Iamblichus, *Pyth. Life* 31.204–206; Libanius, *Comparison* 1.7–8; 5.7; *Speech in Character* 16.2; Porphyry, *Marc.* 6.103–108; 7.125–126, 131–134; 33.508–509; 35.535–536.

[86] For Stoic criticisms, see Cicero, *Fin.* Bk. 2, esp. 2.4.11—2.6.18; Arius Didymus 2.7.10a, p. 58.8–11; for others' criticisms, see e.g., Cicero, *Pis.* 28.68–69; Aulus Gellius, *Att.* 9.5; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 30–33, especially 30.3–5; 31; 33; Galen *Grief* 62, 68. See also Keener, *Acts*, III, 2584–2593, on Epicureans, and 2593–2595 on Stoicism. Cf. Seneca's attack on the Epicurean goal of pleasure in Henry Dyson, "Pleasure and the Sapiens: Seneca De vita beata 11.1," *CP* 105/3 (2010) 313–318 (on *De vita beata* 11.1).

A major emphasis in ancient philosophy was thus how to overcome one's passions.[87] Aristotle's followers, the Peripatetics, merely wanted to moderate passions, but some others, notably Stoics, wanted to eradicate them.[88] Philosophers in the Platonist tradition felt that thinking about virtue or the divine, which was pure intellect, would free one from passions.[89] Thus one later Platonist emphasized that philosophy should cast passion from the soul, as medicine drives sickness from the body.[90]

Despite differences among particular schools, most intellectuals agreed that one must use reason, guided by virtue, to at least control the passions.[91] Passions could challenge and overpower reason if the latter were not sufficiently strong.[92] Stoics and Platonists alike agreed that one must distinguish real happiness from transient pleasures, and that one learns this discernment by "repeated, deliberate choice, a lifelong struggle for rational mastery."[93] Thus one collector of historical anecdotes concluded that Philosophy "drives away every unseemly and useless emotion," making reason "more powerful than fear and pain."[94]

For Stoics the process was purely cognitive: genuinely understanding what was true would eradicate the emotions that were tied to false assumptions about what really mattered.[95] Although the Stoic approach offered some positive insights that can be used even today in cognitive psychology,[96] in practice it also severely underestimated (for all the Stoic emphasis on living according to nature!) the physiological connections between natural bodily instincts and emotion, as well as connections between emotion and reason. Modern research has shown that powerful stimuli can alert the brain's amygdala, generating emergency physical responses, before the signals are even processed by the cortex. Only at that point can stimuli be rationally evaluated and, when needed, deescalated rationally.[97]

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[87] See e.g., Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.24; Valerius Maximus 3.3. ext. 1; Musonius Rufus 6, p. 52.15–17; 7, p. 56.27; 12, pp. 86.39—88.1; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 1.9; 7.7; 25.6; Iamblichus, *Letter* 3, frg. 3 (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.5.46); Porphyry, *Marc.* 31.479–481; *Let. Aris.* 256; *4 Macc* 13:1; A.J. Malherbe, "The Beasts at Ephesus," *JBL* 87/1 (1968) 71–80. Many sources use figurative war imagery, as in Rom 7:23 (see Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 110–111). Control of oneself was the greatest conquest (Seneca Y., *Nat.* 1. pref. 5; 3. pref. 10; *Lucil.* 113.29–31; Publilius Syrus 137; Prov 16:32; cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.5.1).

[88] Tobin, *Rhetoric*, 229; J.M. Dillon, "Philosophy," *DNTB* 796. In *4 Macc* 3:2–5 reason expressly controls and fights passions rather than eradicates them.

[89] E.g., Philo, *Sac.* 45; cf. discussions of 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 4:8 in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*.

[90] Porphyry, *Marc.* 31.483.

[91] Cicero, *Inv.* 2.54.164; *Off.* 2.5.18; *Leg.* 1.23.60; Sallust, *Catil.* 51.3; Plutarch, *Lect.* 1, *Mor.* 37E; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 33.3; Porphyry, *Marc.* 6.99; 29.453–460; 31.478–483; 34.521–522; cf. in other cultures, e.g., traditional Morocco (D.F. Eickelman, *The Middle East. An Anthropological Approach*, 2 ed. [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1989] 205). For reason ruling the senses, see Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 66.32.

[92] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 5.8.6; Cicero, *Sen.* 12.40; Chariton, *Chaer.* 2.4.4; Arius Didymus 2.7.10a, p. 58.5–6, 12–16; Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 3.6.2; Porphyry, *Marc.* 9.154–155; for passions as a distraction from attention to God, see Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 11.10. One or the other would be in control, with passion being more feminine (Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 33.2, from an androcentric perspective; cf. Philo, *Immut.* 111). Greek thinkers often associated passion both with females and with barbarians; see D.E. McCoskey, *Race. Antiquity and Its Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press 2012) 56 (for barbarians as like beasts, e.g., Libanius, *Invective* 2.1; *Common Topics* 2.6).

[93] W.A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (LEC 6; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster 1986) 47.

[94] Valerius Maximus, *Mem.* 3.3. ext. 1 (LCL 492, 275).

[95] See Sorabji, *Emotion*, 2–4; Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 540; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.28.6. Cf., however, Arius Didymus 2.7.10a, p. 58.11–16, where passions overpower teaching.

[96] As with the limitations of Stoicism (Sorabji, *Emotion*, 153–154), cognitive therapy when used by itself is more useful for some disorders than others (e.g., for reducing phobias but not helpful for anorexia; 155).

Stoics were nevertheless sensitive to experiences they inevitably encountered when seeking to subject emotion to reason. Recognizing that humans experience physical reactions that precede cognitive judgments, Seneca counted these reactions "first movements," a sort of pre-emotion that could be nipped in the bud by rational decisions once one had opportunity to consider them.[98] Because Origen misconstrued "first movements" themselves as cognitive, Christians later imagined "many intermediate degrees of sin," provoking new questions, such as "Did you let it linger? Did you enjoy it?"[99] Although such exercises stimulated and developed self-discipline, they may also have often bred the very sort of fixation on sin that Romans 7 parodies.

Although details varied among ancient thinkers, most viewed reason and passion as mutually opposed. In Rom 1, however, those who fancied themselves wise (Rom 1:22) have become slaves of passion (1:24–27; cf. 6:12, 16; 16:18). In 1:27, Paul not only speaks of intense desire (ὄρεξις) but also uses the image of "burning" (ἐξεκαύθησαν, from ἐκκαίω), an image to which he appeals more explicitly in depicting intense emotion (2 Cor 11:29),[100] including, as often elsewhere, consuming sexual passion (1 Cor 7:9).[101]

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[97] Sorabji, *Emotion*, 6, 144–155 (esp. 145–150). Galen viewed emotion as flowing from bodily states (see esp. 253–262). The Stoic emphasis on indifference is not natural or desirable for modern therapy (pp. 169–180).

[98] Sorabji, *Emotion*, 2–5. Seneca would have included among such first movements the involuntary stimulation of male organs, more rapid respiration when provoked, loss of color when startled, and the like (11). Such "first movements" become problematic only if, once wrong judgments are identified, one chooses them, allowing emotion to become worse (see more fully pp. 55–65). Thus if one assents to the movement rather than preferring reason, it becomes full-fledged emotion (73); but it is not a matter of choice so long as it remains involuntary, like anything that befalls the body (73–74, citing Seneca Y., *Anger* 2.2.1—2.4.2). Earlier Posidonius, who felt that judgments were not always necessary for emotion to occur (Sorabji, *Emotion*, 121–132; cf. others in 133, 142), accepted something like first movements, but without denying that they involved some emotion (118–119).

[99] Sorabji, *Emotion*, 8–9 (quotations from 9); more fully, 343–356 (on Origen, esp. 346–351). This led further to the seven cardinal sins (357–371) and Augustine's philosophic and linguistic misunderstanding of Stoics regarding emotion, through which sin was thought to pervade every layer of one's being (372–384). Though respecting Augustine, Sorabji prefers Pelagius's approach to lust (417).

[100] For nonsexual cravings or feelings similarly described, see e.g., Cornelius Nepos, *Gen.* 6 (Lysander), 3.1; Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.19.44; Vergil, *Aen.* 7.456; Plutarch, *Cor.* 21.1–2; Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 3.13.3; *Ep. Graecae* 6; Menander Rhetor 2.3, 384.29–30; Sir 28:10–12; *4 Macc* 16:3; Josephus, *Life* 263; Luke 24:32.

[101] E.g., Musaeus, *Hero and Leander* 40–41; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 5.1.16; Menander, *Fabula Incerta* 8.21; Catullus, *Carm.* 45.16; 61.169–171; 64.19; Vergil, *Aen.* 1.660, 673; 4.2, 23, 54, 66, 68; *Ecl.* 8.83; Ovid, *Fast.* 3.545–546; *Her.* 4.17–20; 7.23; 15.9; *Am.* 1.1.25–26; 1.2.9, 46; Valerius Maximus 4.6.2 (conjugal); Plutarch, *T.T.* 1.2.6, *Mor.* 619A; *Dial. L.* 16; *Mor.* 759B; Lucian, *Lucius* 5; Philostratus, *Letters* 13 (59); Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 1.10d; Sir 9:8; 23:16; *T. Jos.* 2:2; in erotic spells, L. LiDonnici, "Burning for It: Erotic Spells for Fever and Compulsion in the Ancient Mediterranean World," *GRBS* 39 (1998) 63–98; further in C.S. Keener, "Marriage," *DNTB* 686–687. See esp. the romances, e.g., Longus, *Daphn.* 3.10; Chariton, *Chaer.* 1.1.8, 15; 2.3.8; 2.4.7;

3. Passion and the Law in Hellenistic Jewish Sources

Paul does not limit damaging passion to gentiles; for him, knowledge of even God's law is not sufficient to overcome passion. Hellenistic Jewish authors, like many gentile philosophers, saw passions as harmful (and, beyond most gentiles, as sinful).[102] For the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo, for example, the mind that loves the body and passion, enslaved to pleasure, cannot hear the divine voice.[103] Like most gentile philosophers,[104] Diaspora Jewish thinkers contended that the key to overcoming passions was reason.[105]

For Jewish thinkers, the epitome of this reason that overcomes passion was found in the Torah.[106] There is strong evidence suggesting that the Jewish community in Rome had a highly developed knowledge of the law and belief in its superiority to other ancient legal collections.[107]

Jewish thinkers found in the law of Moses explicit warrant against passion. The tenth commandment, "You shall not covet" (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, Exod 20:17 and Deut 5:21 LXX, using ἐπιθυμέω) specifically addressed overcoming passion.[108] Citing this very commandment (Rom 7:7), Paul will argue that the law was never meant to eradicate passion; only Christ frees one from sin.[109]

4.7.6; 5.9.9; 6.3.3; 6.4.5; 6.7.1; Achilles Tatius 1.5.5–6; 1.11.3; 1.17.1; 2.3.3; 4.6.1; 4.7.4; 5.15.5; 5.25.6; 6.18.2; Apuleius, *Metam*. 2.5, 7; 5.23; Xenophon, *Eph. Tale* 1.3, 5, 9, 14; 2.3; 3.6.

[102] E.g., *4 Macc* 3:11; *T. Dan* 4:5; *T. Ash*. 3:2; 6:5; also Sir 18:30–32 (cf. 6:2, 4); the origin of all sin, in *Apoc. Mos.* 19:3; sexual in *T. Jud*. 13:2; *T. Jos*. 3:10; 7:8; *T. Reu*. 4:9; 5:6. Philo castigates "lovers of pleasure" in *Creation* 157–159; *Alleg. Interp*. 3.161; *Sacrifice of Cain and Abel* 32; cf. sexual "pleasure" in *T. Iss.* 3:5. *T. Reu*. 2:8 maintains the biblical posture that desire for intercourse is good, but warns that it can lead to love for pleasure; Philo (*Creation* 152) complains that woman brought man sexual pleasures, introducing sins. Rulers must avoid being distracted by pleasure (*Let. Aris*. 245), for people are prone to pleasure (277; cf. 108, 222).

[103] Philo, *Immut*. 111. This contrasts with the sacred mind uncorrupted by shameful matters (*Immut*. 105). For Philo, the garden's serpent is pleasure (e.g., *Creation* 157–160, 164; *Alleg. Interp*. 2.71–74; *Husb*. 97).

[104] See discussion in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 21–23.

[105] E.g., *4 Macc* 1:1, 9, 29; 2:15–16, 18, 21–22; 3:17; 6:31, 33; 7:4; 13:1–2, 7; Philo, *Creation* 81; *Alleg. Interp*. 3.156; see also Tobin, *Rhetoric*, 231; Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 531–534; on *4 Maccabees*, note K.-S. Krieger, "Das 3. Und 4. Makkabäerbuch," *BK* 57/2 (2002) 87–88; P. Dijkhuizen, "Pain, Endurance and Gender in 4 Maccabees," *JSem* 17/1 (2008) 57–76; cf. S. Fuhrmann, "The Mother in 4 Maccabees – An Example of Rational Choice in Religion," *JSem* 17/1 (2008) 96–113. In contradistinction to orthodox Stoicism, *4 Macc* 3:2–5 affirms that reason subdues rather than eliminates passions. Cf. *T. Reu*. 4:9; Josephus, *Ant*. 4.328–329. In early Christianity, see e.g., (in Bray, *Romans*, 195) Pelagius, *Comm. Rom*. on 7:22 (OECS, 104–105).

[106] See *4 Macc* 2:23; see also D.A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God. An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2009) 564. For law providing self-mastery over passions in Josephus and Philo, see Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 532–534. In principle, good laws were supposed to make good people (Polybius, *Hist*. 4.47.3–4), since law is not ruled by passion (Aristotle, *Pol*. 3.11.4, 1287a).

[107] See Tobin, *Rhetoric*, 28–30.

[108] Tobin, *Rhetoric*, 231–232, citing *4 Macc* 2:4–6; Philo, *Decal*. 142–153, 173–174; *Spec*. 4.79–131. In Philo *Special Laws* 4.80, desire for what one lacks is the most troublesome passion.

[109] With Stowers, "Self-Mastery," 536; cf. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 232; Rom 7:5; Gal 2:21; 3:21–22. Paul was more pessimistic about human ability to master passions than Philo and esp. *4 Maccabees*

4. Unlawful Desire

It is possible to define desire here too broadly. Unlike the most extreme hellenistic thinkers,[110] Paul would not demand the conquest of every bodily desire.[111] Paul probably does not, for example, oppose sexual desire in marriage[112] or appreciation for food.[113] On such points, Paul reflects not the austerity of some gentile thinkers but thoroughly conventional, mainstream Jewish views (as well as the common views of most ordinary people in antiquity).

When Paul speaks of passions, he does not, unlike some philosophers, define them, but his association of forbidden desire with the law's command not to covet probably presupposes what the biblical commandment contextually specifies: desiring what belongs to someone else. What the body desires may even be necessary for survival or the biblically mandated propagation of humanity; but the mind remains responsible to limit the fulfilment of those desires to what God's law permits. A thirsty person's craving for water or a person's reproductive drive are not wrong in themselves, but desiring someone else's spouse or donkey is wrong. Desire must be harnessed rather than running amok.

The problem of conquering desire arises when desires that were created for good if directed by moral reason instead rule the person. As Paul laments, "I see a different law in my [bodily] members, battling against the law in relation my mind, and taking me prisoner by the law in relation to my members, the law that reveals sin. … Who will free me from the body [thus] doomed to death? … Thus, with respect to the mind, I'm emphatically serving God's law—but, with respect to the flesh, the law in its role of revealing sin" (paraphrasing Rom 7:23–25).

5. New Identity in Christ (Rom 6:11)

My elaboration of previous points leaves me less space to elaborate Paul's answer to the problem he so graphically depicts. In Rom 4:3–25 (and possibly also 5:1–11), Paul offers an extended midrash on Gen 15:6: "And Abraham trusted God, and it was reckoned to his account as righteousness." Although Paul by no means limits his use of λογίζομαι ("reckon") to accounting language (cf. e.g., probably 8:18, 36; 14:14), it is no accident

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(P. von Gemünden, "La culture des passions à l'époque du Nouveau Testament. Une contribution théologique et psychologique," *ETR* 70/3 [1995] 335–348).

[110] Most opposed excessive desire rather than proper desire (W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy. The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, 2 ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2004] 45, 69, n. 70, 128, nn. 85–86); for Stoics some desires or interests could be morally indifferent and thus acceptable provided they were kept within natural bounds.

[111] Like others, he was even capable of using ἐπιθυμία in a positive way in the right context (Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 2:17).

[112] See 1 Cor 7:9 (despite the way that some interpreters understand 1 Thess 4:4–5). In earlier Jewish sources, see comment in C.D. Mueller, "Two Faces of Lust," *TBT* 41/5 (2003) 308–314.

[113] See Rom 14:2–3, 6; 1 Cor 9:4; Col 2:16; cf. the echo of a traditional Jewish benediction in 1 Tim 4:3–5.

that his greatest cluster of the term appears in his exposition of this verse from Genesis (Rom 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24—eleven times). In Rom 4, God reckoned righteousness to Abraham's account, and thus to the account of those who, like their spiritual father Abraham, believe.

Now in his next use of the term, climaxing a discussion of new life in Christ accomplished by God (6:1–10), Paul urges believers to "reckon" themselves the way that God has reckoned them (6:11).[114] That is, having already been made right by trusting God, they now ought to trust the reality that God has accomplished—that God has made them right in Christ. This includes the reality that they have a new identity in Christ as those who have died to sin. This reckoning follows God's reckoning; it recognizes rather than confers a new identity.

Origen recognized both the reality of temptation and the higher dimension of reality of what his identification with Christ entailed: "Whoever thinks or considers that he is dead will not sin. For example, if lust for a woman gets hold of me or if greed for silver, gold or riches stirs me and I say in my heart that I have died with Christ … the lust is immediately quenched and sin disappears."[115]

Paul was not alone in considering the role of reason and new perspective in overcoming passion. Ancient thinkers emphasized focusing one's mind on what was good (cf. Phil 4:8).[116] Philosophy was a matter of using reason and contemplating what was necessary.[117]

Right thinking was crucial for Stoics. A Stoic could contend that what matters most is to *think* rightly, unafraid of fortune and joyful in hardship.[118] By discipline of the mind people can learn to abstain from any pleasure, to endure any pain.[119] Stoics developed cognitive exercises in order to form habits of interpreting reality according to their philosophic beliefs.[120] Some adopted some Pythagorean exercises, such as in the evening taking inventory of one's reactions during the day.[121] For Stoics, the way things appeared was not necessarily reality; appearances were distorted by wrong thinking about them.[122] On this point Paul apparently agreed.

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[114] For 6:11 as the summary of 6:1–10, see Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought* (SNTSMS 119; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002), 94, after clearly tracing the passage's structure; cf. G. Bornkamm, *Early Christian Experience* (trans. P.L. Hammer) (New York: Harper & Row – London: SCM 1969) 75. (This structure seems more compelling than the ingenious chiasm proposed in H.Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," *CBQ* 63/4 [2001] 664–682.)

[115] Origen, *Comm. Rom*. on 6:11 (FC 2, III, 188); Bray, *Romans*, 162.

[116] Such as focusing the mind on nature, to live in harmony with it (Musonius Rufus, frg. 42, p. 138.9–11), or on the soul (Plutarch, *Pleas. L.* 14); the gods would reward a good mind (Maximus of Tyre, *Or*. 8.7). One's thinking (φρόνημα) should always be "turned toward God" (Porphyry, *Marc*. 20.327–329 (SBLTT 28, 63); one's speaking would thus be inspired ἔνθεος (20.329). Oaths to Caesar could even promise mental loyalty to Caesar (*CIGRR* 3.137; *OGIS* 532; R.K. Sherk [ed., trans.], *The Roman Empire. Augustus to Hadrian* [New York: Cambridge University Press 1988] §15, p. 31).

[117] Musonius Rufus 16, p. 106.3–6, 12–16.

[118] Seneca Y., *Nat.* 3, pref. 11–15.

[119] Seneca Y., *Dial.* 4.12.4–5. Cora E. Lutz ("Musonius Rufus," 28) observes that Musonius also opined that through disciplining his mind (Musonius Rufus 6, p. 54.16–25) a wise person would achieve self-mastery (6, p. 54.2–10).

[120] See Sorabji, *Emotion*, 165, 211–227. Some techniques remain useful today, e.g., relabeling (222–223).

[121] Sorabji, *Emotion*, 213.

6. Renewing of Mind: Neuroplasticity (Rom 12:2)

The most relevant Gentile ideas regarding a transformed mind appear in philosophers, who were those who addressed such issues. Thus, for example, Seneca insists that mere learning of what to do and not to do is insufficient; one becomes a truly wise person only when one's "mind is metamorphosed [*transfiguratus est*] into the shape" of what one has learned.[123] The Platonic tradition also valued being conformed to the divine likeness.[124] The wise person becomes good only "by thinking the good and noble thought which emanated from the divine."[125] Like some other philosophers,[126] the Jewish philosopher Philo emphasizes being conformed to God.[127]

Ancient popular philosophic vocabulary would allow Paul's audience to understand some of his language, but they might also recognize that he employs it somewhat differently. For Paul, of course, the transformation is into Christ's image (cf. Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18).[128] Imitation of God is also prominent in philosophic discourse;[129] but in the context of Romans it is God's Spirit rather than human ability (or innate divinity) that effects the transformation.

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[122] Sorabji, *Emotion*, 165.

[123] Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 94.48 (LCL 77, 42–43). In *Lucil.* 6 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 64) Seneca claims that he was experiencing a transformation, though it was not yet complete. Stoics emphasized transformed thinking (R.M. Thorsteinsson, "Stoicism as a Key to Pauline Ethics in Romans," *Stoicism in Early Christianity* [eds. T. Rasimus – T. Engberg-Pedersen – I. Dunderberg) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2010] 24–25). Peggy Vining ("Comparing Seneca's Ethics in *Epistulae Morales* to Those of Paul in Romans," *ResQ* 47/2 [2005] 83–104) views Paul's emphasis on reason and ethics as parallel to yet not dependent on the same Stoic emphasis.

[124] See A.D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background* (New York: Harper & Row 1964) 55. One honors God by making one's thought like him (Porphyry, *Marc.* 16.265–267), through virtue which draws the soul to what was like it (16.267–268); a mind like God gravitates toward him (19.315–316; for the divine law stamped in the mind, see 26.410–411, 419–420).

[125] Porphyry, *Marc.* 11.199–201 (SBLTT 28, 55).

[126] E.g., Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 10.8.2 (and comparable sources cited by Haines [LCL 58, 270, n. 1]).

[127] Philo, *Creation* 144; cf. *Abr.* 87; *Decal.* 73; *Virt.* 168. Philo uses the verb ἐξομοιόω and its cognate noun 46 times, sometimes with reference to nature's conformity to God's nature. Judeans also could emphasize the importance of right thinking about the law (e.g., 1QS 9.17; 4Q398 f14–17ii.4).

[128] For the relevance of 2 Cor 3:18 and Hellenistic and Jewish conceptions of vision of the divine, see discussion in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 206–215. These texts about Christ's image employ cognate terms in a relevant manner. On Christ as God's image embodying expectations for divine wisdom (cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Wis 7:26), see e.g., discussion in C.S. Keener, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005) 169–171, 174; cf. the *logos* in Philo *Dreams* 2.45.

[129] See e.g., Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.25.70; Seneca Y., *Dial.* 1.1.5; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.14.12–13; Marcus Aurelius 10.8.2; Heraclitus, *Ep.* 5; Plutarch, *Borr.* 7, *Mor.* 830B; *Let. Aris.* 188, 190, 192, 208–210, 254, 281; Philo, *Creation* 139; *T. Ash.* 4:3; *Mek. Shirata* 3.43–44; *Sifra Qed.* par. 1.195.1.3; *Sent. Sext.* 44–45; C.G. Rutenber, *The Doctrine of the Imitation of God in Plato* (New York: King's Crown, Columbia University Press 1946) chs. 2–3; cf. Eph 5:1.

Most philosophers emphasized that one should not follow the views of the masses;[130] but for Paul, lack of conformity to this "age" belongs to his realized approach to a conventional Jewish "two ages" schema (cf. Rom 8:11, 23; 1 Cor 2:9–10; 10:11; 2 Cor 1:22; Gal 1:4). Likewise, while philosophic ideals often emphasize transformation,[131] Paul applies related language to eschatological transformation (Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21), an image at home in Jewish apocalyptic sources.[132]

In view of the preceding context of Rom 12:2, Paul thinks partly of God's own mind or wisdom revealed in salvation history (11:34).[133] God provides them retroactive insight into his purposes.[134] If the preceding context offers God's sovereign plan as a foundation for transforming the mind, the following context offers one objective of this transformation. The right way of thinking (12:2–3) puts each believer's embodied contribution (12:1) in the wider context of *Christ's* body (12:4–8).

A Stoic might seek to transcend embodied individual limitations through recognizing God's mind in the cosmos, viewing the universe[135] and even the state as a body. For Paul, both salvation history and God's people offer a context beyond the individual. Paul's point is not simply a context beyond one's limited personhood, as in Stoicism, but rather a life beyond human autonomy in its willful rejection of God's perspective. Individual believers' bodies can serve the higher purposes of Christ's body (Rom 12:1, 5).[136] For Paul, Christ dwells in his body, working through all believers. Although God works in the cosmos (Rom 1:19–20; Col 1:15–16) and in all of history, he is revealed most fully in the history of his people and his current work among his people in Christ.

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[130] E.g., Musonius Rufus frg. 41, p. 136.22–24; Philo, *Abr.* 38.

[131] See further discussion on 2 Cor 3:18 in Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 206–215.

[132] Cf. e.g., Dan 12:3; *4 Ezra* 7:97; *2 Bar.* 51:3, 5; 1 Cor 15:51–53; Phil 3:21; cf. Segal, *Convert*, 63–65.

[133] Adapting Isa 40:13; cf. Paul's use of the same question from Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16, where Paul responds with the "mind of Christ."

[134] Cf. the pesher hermeneutic at Qumran: see e.g., W.H. Brownlee, "Biblical Interpretation among the Sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *BA* 14/3 (1951) 60–62; J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament," *NTS* 7/4 (1961) 325–330; R.N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1975) 31, 38–45; D. Dimant, "Pesharim, Qumran," *ABD* V, 244–251; G.J. Brooke, "Qumran Pesher: Towards the Redefinition of a Genre," *RevQ* 10/4 (1981) 483–503; G.J. Brooke, "Eschatological Bible Interpretation in the Scrolls and in the New Testament," *Mishkan* 44 (2005) 18–25; T.H. Lim, "Eschatological Orientation and the Alteration of Scripture in the Habakkuk Pesher," *JNES* 49/2 (1990) 185–194; D.E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2003) 347–350. Such a hermeneutic of hindsight, however, is in no way limited to Qumran. Cf. also the Spirit's role in providing insight in the Qumran scrolls (1QS 4.3; 1QHa 20.15; 4Q427 f8ii.18).

[135] E.g., Cicero, *Fin.* 3.19.64 (providing the Stoic view); Seneca Y., *Lucil.* 95.52; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.12.26.

[136] See Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit*, 167–172; for Christ's body and persons in relation to one another, see esp. S.G. Eastman, *Paul and the Person. Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2017) 81, 91.

Conclusion

By engaging the popular intellectual language of his contemporaries, Paul seeks to communicate his distinctly Christocentric message. Reason's ability to control passions, as promoted by contemporary philosophy, is shown by Paul to be compromised by the ways passions have corrupted it. Moreover, Paul asserts that even right knowledge of God's law, as generally suggested by Jewish thinkers, cannot deliver one from this enslavement. Paul, thus, presents a new way of dealing with passions, namely that Christ by the Spirit liberates from bondage to passion, enabling a relationship with and a life pleasing to God.

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The "inner man" – Fundamental Concept of Pauline Anthropology?

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Abstract: The reader of the Pauline Epistles encounters the metaphor of the "inner man" for the first time in 2 Cor 4:16. Inconspicuous at first glance, this metaphor reveals not only a wide reception history within Christian thought and tradition but also a conceptual depth which brings us close to the origins of our thought on human personality and subjectivity. In this article, I want thus to elaborate on the concept of the "inner man" in Paul. Tracing its origins in Plato, I want to show how this metaphor must be understood on a conceptual level using metaphors as archaeological tools that help to discover concepts that might get lost when only interpreted as linguistic ornaments. Claiming that Plato explicitly expresses the human »self« as a continuous agent in front of changing phenomena of the human soul with his concept of the "inner man," I will then turn to Paul. Even though it is impossible to trace the exact origins of this metaphor in the writings of the Apostle, it is my thesis that it can be found in 2 Cor 4:16 in substance. Paul thus uses the metaphor of the "inner man" to express the newly redeemed and yet justified Christian »self« that is confronted with opposition and contradiction that *waste away the outer man*. The exact Greek wording of this metaphor allows to identify the pictorial level of this metaphor in Paul with the temple in Jerusalem. As I will show, Paul thus integrates two anthropological lines that he derives from the creational accounts in the "inner man," showing interesting parallels to Philo of Alexandria. With the metaphor of the "inner man," the reader of 2 Cor 4:16 therefore encounters a or even the fundamental concept of Pauline Anthropology.

Keywords: Paul, Pauline anthropology, selfhood, inner man, subjectivity

The reader of the Epistles of Paul encounters the metaphor of the "inner man" for the first time in 2 Cor 4:16: "So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer man (ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) is wasting away, our inner man (ὁ ἔσω) is being renewed day by day." It can also be found in Rom 7:22: "For I delight in the law of God in my inner man (κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον)." If we look into the so called deutero-pauline Epistle to the Ephesians, we find another reference: "I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner man (εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον) with power through his Spirit" (Eph 3:16). On the first glance, this metaphor seems unsuspicious. A look into its reception history, however, reveals a wide prevalence, either literally or in substance, not only in patristic literature, but also in medieval and in early modern writings. The reader

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of the *Second Epistle of Clement* thus gets as answer to the question of the Second Coming of Christ that it will occur "when the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female, neither male or female."[1] Clement of Alexandria then directly refers to this metaphor,[2] followed by Tertullian[3] and Origen, who use the metaphor of the "inner man" when interpreting the creational account in Genesis. Other references can not only be found in the writings of Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine who excessively draws on this metaphor, or Leo the Great, but also in pagan philosophical writings such as Plutarch, Porphyry or Plotinus.[4] It is, however, not only patristic literature that draws so heavily on the "inner man." Speaking about medieval literature, the reader encounters this metaphor in several *Novice's manuals* and authors such as Hugo of St. Victor or the Tractatus *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione* of David of Augsburg.[5] Martin Luther, too, uses this metaphor in his *On the Freedom of a Christian*,[6] followed by John Paul II, who starts his *Love and Responsibility* with an anthropological vision based on the "inner" and "outer" man.[7] Given this wide reception history, it is therefore no wonder that scholars such as Theo Kobusch denote patristic philosophy as the "metaphysics of the inner man."[8] Jens Wolff even suggests that this metaphor could be used to speak about subjectivity in a conceptual unburdened way.[9] Despite numerous biblical commentaries[10] referring to the passages in the Pauline Epistles, there is hardly any research done that e*xplicitly* deals with the *concept* of this metaphor.[11] What is the conceptual framework of this terminology?

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[1] *2 Clem.* XII,2.

[2] Clement of Alexandria, *Paid.* III, 1; III, 2.

[3] Tertullian, *Anim.* IX, 7f.

[4] For an overview over the wide reception history see: C. Markschies, "Innerer Mensch," *RAC* XVIII, 266–312.

[5] Cf. R. Schnell, "Wer sieht das Unsichtbare?," *Anima und sêle. Darstellungen und Systematisierungen von Seele im Mittelalter* (ed. K.S. Philipowski) (Berlin: Schmidt 2006) 21–40. For a detailed overview see also: A. Derville – A. Solignac, "Homme Intérieur," *DSAM* VIII/1, 650–674.

[6] Cf. J. Wolff, "Martin Luthers »innerer Mensch«," *Lutherjahrbuch* 75 (2008) 31–66.

[7] Cf. John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press 1993) 21–40.

[8] T. Kobusch, *Christliche Philosophie. Die Entdeckung der Subjektivität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2006) 15.

[9] Cf. Wolff, "Martin Luthers »innerer Mensch«," 64–65: "Mit der präzisen Metapher vom inneren Menschen, der die etwas hochgestochenen Begriffe wie «Subjektivität» oder «Selbstbewußtsein» vermeidet und abstrakte Reflexionskategorien umschifft, wird sprachlich ein Freiraum geschaffen, der ein unmittelbares Angesprochensein au den innerlichen Menschen erlaubt, ohne «Subjektivität» zur monistischen Kategorie zu erheben. Luther weiß offensichtlich durchaus, was das Phänomen der «Subjektivität» ist, er presst es aber nicht in philosophische Reflexionskategorien."

[10] Only to mention some of them: R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms. A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill 1971); H. Klein, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (Hermannstadt: Honterus 2015); C. Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press 1987); T. Schmeller, "Der zweite Korintherbrief," *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (eds. M. Ebner – S. Schreiber) (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2008) 331–352; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, ed. 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2017); H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 9 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1924).

[11] Studies that explicitly deal with the metaphor of the "inner man" as independent or starting point for other objects: J. Assmann, *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen. Studien zur religiösen Anthropologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verl.-Haus Mohn 1993); H.D. Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ho esō anthrōpos)

How do we need to interpret it? Can we identify this metaphor as a or even the fundamental concept of Pauline Anthropology and where does it come from? I would like to approach these questions on a methodological level in a hermeneutical way using metaphors as archaeological tools that allow us to identify concepts and worlds of thought that would otherwise elude the reader. But where to start?

1. The Metaphor of the Inner Man in Plato

There is scholarly consent on the fact, that the metaphor of the "inner man" can generally be found in Plato's *Politeia* 588a-b for the first time. All in all, it seems to be a creation of Plato himself, who introduces his readers into an "image of the soul" (εἰκόνα [...] τῆς ψυχῆς).[12] In Plato's words:

> And on the other hand he who says that justice is the more profitable affirms that all our actions and words should tend to give the man within us [τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ἐντός] complete domination over the entire man and make him take charge of the many-headed beast like a farmer who cherishes and trains the cultivated plants but checks the growth of the wild and he will make an ally of the lion's nature, and caring for all the beasts alike will first make them friendly to one another and to himself, and so foster their growth.[13]

Plato uses this image "to reinforce the message of book IX that injustice does not benefit a person"[14] and therefore provides the program of the *Politeia* as a relocation of justice in the interior sphere with an anthropological foundation. Plato speaks in this image about the many headed beast, the lion and the man within us.

> "Mould, then, a single shape of a manifold and many-headed beast that has a ring of heads of tame and wild beasts and can change them and cause to spring forth from itself all such growths." "It is the task of a cunning artist," he said, "but nevertheless, since speech is more plastic than wax and other such media, assume that it has been so fashioned." "Then fashion one other form of a lion and one of a man and let the first be far the largest and the second second in size." "That is easier," he said, "and is done." "Join the three in one, then, so as in some sort to grow together." "They are so united," he said. "Then mould

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in the Anthropology of Paul," *NTS* 46/3 (2000) 315–341; U. Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung. Traditionsgeschichte und systematische Struktur der Zweireichelehre*, 2 ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1983) 59–136; T.K. Heckel, *Der innere Mensch. Die paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs* (WUNT 2/53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1993); Kobusch, *Christliche Philosophie*; T. Kobusch, *Selbstwerdung und Personalität. Spätantike Philosophie und ihr Einfluß auf die Moderne* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2018) 76ff; Markschies, "Innerer Mensch," 266–312; G. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context. The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Rarly Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2008) 358–374; C. Zarnow, *Identität und Religion. Philosophische, soziologische, religionspsychologische und theologische Dimensionen des Identitätsbegriffs* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2010).

[12] Plato, *Rep.* IX, 588b. Cf. E. Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen* (International Plato Studies 11; Sankt Augustin: Academia 2000) 214.

[13] Plato, *Rep.* IX, 589a-b.

[14] Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen*, 214.

> about them outside the likeness of one, that of the man, so that to anyone who is unable to look within but who can see only the external sheath it appears to be one living creature, the man."[15]

There is no doubt that the three creatures stand for the three parts of the soul: The man symbolizes the λογιστικόν, the lion stands for the θυμοειδές and the many-headed beast for the ἐπιθυμητικόν. To understand what Plato wants to tell his readers with the metaphor of the "inner man," one now needs to take two aspects into account. The first is him not interpreting these different aspects of the soul as parts in an analytical way. Plato speaks of them as "μέρος" (parts), he also uses words such as γένος or even εἶδος as species or appearance.[16] Theories that argue for a strict dichotomy between these parts thus fall short. They must be understood as *phenomena of interior life* or better: phenomena of the experience of oneself.[17] Given this stress on the phenomenology of interior states and motions, one faces another element that is important to understand the actual meaning of this image. It is the fact that one deals with metaphorical language. Even though Plato does, according to Elizabeth Pender, not use the word μεταφορά in his writings, one can find εἰκών next to ὁμοιώσις, ἀναλογία, εἴδολον or παράδειγμα as words functioning in the same way as metaphors.[18] When the reader thus is introduced into an image of the soul as "εἰκόνα [...] τῆς ψυχῆς,"[19] the images he uses are metaphors. Referring to David B. Claus, Pender now focuses on centrality of the platonic notion of the soul as immaterial that can imply a tension when confronted with traditional views of the soul.[20]

> Thus the Greek language does not possess a *literal* vocabulary for the nature and behaviour of the soul *as posited by Plato*. For even where one can point to the antecedents of such a vocabulary, it is clear that

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[15] Plato, *Rep.* IX, 588c-e.

[16] Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen*, 196f.

[17] This coincides with the fact that one can find a rich interior life in the Platonic Dialogues. See: Plato, *Phileb.* 41b: "ἐπιθυμίαι ἐν ἡμῖν"; 29c: "σμικρὸν μέν τι τὸ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν"; 39a: "ἐν ἡμῖν γιγνόμενοι"; Plato, *Leg.* III, 698a: "καὶ δεσπότις ἐνῆν τις αἰδώς"; Plato, *Tim.* 88b: „διὰ δὲ τὸ θειότατον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν φρονήσεως"; Plato, *Rep.* IV, 436a: "θυμούμεθα δὲ ἄλλῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν"; *Rep.* X, 603a-b: "πόρρω δ᾽ αὖ φρονήσεως ὄντι τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν προσομιλεῖ"; Plato, *Tht.* 184d: "εἰ πολλαί τινες ἐν ἡμῖν." The δικακαιοσύνη as interior practice (Plato, *Rep.* IV, 443c-d). Further: Plato, *Rep.* IV, 443d: "ἐντός, ὡς ἀληθῶς περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ". Plato, *Phileb.* 26b: "καὶ ἐν ψυχαῖς αὖ πάμπολλα ἕτερα καὶ πάγκαλα"; Plato, *Men.* 88c: "εἰ ἄρα ἀρετὴ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ"; 88e: "τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνηρτῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῆς εἰς φρόνησιν"; Plato, *Gorg.* 453a: "ἢ ἔχεις τι λέγειν ἐπὶ πλέον τὴν ῥητορικὴν δύνασθαι ἢ πειθὼ τοῖς ἀκούουσιν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ποιεῖν;"; Plato, *Gorg.* 477b: "οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ πονηρίαν ἡγῇ τινα εἶναι"; Plato, *Rep.* IV, 441c: "τὰ αὐτὰ δ᾽ ἐν ἑνὸς ἑκάστου τῇ ψυχῇ γένη ἐνεῖναι καὶ ἴσα τὸν ἀριθμόν."; Plato, *Leg.* XII, 968e: "πρὶν ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ἑκάστῳ που μαθήματος ἐπιστήμην γεγονέναι."

[18] Cf. Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen*, 40, 42.

[19] Plato, *Rep.* IX, 588b.

[20] Cf. D.B. Claus, *Towards the Soul. An Inquiry into the Meaning of psychē before Plato* (New Haven, MI: Yale University Press 1981) 183: „There are two demonstrably important groups of philosophical or technical context of ψυχή in the fifth century, both of which stem semantically form the archaic 'life-force' and both of which are therefore able to merge more or less invisibly with one another and with popular usage at the end of the century. The first group consists of contexts in which ψυχή is essentially the impersonal animator of the body, [...] the second group [...] attests to a newly persona and in that sense 'Socratic' use of ψυχή based, somewhat unexpectedly, on strongly psychophysical rather than dualistic ideas."

> Plato, in formulating his own non-standard views on soul, would have to mould this vocabulary to his own ends.[21]

Pender thus differentiates between four modes of metaphorical language in Plato. In doing so, she builds on debates held in the philosophy of language and here foremost by Eva F. Kittay whereas metaphors are not only linguistic ornaments without any deeper meaning but comprise a cognitive core that can only be expressed by means of this linguistic tool.[22] The first of these modes is thereby 1) the literal meaning of ψυχή.[23] In the second mode, Plato tries to express his concept of the soul 2) in a more abstract way. In this abstract sense, he differs with his notion of the soul from traditional interpretations, but the overall context of the passage does not imply a contradiction. As soon as this contradiction appears, one reaches the realm of metaphorical language in the dialogues where Plato uses 3) neutral or 4) imaginative metaphors.[24] Pender now claims that imaginative and neutral metaphors can always be reduced to abstract language as long as one asks about the “that” of the soul. This implies that these metaphors can further be explained in literal language. As soon as one asks for the “how” or the “what,” one is confronted with irreducible metaphors, that means, metaphors that include a cognitive core that can only be expressed by use of the metaphor given in the text.[25]

The crucial aspect now lies in the fact that the metaphor of the inner man unfolds in an image that precisely talks about the “how” or the “what” of the interaction of the different phenomena of the soul. This means in other words that the metaphor of the “inner man” contains a cognitive core, it stands for something that can only be expressed by using metaphorical language.

It is now my thesis that Plato precisely answers what Annas once identified as Homunculus Problem. What is the I, the human »self«, that principle of continuity we need in order to express a continuous agent within various interior phenomena of the soul that are partly contradictory, partly interacting?[26] Plato must have been aware of this problem, since he remarks some lines before:

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[21] Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen*, 185.

[22] Cf. E.F. Kittay, *Metaphor. Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon 1987); Further: A. Haverkamp, *Theorie der Metapher* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1983); H. Blumenberg, *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*, 2 ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1999); G. Lakoff – M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press 2003); K. Löwith, “Die Sprache als Vermittler von Mensch und Welt,” *Gesammelte Abhandlungen. Zur Kritik der geschichtlichen Existenz* (ed. K. Löwith) (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1960) 208–227; A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 2 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993); P. Ricoeur, “Stellung und Funktion der Metapher in biblischer Sprache,” *Zur Hermeneutik religiöser Sprache* (eds. P. Ricoeur – E. Jüngel) (München: Kaiser Verlag 1974) 45–71; B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen*, 4 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1975) 208–227.

[23] Cf. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, 187.

[24] Cf. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, 187.

[25] Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, 189.

> “Now the phrase ‘master of himself’ is an absurdity, is it not? For he who is master of himself would also be subject to himself, and he who is subject to himself would be master. For the same person is spoken of in all these expressions.” “Of course.” “But,” said I, “the intended meaning of this way of speaking appears to me to be that the soul of a man within him has a better part and a worse part, and the expression self-mastery means the control of the worse by the naturally better part.”[27]

One needs to ask: Why does Plato then use the metaphor of the “inner man” in order to express this continuous agent, the human »self«, so explicitly? Is the “inner man” not close to the λογιστικόν, the soul not close to the immutable ideas? Why does he not use these terms to express the human »self«?

It is indeed the platonic reason (νοῦς) that is described in *Nomoi* XII as “sustainer” (“σωτῆρα”),[28] but as Gerhard Jäger showed, the νοῦς cannot fully be understood as an organ of the soul.[29] Stephen Menn further interprets the νοῦς as a cosmic principle the individual is participating in.[30] The human soul as such, however, runs short as well, since it is only ῾ομοιότερον (similar)[31] and ἐγγύς (close)[32] to the continuity of the ideas, but not immutable itself.

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[26] J. Annas, *An introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1981) 142: “Each part has desires and pleasures, and tries to gain them, sometimes at the expense of the other two; they conflict, agree, and so on. That is, they are freely described in terms that are normally used only of the person as a whole. But the theory was introduced to explain certain behaviour on the part of the whole person showing that he or she is not a real unity. The parts are explanatory entities, parts needed to the behaviour of the whole. If they themselves, however, can be described in the way the whole person is, have we not reproduced the problems that led to the need for the theory in the first place? The desiring part is introduced to explain why sometimes I reach for a drink even when there is countervailing motivation. But then it turns out that we can say that the desiring part *wants* a drink and tries to promote this aim even when the other parts do not concur. How have we advanced from saying that *I* want a drink though I realize that there is something to be said against it? How is my desire to work out the truth explained by saying that I contain a little reasoning part whose main desire is to know the truth? The parts lead to a regress of explanation if they reproduce, as they seem to, the features of the whole person that needed the explanation in the first place. Let us call this the Homunculus Problem: is the theory not worthless if it explains the behaviour of a person by introducing in the person homunculi, little people to bring about the behaviour.”

[27] Plato, *Rep.* IV, 430e-431b: “οὐκοῦν τὸ μὲν ‘κρείττω αὑτοῦ’ γελοῖον; ὁ γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ κρείττων καὶ ἥττων δήπου ἂν αὑτοῦ εἴη καὶ ὁ ἥττων κρείττων: ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐν ἅπασιν τούτοις προσαγορεύεται. τί δ᾽ οὔ; ἀλλ᾽, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, φαίνεταί μοι βούλεσθαι λέγειν οὗτος ὁ λόγος ὥς τι ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τὸ μὲν βέλτιον ἔνι, τὸ δὲ χεῖρον, καὶ ὅταν μὲν τὸ βέλτιον φύσει τοῦ χείρονος ἐγκρατὲς ᾖ, τοῦτο λέγειν τὸ ‘κρείττω αὑτοῦ’—ἐπαινεῖ γοῦν—ὅταν δὲ ὑπὸ τροφῆς κακῆς ἤ τινος ὁμιλίας κρατηθῇ ὑπὸ πλήθους τοῦ χείρονος σμικρότερον τὸ βέλτιον ὄν, τοῦτο δὲ ὡς ἐν ὀνείδει ψέγειν τε καὶ καλεῖν ἥττω ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀκόλαστον τὸν οὕτω διακείμενον.”

[28] Plato, *Leg.* XII, 961d: “χρὴ τοίνυν, ὦ Κλεινία, παντὸς πέρι νοῆσαι σωτῆρα τὸν εἰκότα ἐν ἑκάστοις τῶν ἔργων, ὡς ἐν ζῴῳ ψυχὴ καὶ κεφαλή, τό γε μέγιστον, πεφύκατον. […] ψυχῇ μὲν πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις νοῦς ἐγγιγνόμενος, κεφαλῇ δ᾽ αὖ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ὄψις καὶ ἀκοή: συλλήβδην δὲ νοῦς μετὰ τῶν καλλίστων αἰσθήσεων κραθείς, γενόμενός τε εἰς ἕν, σωτηρία ἑκάστων δικαιότατ᾽ ἂν εἴη καλουμένη.”

[29] Cf. G. Jäger, *“NUS” in Platons Dialogen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1967).

[30] S. Menn, *Plato on God as nous* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press 1995).

In other words: Plato expresses with the metaphor of the "inner man" explicitly the human »self« as principle of continuity in front of changing states and phenomena of the soul.

With this in mind, we can turn our attention to Paul and his use of the "inner man" in 2 Cor 4:16 and Rom 7:22. Does he use this term in a similar way? Can we possibly identify the earliest expression of Christian selfhood and subjectivity, even a fundamental concept of Pauline anthropology there?

2. The Metaphor of the "inner man" in Paul

2.1. A Platonic Metaphor in Pauline Epistles?

As it was already mentioned above, the reader of the Pauline Epistle finds the metaphor of the "inner man" in 2 Cor 4:16; Rom 7:22 and Eph 3:16 leading to the question how Paul got to this metaphor. It would be much too broad to discuss the rich reception history of the "inner man" in philosophical and religious writings before Paul.[33] Given this wide adaption and multiple references, it is understandable, why there are various attempts of scholars to explain the existence of this platonic metaphor in the Pauline Epistles. Robert Jewett for example claims that „all but Cremer accepted the idea that Paul's terminology and thinking was influenced to some extent by Greek philosophy."[34] Richard Reitzenstein on the other hand tried to highlight the gnostic background and its influence on Paul.[35] Joachim Jeremias further points to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, whereas Hans Windisch to gnostic and Hellenistic influences.[36] Theo K. Heckel now confronts his readers with a "catchword-Hypothesis." Paul might have taken the metaphor of the "inner man" from his opponents[37] and here in particular from a pupil of Philo, namely Apollos, who is described by Luke in Acts 18:24–28 as a Jew whose origins lie in Alexandria, who was educated, came to Ephesus, was conversant with the scriptures and educated in the way of the Lord.[38] Could it also be that there were Jewish Missionaries confronting Paul and using this metaphor?

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[31] Plato, *Phaid.* 79b.

[32] Plato, *Phaid.* 80b.

[33] For a detailed overview see: Markschies, "Innerer Mensch," 266–312.

[34] Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 392.

[35] R. Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen. Nach ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen*, 3 ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1966) 345.

[36] Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 152.

[37] Cf. Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 132.

[38] Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 140.

As Thomas Schmeller rightly suggests, the problems of a definite reconstruction are to complex.[39] But does Paul even use the metaphor of the "inner man" in the same way as Plato? Does it *explicitly* denote the human »self« as a continuous agent?

2.2. The Metaphor of the "inner man" – the Human »self«?

In the oldest passage of the Pauline writings where one can find this metaphor, 2 Cor 4:16, Paul embeds the "inner man" into the wider context of the overall topic of his letter. It is the apostolic service as an existence of suffering (*Leidensexistenz*) in opposition to worldly fame. In the centre is the dialectic between cross and salvation, death and life, destruction and renewal, but also change and continuity. It can easily be seen that this dialectic confronts the reader with a similar yet different constellation as it is given in Plato. The question in this context is: How can the continuity and perseverance of the individual human being be thought in face of a new Christian existence that is justified by the death and resurrection of Christ and partakes in it qua baptism but is confronted with dangers and oppositions that *waste away the outer man*? In other words: How can the newly redeemed and justified »self« of the Christian be expressed in the *status viatorum* as a continuous agent, but still on his journey with all its struggles, its contradictions? Given these questions, one must further ask: Why is Paul then talking about the "inner man"? Are there not other anthropological terms that would provide the reader with the conceptual capacity to express selfhood as a continuous and stable agent being *day by day* renewed?

In order to answer these questions, I want to differentiate between two anthropologies in Paul that were especially highlighted by George van Kooten's study on Paul's anthropology, namely *spirit anthropology* and *image anthropology*.[40]

Van Kooten thereby emphasises the role and reception of both creational accounts, namely the priestly (Gen 1:1–2:3: *image anthropology*) and yahwist (Gen 2:4–25: *spirit anthropology*) account, and its influence on Jewish anthropological thought given in authors such as Philo and ultimately Paul.[41] The *spirit-anthropology*, conceptually thus derived from Gen 2:4–25, rests primarily on the triad of νοῦς, ψυχή and σάρξ as it is given in passages such as 1 Thess 5:23.[42] In 1 Cor 2:13–15 Paul then attributes to each of them a way of life.

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[39] Schmeller, "Der zweite Korintherbrief," 344: "Die Probleme und Unsicherheiten der Rekonstruktion sind so groß, dass solche Entwürfe heute oft mit Skepsis betrachtet werden."

[40] Cf. G. Van Kooten, "Paul's Anthropology in Context. The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity" (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2008) 375: "The most remarkably feature of Paul's anthropology is that it consists of two separate anthropologies, which can be distinguished as a 'spirit anthropology' and an 'image anthropology'. This comes as no surprise, as we have seen that Philo, too, knows of these two anthropologies and derives them respectively from the second and first account of man's creation in Gen 1–2. The spirit anthropology is based on Gen 2.7, whereas the image anthropology follows from Gen 1.26–27."

[41] For a detailed analysis see: Van Kooten, "Paul's Anthropology in Context," 269–312. Published as separate article: Van Kooten, G., "The Anthropological Trichotomy of Spirit, Soul and Body in Philo of Alexandria and Paul of Tarsus," *Anthropology in the New Testament and Its Ancient Context. Papers from the EABS-meeting in Piliscsaba/Budapest* (Leuven: Peeters 2010) 87–119.

> And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual (πνευματικοῖς). Those who are unspiritual[e] (ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος) do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern (πνευματικός) all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny. “For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ. And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh (ἀλλ’ ὡς σαρκίνοις), as infants in Christ.

The *Sarkinos* is worldly and lives according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) (Rom 8:13). The same counts for the *Psychicos*, who does “not receive the gifts of God’s spirit.” Both thus fall short to express the justified and redeemed human »self« in the context of 2 Corinthians. The *Pneumaticos* by contrary lives according to the spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα) (Rom 8:5). Would this not be an ideal candidate? In the center now is 1 Cor 15:41–48, where the *Pneumaticos* is embedded in a framework of redemption:

> So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), there is also a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit (ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Αδὰ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Αδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν). But it is not the spiritual (πνευματικόν) that is first, but the physical (τὸ ψυχικόν), and then the spiritual (πνευματικόν). The first man (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος) was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven (1 Cor 15:45–48).

Paul differentiates in this passage between σῶμα ψυχικόν and σῶμα πνευματικόν. One could now follow that Paul speaks of the spirit (πνεῦμα) only when talking about human salvation. But Paul speaks of the pneumatic body here, not the pneuma as such. In Van Kooten’s word: „In Paul’s view, it is not that the pneumatic reality (τὸ πνευματικόν) as such belongs to the future, but rather that the pneumatic *body* only becomes a reality after the eschatological resurrection.”[43] Paul thus attributes the pneuma to the fallen existence as well. From 1 Cor 15 follows that Adam was not created with ψυχή and σάρξ, but was created with πνεῦμα, ψυχή and σάρξ with the πνεῦμα of the fallen creation now in need for renewal and transformation. „Every human being has *pneuma*, only the Christians can have their *pneuma* really and effectively restored.”[44] By contrast, the πνεῦμα as well as the ψυχή and σάρξ fall short of describing the human »self« as this newly redeemed and justified continuous agent that is confronted with oppositions and contradictions.

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[42] “May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.”

[43] Van Kooten, “Paul’s Anthropology in Context,” 302.

[44] Van Kooten, “Paul’s Anthropology in Context,” 304.

Following 1 Cor 15 further, one can leave this *spirit-anthropology* and look at *the image anthropology*. Paul writes in 1 Cor 15:49: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ), we will also bear the image of the man of heaven (φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου)."

Paul uses the word "φέρειν" and introduces his readers into the idea that man carries the image of God within himself. „Even though he does once identify man with the image of God (1 Cor 11.7), properly speaking only Christ is the image of God (2 Cor 3.17, 4.4; Rom 8.29)."[45] In the centre is thus that the individual should be transformed into the image of God, Christ. The *image anthropology* thus does not have the conceptual capacity to express this human »self« in the *status viatorum* as mentioned above since it accentuates not the individual human being but Christ as the true image of God and ideal to be transformed by the spirit.

Conversely, the metaphor of the "inner man" can be identified as the Christian version of this platonic »self« expressing redeemed selfhood within a situation of salvation that begun but is faced with oppositions, dangers and contradictions.

2.3. The "inner man" – Fundamental Concept of Pauline Anthropology

So far, it could be shown that Paul expresses the human »self« as a continuous agent with his concept of the inner man. At the end of this article, I would like to ask, if the metaphor of the "inner man" can be identified as a or even the fundamental concept of Pauline Anthropology? More technically: How does Paul integrate both anthropologies into his concept of the "inner man"? In order to answer this question, it is important to look at Christoph Markschies who remarks that Paul uses "ἔσω" and "ἔξω" instead of Plato using ἐντός in order to express this metaphor.[46] It is thereby interesting that the words "ἔσω" and "ἔξω" appear in the Septuagint, next to the description of space in a rather neutral way,[47] foremost in the description of the Temple in Jerusalem or Tabernacle with "ἔσω" in particular designating the Holy of Holies.[48] This fact might provide us with a hint of the context in which Paul thought about the pictorial level of the metaphor of the "inner man" coinciding with the fact that Paul speaks of the human person as a temple primarily in his correspondence with the Corinthians as can be seen with verses such as 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:19 or 2 Cor 2:17. The Temple in Jerusalem as imaginative analogy to the "inner man" fits further into a context where Paul describes the apostolic ministry as similar as to the sacrifice of Christ. Windisch even argues that the earthly vessels ("ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν") mentioned in the text could be interpreted as Temple vessels.[49] The expression *day by day* could further be an allusion to the daily temple sacrifice. A more subtle argument for the idea that Paul thinks of the "inner man" as the Temple in Jerusalem can be found with V.5,1: "For we know that if the earthly tent (οἰκία τοῦ σκήνους) we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God (οἰκοδομήν), a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (ἀχειροποίτον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς)."

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[45] Van Kooten, "Paul's Anthropology in Context," 378.

[46] C. Markschies, "Die platonische Metapher vom «inneren Menschen»: Eine Brücke zwischen antiker Philosophie und altchristlicher Theologie," *Int. J. Class. Tradit.* 1/3 (1995) 6: "Diese Brücke hat im Falle der Metapher vom «inneren Menschen» *bewußt* keiner gebaut, sie hat sich aber für nachfolgende Generationen als tragfähig erwiesen."

[47] Gen 39:11: "ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἔσω"; Job 1:10: "τὰ ἔσω τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ"; Gen 9:22: "ἀνήγγειλεν τοῖς δυσὶν ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ ἔξω"; Gen 15:5: "ἐξήγαγεν δὲ αὐτὸν ἔξω"; Gen 19:17: "ἐξήγαγον αὐτοὺς ἔξω"; Gen 24:11: "καὶ ἐκοίμισεν τὰς καμήλους ἔξω"; Gen 24:29: "Λαβαν πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔξω ἐπὶ τὴν πηγήν"; Amos 4:5: "καὶ ἀνέγνωσαν ἔξω νόμον καὶ ἐπεκαλέσαντο ὁμολογίας."

[48] Cf. Exod 26:33: "You shall hang the curtain under the clasps, and bring the ark of the covenant in there, within the curtain (καὶ εἰσοίσεις ἐκεῖ ἐσώτερον καταπετάσματος); and the curtain shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy"; Lev 10:18: "Its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary (κατὰ πρόσωπον ἔσω φάγεσθε), as I commanded"; Lev 16:2: "The Lord said to Moses: Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary (εἰς τὸ ἅγιον

Paul uses the word "ἀχειροποίητος" that one will also find in Mark 14:58, when talking about the renewal of the temple: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands (χειροποίητον), and in three days I will build another, not made with hands (ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω)'."

Consequently, the temple in Jerusalem not only serves as the cognitive framework and as pictorial level of the "inner man," but also integrates both anthropologies in this metaphor. As it was shown with 1 Cor 15, Paul thinks that the individual carries the image of God like the statue of a deity within him or herself. The "inner man" is further the place, where this newly redeemed and justified »self« experiences the works of the Holy Spirit. The temple imagery is thus the ideal conceptual space to integrate and combine both anthropologies in an overall concept. When looking on the reception history of this metaphor before Paul, it is interesting that Philo of Alexandria seems to use this image of the soul in a similar fashion. As Heckel shows, Philo must have known the platonic image in the *Republic*.[50] Even though he does not use this metaphor in a literal way and thus follows other

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ἐσώτερον) inside the curtain before the mercy seat that is upon the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat"; Lev 16:12: "He shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, and two handfuls of crushed sweet incense, and he shall bring it inside the curtain (καὶ εἰσοίσει ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος)"; 2 Chr 29:16: "The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it, and they brought out all the unclean things that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord (καὶ εἰσῆλθον οἱ ἱερεῖς ἔσω εἰς τὸν οἶκον κυρίου ἁγνίσαι); and the Levites took them and carried them out to the Wadi Kidron"; 1 Kgs 6:15: "He lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar; from the floor of the house to the rafters of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress (ἐκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν καὶ περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίναις)." Εξω is used as ἔξωθεν for the outside of the arche, but also for the ark (Gen 6:14; Exod 25:11; Exod 26:35), the outside of the Tabernacle for the place, where the sacrifice took place (cf. Exod 26:35); Cf. Hecht, *Der innere Mensch*, 185–189.

[49] Cf. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 142. Windisch argues that the phrase "ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν" in 2 Cor 4:16 might point to the use of these words in the LXX (Lev 6:28; 11:33; 14:50) for vessels used at the temple service ("ein im Tempeldienst gebrauchtes tönernes Gefäß").

[50] Cf. Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 50ff. Heckel refers to passages such as Philo, *QE*. I, 19: "Wherefore not ineptly does He add that one must have a girdle about the middle, for this place is considered as the manger of the many-headed beast of desire within us [πολυκεφάλω θρέμματι τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐπιθυμιῶν]." Against a tradition

ancient authors who refer to Plato's image using the actual metaphor in a variety of forms and transformations whilst sticking to its cognitive core, the human »self«,[51] Philo seems to identify the "inner man" with the creation of an ideal human being he takes from the priestly account (Gen 1:1–2, 4a)[52] using the platonic metaphor as an "exegetical tool" ("exegetisches Werkzeug")[53] to describe the ideal human existence in the eyes of God. In this regard, the reader encounters expressions such as the heavenly man (als ἄνθρωπος-νοῦς), but also an identification of the "inner man" with Adam, the wise man or king (σόφος, βασιλεύς), the human mind, other biblical figures such as Enoch or Moses and finally the human conscience.[54] Interestingly, Philo seems to think in the same conceptual patterns as Paul thus integrating this anthropological concept into temple metaphorology:

> For there are, as is evident, two temples of God: one of them this universe, in which there is also as High Priest His First-Born, the divine Word, and the other the rational soul, whose Priest is the real Man; the outward and visible image of whom is he who offers the prayers and sacrifices handed down from our fathers, to whom it has been committed to wear the aforesaid tunic, which is a copy and replica of the whole heaven, the intention of this being that the universe may join with man in the holy rites and man with the universe.[55]

At another passage, the reader encounters even a similarity to 1 Cor 15:49 with the idea of the human mind as enshrined (ἀγαλματοφορεῖσθαι) and thus carried around like the statue of a deity (ἄγαλμα).

> And where in the body has the mind made its lair? Has it had a dwelling assigned to it? Some have regarded the head, our body's citadel, as its hallowed shrine, since it is about the head that the senses have their station, and it seems natural to them that they should be posted there, like bodyguards to

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that merges passages from the *Timaios* and the *Republic*, Heckel brings forth the following passage: *QE*. II, 100: "Why is the height of the altar three cubits? The literal meaning (refers to) the service of the several priests, that they may easily be able to perform their office by standing on a firm base, hiding their bellies and the things within their bellies, because for that many-headed beast [πολικέφαλον θηρίον], desire, and the farther (part) around the heart, because of anger, the counselor of evil, that it may be superior to the head."

[51] Cf. Markschies, "Innerer Mensch," 266–312.

[52] Philo, *Opif.* XLVI, 134: "After this he says that 'God formed man by taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life' (Gen. ii,7). By this also he shows very clearly that there is a vast difference between the man thus formed and the man that came into existence earlier after the image of God: for the man so formed is an object of sense-perception, partaking already of such or such quality, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal; while he that was after the (Divine) image was an idea or type or seal, an object of thought (only) incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible."

[53] Cf. Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 56ff: "doch weitere Belege zeigen, daß das Bild vom obersten Seelenteil als Mensch im Menschen für Philon ein schnell zur Hand genommenes exegetisches Werkzeug sein kann. Nicht immer zwingt ihn der Text, dies schwierige Instrument zu verwenden; gelegentlich genügen ihm auch sehr vage Stichwortanknüpfungen, um dieses Bild einzubringen."

[54] H. Leisegang, *Der Heilige Geist. Das Wesen und Werden der mystisch-intuitiven Erkenntnis in der Philosophie und Religion der Griechen. Die vorchristlichen Anschauungen und Lehren vom Pneuma und der mystisch-intuitiven Erkenntnis* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1967) 79ff, n. 5.

[55] Philo, *Somn.* I, 215.

> some mighty monarch. Others contend pertinaciously for their conviction that the heart is the shrine in which it is carried ("καρδίας αὐτὸν ἀγαλματοφορεῖσθαι").[56]

Even though a reconstruction of how Paul got to this metaphor is not possible and one can find similar description in other ancient sources,[57] parallels as such might evidence a philonic climate ("*philonischen Denkaura*"[58]) in Corinth or at least a broader philonic tradition in the Jewish communities of Asia Minor as argued by Heckel[59] or David T. Runia.[60] In addition, Maren Niehoff recently argued that detailed descriptions of landscapes in the work of Philo reflect the wide spread and reception of his works in areas beyond Egypt.[61]

All in all, the expression of the "inner man" serves Paul to express the human »self« in the wake of the newness of the *factum Christi*,[62] the experience of the crucified and living Christ, within the conceptual frameworks and imagery of his time. Based on discussions about the status of metaphors such as at George Lakoff and Mark Johnson,[63] the temple as pictorial level of the "inner man" thus serves as a religious appropriation (*religiöse Daseinsanneignung*)"[64] urged by the need to develop new linguistic patterns for expressing the newness of the experience of Christ. Furthermore, when using the temple in Jerusalem as pictorial level for the "inner man," Paul uses imagery that can also be understood in front of a pagan audience since temples belonged to the everyday life of ancient people. It serves thus his broader mission.[65]

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[56] Philo, *Somn.* I, 31ff; see also *Opif.* 82: "He bears about within himself, like holy images (ἀγαλματοφοροῦντα), endowments of nature that correspond to the constellations. He has capacities for science and art, for knowledge, and for the noble lore of the several virtues. For since the corruptible and the incorruptible are by nature contrary the one to the other, God assigned the fairest of each sort to the beginning and the end, heaven (as I have said) to the beginning, and man to the end."

[57] Cf. Van Kooten, "Paul's Anthropology in Context," 201: "Many further passages from ancient philosophers could be adduced here. Similar views circulate in Stoicism, to the effect that one should not build temples but hold the divine in one's mind (…) (SVF 1.146; Zeon apud Epiphanius, *Panarion* 3.508). Such views are also echoed in Nemesius of Emesa, according to whom man is a temple of God (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.433 edn Einarison; 1.15.19 edn Morani). Other Christian reflect these traditions. In his *Sententiae*, the Christian compilator Sextus (…) expresses views derived from pagan, Neo-Pythagorean collection: not only that the wise man is a living image of God (*Sententiae Sexti* 190 (…)), but also that one should treat the body as a temple of God."

[58] Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 141.

[59] Heckel, *Der innere Mensch*, 141.

[60] Cf. D.T. Runia, "Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Thought," *SPhiloA 7* (1995) 153: "by making the distinction between Philo and Philonism, proposing the latter term for the broader tradition."

[61] Cf. M. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria. An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2017) 125ff.

[62] With reference to Lubac's dictum: „le fait du Christ." See: H. de Lubac, *Typologie-Allegorie-Geistiger Sinn. Studien zur Geschichte der christlichen Schriftauslegung* (Freiburg: Johannes Verlag 1999) 182.

[63] Cf. Lakoff – Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

[64] Cf. Hecht, *Der innere Mensch*, 190 with reference to B. Janowski, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott. Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen*, 4 ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft 2003) 33ff.

[65] V. Gäckle, *Allgemeines Priestertum. Zur Metaphorisierung des Priestertitels im Frühjudentum und Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014) 16.

Conclusion

As I tried to show, the metaphor of the "inner man" can be found in Plato's *Republic* IX. 588 as an "image of the soul" for the first time. Inconspicuous at first glance, this metaphor unfolds a conceptual depth that can be identified with an *explicit* expression of the human »self« as a continuous element within a permanent flux of interior phenomena of the soul. Even though we cannot reconstruct where and how Paul got this terminology and if he received it from Plato via direct and indirect ways, it can at least be found in substance. Trying to express redeemed and justified human existence confronted with oppositions and contradictions, the "inner man" as continuous agent stands for this new Christian identity integrating both anthropologies he derives from Genesis in the imagery of the temple in Jerusalem as the pictorial level of this metaphor. It is, therefore, my thesis that the metaphor of the "inner man" in Paul is not only a, but probably the fundamental concept of Pauline Anthropology.

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Betwixt and Between:
The Letter of James and the Human Condition

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Abstract: James's letter does not concern itself with the nature of humanity in the abstract. His message regarding the trials of Jewish messianists distributed outside the land of the Jews leads him rather to explore the perplexing paradox of the human predicament—called to faithful life patterns, to love of God and neighbor, on the one hand, overwhelmed by craving and sin, on the other hand. This undergirds a profound analysis of the human condition as well as its remedy in God's true word.

Keywords: theological anthropology, James, temptation, trials, human craving, narrative, hybridity

What might the New Testament letter of James contribute to our understanding of the human situation? As with other questions concerning James's theological significance, the weighty influence of Martin Luther and Martin Dibelius provides little hope that James has much to offer. For Luther, the contributions of Paul, John, and even Peter were welcomed as the "true kernel and marrow of all the [NT] books," because they would "show you Christ" and "teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know." James, though, had "nothing of the nature of the gospel about it."[1] Almost four centuries later, Dibelius was more willing to number James among "the classical documents of Christianity," but acknowledged that it lacks "the force and scope" of "the gospel of Jesus" and is "essentially alien to the spirit manifested in the letters of Paul and in the writings of 'John.'"[2] He portrayed the text of James as a beaded necklace, a cord on which James has strung ethical judgments like charms on a bracelet.[3] Generally, this evaluation of James as a collection of nuggets of practical wisdom suggests that we might turn to James in search of down-to-earth advice but not for theological insight. Ironically, this judgment assumes a segregation of theology and practice that propagates the very division of "hearing the word" and "doing

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[1] M. Luther, *Word and Sacrament* (ed. E.T. Bachmann) (LW 35; St. Louis, MO: Concordia 1960) I, 362.

[2] M. Dibelius, *James. A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (rev. H. Greeven; trans. M.A. Williams; ed. H. Koester) (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1976) 50.

[3] Dibelius, *James*, 2–3. Given his contributions otherwise to *formgeschichtliche Studien*, Dibelius's characterization of James may not be surprising.

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the word" James counters. What if we set aside this modernist impulse to divorce theory and practice and, instead, adjust our lenses to recognize theology embedded in practice?[4]

My focus in this essay is James's portrait of the human condition. Admittedly, James neither directly asks nor explicitly answers the anthropological question: What is a human being? Or: What is humanity? This question is rare in Christian Scripture.[5] In varied ways, however, the biblical writers, James among them, carry out their work on the basis of tacit understandings of the human person. As we will see, James does so as he elaborates his practical wisdom in conversation with Gen 1–3. Accordingly, we will attend above all to James's introduction to his letter in chapter 1, and, therefore, to his portrayal of the hybrid nature of human life in the dispersion. I will show that James's understanding of humanity parallels a reading of human origins that emphasizes the profoundly paradoxical nature of humanity, with James emphasizing the dependence of faithful human life on the implanted word of God's good news.

1. Mapping James

Although they differ on myriad details of James's structure, most contemporary interpreters of James designate 1:2–27 as an "introduction," following the typical letter opening in 1:1. An initial reading might lead one to assess this opening section of James's letter as a hodgepodge of wisdom sayings cast as commands, but closer examination reveals word-links and parallels that draw together into a coherent whole what might first appear as isolated directives.[6] Without pressing for agreement on how best to outline James's letter, or even its first chapter, we can nonetheless identify how James begins immediately to locate his audience on a map and to shape their theological imaginations.

If we recall that our identities are shaped and shared through stories told, we are primed to ask how James tells the story of those to whom he addresses this letter. In identity theory, "narrative identity" refers to a person's internalized and evolving story, which provides him or her with a sense of unity across time, purpose, and significance. These stories may be unique at the individualized level, but nonetheless tend to follow patterns and tropes shared by others within one's community of reference. Not surprisingly, research demonstrates that the life-story a person relates reveals at least as much of the world within which she or he frames meaning as it does of his or her own life.[7] Personal and community identities are narratively constructed, propagated, and preserved. Accordingly, transformation entails a reordering of life in terms of a fresh adaptation of the narrative shared among and told within and by the community.

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[4] Indeed, recent years have welcomed a revival of interest in James, emphasizing not only the structural coherence of this letter but also its theology; Richard Bauckham's *James. Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge 1999) marks something of a turning point in this respect.

[5] See Pss 8 (cited in Heb 2:6–9); 144; Job 7:17–18—on which see P.D. Miller, "What Is a Human Being? The Anthropology of Scripture," *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (ed. J.B. Green) (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 2004) 63–73.

[6] Cf., e.g., M.E. Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into the Discourse Structure of James* (LNTS 311; London: Clark 2006) (see pp. 1–34 for Taylor's survey of a range of proposals); M.E. Taylor – G.H. Guthrie, "The Structure of James," *CBQ* 68/4 (2006) 681–705; C.L. Westfall, "Mapping the Text: How Discourse Analysis Helps Reveal the Way through James," *The Epistle of James. Linguistic Exegesis of an Early Christian Letter* (eds. J.D. Dvorak – Z.K. Dawson) (Linguistic Exegesis of the New Testament 1; Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2019) 11–44.

James locates his brothers and sisters in an overarching narrative with four primary kernels:[8]

Creation → Jesus's Advent → Present, Diasporic Life → Consummation

James's opening chapter alludes to all four, and I will comment briefly on each, beginning with Jesus's advent.

(1) Jesus's Advent. In 1:1, James identifies himself as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to this reference we may add the less explicit but nonetheless pervasive use of Jesus's teaching as subtext for much of the letter,[9] not least in James's dual emphasis on double-love: loving God, loving neighbor. James also highlights the significance of Jesus's advent in 2:1: "My brothers and sisters, do not hold the faithfulness of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ together with acts of favoritism."[10] In these references to Jesus, James underscores allegiance to Jesus and his way (developed in the letter especially in terms of his interpretation of Torah).

(2) Diasporic Life and Its Trials. At the outset, James greets "the twelve tribes who are in the diaspora" and, we quickly learn, these "brothers and sisters" are to find the greatest happiness in "the various trials" they encounter (1:1–2). Read in isolation, "the twelve tribes" could refer metaphorically to Israel. Following James's acclamation of Jesus as Lord and Christ, though, James's use of this phrase presses in the direction of *Israel, whose hope has*

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[7] D.P. McAdams, "Narrative Identity," *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (eds. S.J. Schwartz – K. Luyckx – V.L. Vignoles) (New York: Springer 2011) I, 99–115; S.P. Reyna, *Connections. Brain, Mind, and Culture in Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge 2002).

[8] I borrow the term "kernel" from Seymour Chatman's classic work, *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1978): "nodes or hinges in the structure, branching points which force a narrative into one or two (or more) possible paths" (53). I am adapting material first published in J.B. Green, "Reading James Missionally," *Reading the Bible Missionally* (ed. M.W. Goheen) (The Gospel and Our Culture Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2016) 194–212; J.B. Green, "Original Sin: A Wesleyan View," *Original Sin and the Fall. Five Views* (eds. J. Stump – C. Meister) (Spectrum Multiview Books; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2020) 55–77.

[9] For a list of allusions and discussion, see D.C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James* (ICC; New York: Bloomsbury 2013) 56–62; cf., e.g., J.S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James," *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition* (ed. J. Schlosser) (BETL 176; Leuven: Peeters 2004) 91–139; J.S. Kloppenborg, "The Emulation of the Jesus Tradition in the Letter of James," *Reading James with New Eyes. Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James* (eds. R.L. Webb – J.S. Kloppenborg) (LNTS 342; London: Clark 2007) 121–150; P.J. Hartin, *James and the 'Q' Sayings of Jesus* (JSNTSup 47; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1991). On the significance of this material for James's Christology, see W.R. Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," *EvQ* 74/1 (2002) 47–57.

[10] Unless otherwise indicated, translations of biblical materials are my own.

been restored in Jesus's coming. In other words, James participates in and addresses a Jewish restorationist movement, Jewish messianists. For some, the mental image of *diaspora* might invoke portraits of a people torn from their homeland, a vale of tears for the displaced. Others recognize that, by the first century CE, the Jewish diaspora was a more established amalgamation of forced and voluntary migration, lacking for most the angst typically accompanying refugee status. Even if experiences of diaspora varied and even if few Jewish expatriates seem compelled to return to the homeland, the evidence still suggests persistent koinonia with the homeland (say, participation in the temple tax) and, outside the homeland, patterns of Jewish adaptation and resistance, as well as patterns of anti-Jewish attitudes and behavior. Those patterns of resistance centered on such peculiar commitments and practices as circumcision, diet, and sabbath-keeping.[11] Even for those comfortably settled in their diasporic homes, questions of identity and life patterns remain for Jews living outside the homeland. James seems little concerned with external forces except insofar as external, worldly dispositions and patterns of life—such as arrogance, favoritism, and violence—might be internalized among Christ-followers. He never mentions struggles involving circumcision, diet, and sabbath-keeping, presumably because these practices could be taken for granted among his audience. Instead, his precis of the law of liberty, the perfect law, centers on neighborly love (1:25; 2:8–13; 4:11). James's "royal law" (βασιλικός) thus tracks with Jesus's proclamation of God's royal rule (βασιλεία), with its emphasis on double-love: love of God, love of neighbor. And this is the banner under which we learn to make sense of James's concerns with his audience's diasporic lives. How might they respond in their encounters with various trials (1:2–3, 12), distress among society's vulnerable (1:27), worldly contamination (1:27), conflicts and disputes (4:1), deceit (5:4), unjust verdicts (5:6), murder (5:6), and the potential of drifting away from the truth (5:19)? James, then, imagines a distributed audience threatened by assimilation into patterns of life alien to the way of faithfulness toward God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) Consummation. Explicit references to the eschaton are limited, even if the eschatological horizon of the narrative identity James wants to inculcate in his audience pervades the letter.[12] Among the plain references to the end time, the first two share parallel references to God's promise to those who love God:

> Truly happy are those who endure testing for, having proven themselves, they will receive the garland of life [God] has promised to those who love him. (1:12)
>
> My dear brothers and sisters, listen! Has God not chosen the poor according to worldly standards to be rich in terms of faith, and to be heirs of the kingdom he has promised to those who love him? (2:5)

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[11] See, e.g., E.S. Gruen, *Diaspora. Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2002); J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora. From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1996) (on circumcision, diet, and sabbath, see pp. 428–442); L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1993) (on circumcision, diet, and sabbath, see pp. 153–170).

[12] Cf. T.C. Penner, *The Epistle of James and Eschatology. Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter* (JSNTSup 121; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1996).

James's eschatological vision thus rests in God's promise and God's choice. And the parallel phrases shared by these two texts suggest that the "kingdom" is, for James, to be identified as future life with God characterized as a reversal of fortunes. Of course, this does not mean that James's eschatological vision is relegated to or concerns only the future. As James's rhetoric makes clear, his vision—and its valuation of the lowly and impoverished—casts its shadow backward on present, diasporic life. James asks, "Has God not chosen the poor?," not "Will God not choose the poor?" (2:5). The "royal law"—"Love your neighbor as yourself"—is a directive for present life (2:8). Crucially, too, this eschatological reversal of fortune is the consequence of divine judgment, a motif that resurfaces in James's final chapter:

> Therefore, brothers and sisters, you must be patient as you wait for the coming of the Lord.... You also must wait patiently, strengthening your resolve, because the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain about each other, brothers and sisters, so that you will not be judged. Look! The judge is standing at the door! (5:7–9)

Here James correlates the Lord's eschatological arrival (*παρουσία*) with divine judgment, a motif signaled earlier in 4:12: "There is only one lawgiver and judge, and he is able to save and to destroy. But you who judge your neighbor, who are you?" James's eschatological horizons preclude the possibility that justice might result from human protestations against human behavior, though without offering human passivity in their stead. Humans are called to courageous endurance (*μακροθυμέω, μακροθυμία*) while recognizing that justice-making is God's work. Who is the coming judge? Does Jesus return in order to judge, or does God come in judgment? Given James's high Christology, it is unclear that a choice is necessary.

James's end-time focus falls on the existential situation of his audience. Diasporic life should occasion growth toward maturity (1:2). Their response is to be one of faithful resistance, not retaliation, as they live their lives in dependence on the God who will act to set things right.

(4) Creation. Jesus's advent, present diasporic life, and the eschaton all mark the theological narrative James identifies in this opening chapter. The fourth kernel of James's story, his reflections on creation, takes centerstage in Jas 1, however. This is noteworthy because stories about beginnings (cosmology) and endings (eschatology) are especially important for understanding God's nature, God's engagement with the world, and relationships among God's creatures.

How does James signal his interest in Gen 1–3? He refers to "the Father of Lights," which recalls God's work in the creation of light and of heavenly bodies that illumine the earth (Jas 1:17; Gen 1:3–5, 14–18). James's claim that "every good gift" comes from God evokes God's affirmation of creation's goodness (Jas 1:17; Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). He ends the paragraph that runs from 1:12 to 1:18 with his reference to "everything God created" (1:18).[13] The problem of testing raised in Jas 1 has James reflecting on Gen 3, even if he does not mention Adam and Eve by name.[14] Reading further in the letter, we hear a further echo of the creation account in Genesis when James takes up his concerns with the tongue: "With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we denounce human beings made in God's likeness (ὁμοίωσις)" (3:9). James's use of the rare word ὁμοίωσις recalls Gen 1:26–27: God made humanity "according to our image and likeness (ὁμοίωσις)" (LXX). In such ways, James draws on the opening chapters of Genesis to characterize God, to lay out his understanding of the human condition, and to ground his call for ethical comportment. We return to this narrative kernel shortly.

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[13] *κτίσμα*: "what was created"—cf. Wis 9:2; 13:5; 14:11; 1 Tim 4:4; Rev 5:13; 8:9.

2. The Challenge of Hybridity

Even with the narrative map we have identified, the question remains: Where are James's brothers and sisters, those to whom he addresses this letter? It is tempting to reply that they are "betwixt and between," using an Old English phrase with Germanic roots signifying "neither here nor there." In fact, this is his diagnosis of the problem: Friend of God or friend of the world? Within the community of Christ-followers or outside of it? Embracing heavenly wisdom or earthly? Neither here nor there—betwixt and between. James uses his own language for this when he refers to the *doubleminded* (1:8; 4:8): the self at variance with itself, the self wavering between competing allegiances and alliances, the self tugged in different directions.

Betwixt and between, doubleminded—in contemporary parlance, James sketches a situation marked by *hybridity*. James identifies the character of diasporic testing in relation to power and privilege, with deep roots in judgments concerning status honor (e.g., 1:9–11; cf. ch. 2!). Distributed outside of the land of the Jews, these Christ-followers experience perhaps all the more strongly the realities of their hybrid existence—their identities and life patterns pulled both toward service of Roman ways and in a counter-direction, namely, toward service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Generally, *hybridity* refers to the combination of previously discrete cultural influences in fresh cultural expressions. Accordingly, K. Jason Coker's postcolonial analysis regards James's approach to the situation his audience faces as a failure. Indeed, "in-between places of hybridity repulse James," who attempts to substitute for the Roman empire his own imperial community, according to Coker.[15] This is because, Coker maintains, James presses for single-minded faithfulness to one cultural influence rather than encouraging negotiation among and creative integration of rival life patterns. This is a problematic reading of James, however, since it confuses singlemindedness (i.e., James's call for a single-minded allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ) with a nativist rejection of hybridity, a nostalgic desire to reclaim a past purity.[16] More apt is Ingeborg Mongstad-Kvammen's postcolonial reading of James. She recognizes that the life patterns that concern James cannot be negotiated or creatively transformed; they are simply irreconcilable with following Christ. The choice is between acting vis-à-vis the lowly and impoverished according to God's standards or according to Roman standards.[17] For her, James's concern with hybridity does not prohibit interactions and engagement with the Roman world, but sets out the basic commitments and dispositions that would characterize lives of faithfulness in the Roman world.

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[14] So also, e.g., R.P. Martin, *James* (WBC 48; Waco, TX: Word 1988) 36.

[15] K.J. Coker, "Nativism in James 2.14–26: A Post-colonial Reading," *Reading James with New Eyes. Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James* (eds. R.L. Webb – J.S. Kloppenborg) (LNTS 342; London: Clark 2007) 47.

James's approach is congruous with the map he has drawn, with four nodes (or kernels) that determine the direction and parameters of the theological narrative by which he identifies and forms both his message and, by extension, his audience. *Creation* speaks both of God's capacious goodness and of the enduring moral ramifications of the God-likeness characteristic of fellow human beings. *Consummation* speaks of the reversal by which the rapacious rich are overcome with miseries and the lowly are vindicated—not by human initiative (and certainly not by violent words and violent actions that disrupt and destroy human community) but through divine judgment. *Jesus's advent* speaks of single-minded allegiance to Jesus as Lord, proscribing patterns of belief and behavior that counter the message and example of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning double-love. Following Jesus as a *dispersed, not-at-home people* refuses every hint, even the whiff of acts of favoritism toward the wealthy and well-positioned at the expense of the lowly and impoverished (cf. 2:1). James does not call his brothers and sisters to life in an ethnic or religious enclave removed from the reach of the Roman empire; rather, he sets out the terms by which his brothers and sisters might engage with and make their lives in the Rome's world.

Indeed, Israel's basic affirmation, the *Shema*, ties oneness of commitment to the oneness of God. God is one ("The Lord your God, the Lord is one") and Israel shall love the one God singularly ("with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength," Deut 6:4–5). James is very much concerned with this singleness of commitment (1:12; 2:5, 19), and recognizes when it is compromised by the double-hearted, double-faced, double-tongued, or, as here, the doubleminded.[18] For James, it is God's nature to give single-heartedly, simply, to those who ask without wavering, but these people, the doubleminded, are complex in their dueling compulsions (1:6–8). Accordingly, we are unsurprised later to hear James liken them, inconceivably, to fountains from which pour both fresh and salty water (3:9–12).

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[16] For an alternative (and important) assessment of James's theology of purity, see D. Lockett, *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James* (LNTS 366; London: Clark 2008).

[17] I. Mongstad-Kvammen, *Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Epistle of James. James 2:1–13 in Its Roman Imperial Context* (BIS 119; Leiden: Brill 2013) e.g., 146–147.

[18] Cf. Ps 12:2; 1 Chr 12:33. For related texts, see L.L. Cheung, *The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; Carlisle: Paternoster 2003) 197–201; Allison, *James*, 186–191.

3. Trials for a Betwixt-and-Between People

With his identification of his audience as a dispersed people experiencing trials, James activates the pervasive scriptural motif that God's aims for humanity include putting pressure on them so that they might flourish.[19] The term James uses, πειρασμός, can signify *trials* (a morally neutral term), but also *testing* (which promotes human development and flourishing) and *tempting* (which thwarts human growth and crushes life).[20] All experience *trials* in the diaspora; *trials* morph into *temptation* when people respond poorly. James presses this point home when he claims that *temptations* have their root in human craving, not in God. Moral failure cannot be traced to external pressures alone. God cannot be blamed.

Working within the wider biblical tradition, James has only three choices in his reflections on temptation's etiology: God, Satan, or human beings. He rejects the first (1:13), does not here mention the second, and advocates for the third: "Everyone is tempted by their own cravings, lured away and seduced by them" (1:14). As John Wesley concludes in his notes on James, "We are therefore to look for the cause of every sin, *in*, not *out of*, ourselves."[21]

True, Nicholas Ellis has recently tried to recast the cosmic drama in James so as to make room for a satanic agent, a cosmic tempter, at work in human testing.[22] His is a well-crafted argument, accounting for ancient Jewish reflection on Adam, Abraham, and Job within a legal drama set on mitigating God's responsibility for temptation. For Ellis, by implicitly engaging the story of Adam (1:13–18) and explicitly drawing on the examples of Abraham (2:21–24) and Job (5:11), and by referring to diabolic presence and influence later in his letter (2:19; 3:6, 14–15; 4:7), James participates in that tradition. However, it can hardly escape our notice that, when James pointedly takes up the problem of testing in Jas 1, diabolic forces go without mention and the devil himself is absent; discussion of Abraham and Job in James is not concerned with a cosmic legal drama, but Abraham is presented as a model of faith-at-work while Job exemplifies courageous endurance; Abraham is actually paired with Rahab and not with Job;[23] and, when James traces the etiology of temptation, he refers explicitly to “their *own* cravings” (emphasis added). In the end, James bears witness to a pessimistic anthropology, not an active diabolic agent, as he reflects on temptation’s origins.

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[19] J. Goldingay, *Biblical Theology. The God of the Christian Scriptures* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2016) 177; cf. R.W.L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith. A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000) esp. 238–242.

[20] Moberly, *Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 239–240. James uses πειρασμός (1:2, 12), its verbal form, πειράζω (1:13 [3x], 14), and, speaking of God, ἀπείραστος (1:13).

[21] J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth 1976 [1754]) 857.

[22] N.J. Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing. Cosmic Trials and Biblical Interpretation in the Epistle of James and Other Jewish Literature* (WUNT 2/396; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2015); cf. N.J. Ellis, "A Theology of Evil in the Epistle of James: Cosmic Trials and the Dramatis Personae of Evil," *Evil in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (eds. C. Keith – L.T. Stuckenbruck) (WUNT 2/417; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2016) 262–281.

[23] On James's references to Abraham, Rahab, and Job, cf. J.B. Green, "'I'll Show You My Faith' (James 2:18): Inspiring Models for Exilic Life," *Int* 74/4 (2020) 344–352; and, more fully, R.J. Foster, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James* (WUNT 2/376; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014).

James begins his explanation of trials with reference to God, speaking of God’s character, first, as a way to trace temptation’s origins not to God but to the human condition (1:13–15). Human response is key, with *trials* functioning like a “Y” in the road, with one fork (*testing*) leading to flourishing, happiness, life, and the other fork (*tempting*) leading to stunted growth, decline, death. James’s gloomy portrait of the human condition seems to allow no room for optimism around human flourishing. He speaks of God’s character, second, in order to introduce welcome words concerning God’s medicant for healing the human condition (1:16–18).

How does James develop this perspective? He turns to the opening chapters of Genesis. James’s interest in the etiology of sin has roughly contemporaneous analogues in other Jewish literature. For example, in Life of Adam and Eve, Adam and Eve, expelled from Eden, try to explain suffering and pain; sin’s roots, we learn, are nourished by the poison of insatiable craving. Similarly, for 2 Esdras, Adam was burdened with an evil inclination, a predisposition toward evil that continues to exercise overwhelming influence on all humanity. In these discussions, clearly, ongoing reflection on the opening chapters of Genesis is important. We have already seen that James reflects on Gen 1–3 in his introduction.

Interestingly, then, Gordon McConville proposes that we read the two creation accounts in Gen 1–3 side by side rather than sequentially.[24] If we follow McConville, we gain a stronger sense of James’s portrait of the human situation. This is because Genesis, on this reading, does not recount the story of humanity’s loss of God’s image (and James certainly does not regard God’s likeness as having been lost—cf. 3:9) but rather exposes the perplexing riddle of the human situation. Accordingly, the opening chapters of Genesis do not describe the path from Paradise to Paradise Lost. Rather, Genesis juxtaposes the promise and the peril of humanity. Genesis 1:1–2:4a has God creating humanity in God’s own image, so that human beings are “like God.” Genesis 2:4b–3:24 has human beings seeking, misguidedly, to be “like God.” McConville writes: “Genesis 1–3, therefore, depicts the human condition in its conflicted relation to good and evil, life and death,” with “humans … entrusted with presencing God in the world yet … subject to a fatal misreading of what this means as subjective reality.”[25] The life of human beings, from this vantage point, is deeply (and frustratingly) paradoxical. They are like God yet misconstrue the possibilities and limitations of Godlikeness. This is precisely the situation we find in James. On the one hand, Jas 1 speaks to the optimism of true happiness, confidence, faith, and life with God. On the other hand, Jas 1 bears witness to the overpowering burden of human craving. Genesis 1–3 sets side by side contrasting portraits of human life. So does Jas 1.

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[24] J.G. McConville, *Being Human in God’s World. An Old Testament Theology of Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2016).

[25] McConville, *Being Human*, 41, 43.

For James, though, left to themselves, human hearts lean toward doublemindedness, favoritism, wrong speaking, arrogance, selfish ambition, and violence—that is, toward earthly wisdom and its relational expression (cf. 3:14–16). Note that James opened his letter with a chain of effects (1:2–4):

trials → endurance → wholeness in "the greatest happiness"

And he soon adds a parallel (1:12):

trials → endurance as an expression of love → life

Both of these contrast with the chain of effects by which James exposes the human condition (1:14–15):

cravings → trials → sin → death

James thus gets at the source of his audience's real difficulties: the potency of their internal inclinations. The term I have translated as *craving*, ἐπιθυμία, can have the more neutral sense of *desire*, but in moral discourse it generally carries the negative sense of *evil desire*.[26] Here, its role vis-à-vis sin and death qualifies it plainly as negative and places it in the company of the wider notion of the evil inclination. Accordingly, genuine happiness and a garland of life seem forever out of reach. We can almost hear the words of 2 Esdras:

> What benefit is it to us that we are promised an immortal time, but we have done works that bring death? What good is it to us that everlasting hope has been predicted for us, but we have utterly failed? What good is it that safe and healthy dwelling places are reserved, but we have behaved badly? (7:119–121 Common English Bible)

What James sketches may seem even more damning, however, since he writes as though "what we have done" was practically inevitable, given our subjugation to our own, overpowering cravings. With good reason, later Christian thought about "original sin" might be recast in terms of "human misery."[27]

Happily, even if the evil inclination that plagues all humans is indeed powerful, it need not be all-powerful. We can follow the logic of James's counterproposal by setting side by side two genealogies:[28]

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[26] ἐπιθυμία (1:14, 15). For related language, cf. ἡδονή ("pleasure") in 4:1, 3; ἐπιθυμέω ("I desire," "I crave") in 4:2; and, with a different sense, ἐπιποθέω ("I long for") in 4:5. Cf. L.T. Johnson, *The Letter of James. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday 1995) 193–194.

[27] V.-M. Kärkkäinen, *A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World.* III. *Creation and Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2015) 387–425.

[28] Cf. T.B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora. Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James* (SBLDS 144; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1993) 85.

Jas 1:15	**Jas 1:18**
Human desire (or craving)	God's desire (or choice),
"conceives" and "gives birth to sin"	"to give us birth by means of his true word"
"sin, once it reaches adulthood, gives birth to death"	"so that we might be a kind of foretaste of what would become of everything he created"

Both lineages employ images of the birthing room, the one for the process from craving to death, the other for the process whereby God restores human beings to their vocation as bearers of the divine image. In this way, James can speak of these lowly Christ-followers—who have been given birth by God's true word, who love God, and who demonstrate their allegiance to God through courageous endurance amid trials—as a kind of outpost of the consummation of God's plan.

Here is James's solution: the gift of God's "true word"—internalized, welcomed, and practiced. God's remedy for the perplexing human situation is God's true word—the means by which God's people are enabled to share in God's life and to emulate God's fidelity. James does not specify the content of this "true word," but his use of creation motifs suggests a meaningful parallel between God's word in creation (Gen 1: "God said …") and God's word in the birth that leads to embodying and signifying new creation.

"Birth" and "true word"—this is the language of the good news that opens the way to the transformation that overcomes the human proclivity to sin.[29] Or, to put it differently, the implanted word of God's good news reinvigorates the journey of diasporic life that promotes courageous faithfulness in the midst of trials, so that courageous faithfulness leads to true happiness and the garland of life.

Conclusion

James does not concern himself in this letter with the hypothetical question: What is humanity? His theological-anthropological questions are grounded, rather, in the situation of his audience, his brothers and sisters, who are caught between rival versions of life. Distributed outside the land of the Jews, confronted with pressures to conform attendant to life scattered among the Romans, will their allegiances and life patterns take the forms offered by Rome, with its assumptions and practices concerning wealth and status? Or will their allegiances and life patterns emulate the message and example of Jesus Christ the Lord, with its focus on double-love? James will not allow his audience to blame God for their present predicament. Their failings are of their own making, the outgrowth of their own inclinations, their own cravings. This is nothing more than the frustratingly paradoxical reality of human life—displayed in Gen 1–3 and, again, in Jas 1. For James, humans are caught between hope, faithfulness, and love, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, craving, sin, and death. If James's brothers and sisters cannot indict God for their quandary, though, James does point to God as having opened the way out. His theological narrative includes four kernels, or nodes, that order the nature of faithful life before God and also map the way of human transformation as it moves from creation by means of God's word to consummation by means of that same word, the true word. This is the good news by which God's people are enabled to pattern their lives after God's fidelity, to love God, and to practice "devotion that is pure and unsullied in God the Father's eyes" (1:27).

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[29] Cf., e.g., P.H. Davids, *The Epistle of James. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1982) 89–90; M. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz nach dem Jakobusbrief. Eine Studie zu seiner soteriologischen und ethischen Konzeption* (SUNT 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1998) 41–100; Cheung, *Genre*, 86–87. For "true word," cf. Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15. On the conversionary image of "(new) birth," see John 3:3, 7; 1 Pet 1:3, 23; 2:2; Titus 3:5 (see especially 1 Pet 1:23–24, which parallels Jas 1:10–11, 18 in its use of Isa 40: "having been given new birth not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God—since 'all humanity is like grass and all human glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' This is the word that was proclaimed to you as good news").

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The Fruits without the Roots? Postmodern Group-Identity in the Light of Biblical Anthropology

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Abstract: The origins of modern western societies are indubitably rooted in Judeo-Christian values that generated a unique form of civilization over the course of almost two-thousand years. These values have as their core-belief that humans are created in the image of God. This notion deeply influenced views on human identity and on human rights. Since the rise of modernity, these religious roots of the western world-view have eroded gradually as a consequence of secularization. While society increasingly became cut off from its own roots, the fruits of the former world-view were still accepted as desirable. However, emerging post-modernity appears to be in the process of not only losing the roots, but also rejecting the fruits of Judeo-Christian values. As a consequence, human identity is evermore perceived as consisting of – often conflicting – group-identities. The aim of this study is to discover whether biblical anthropology can shed light on the functions of groups within a given society. Being aware of the fact that the way how ancient Israel dealt with minority groups and how this is reflected within the Hebrew Bible is not automatically applicable for present-day societies, we still might be able to glean insights for our present world. In order to attain such, this study first analyzes shortly the post-modern societal situation pertaining to group-identities. Subsequently, the focus will be on how Israel's self-understanding as "chosen people" is approached critically by some parts within the Old Testament. Following that, the study concentrates on how concrete social and religious minority groups were viewed: the sojourners, the poor, the slaves. Within this approach also the "sons of the prophets" and the Rechabites will be reviewed. The study suggests that the Christian church might have an own alternative narrative within a postmodern world by emphasizing that identity should have a transcendent side, by seeing that the individual is the proper level of identity, and by proclaiming that individuals are called to function with responsibility within communities.

Keywords: minority groups in the Old Testament, sojourners, slaves, the poor, "sons of the prophets," Rechabites, biblical anthropology, modernism, postmodernism, group identity

1. Roots and Fruits

One can hardly deny that the origins of modern western society are deeply rooted in Judeo-Christian values. This generated a unique form of civilization over the course of almost two millennia. Judeo-Christian roots provided concrete fruits as to how humans were viewed within created reality in religious, sociological, and juridical respect. This value-system has as its core-belief the conviction that humans are created in the image of God.

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Hence, this notion formed – both consciously and unconsciously – views on human identity. Since the rise of modernity, these religious roots of the western world-view have eroded constantly as a consequence of secularization. While society, thus, gradually became cut off from its own roots, the fruits of its world-view of origin were still accepted as desirable.[1] However, emerging postmodernity appears to have even lost not only the *roots*, but also wants to get rid of the *fruits* of the Judeo-Christian value-system. Human identity has been steadily and stealthily forced into a perceived group-identity mainly based on race and gender, overarched by the notion of victimhood. The aim of this study is to discover whether biblical anthropology can shed light on what is the function of groups within society and whether the Christian church might have an own alternative and attractive narrative without the necessity to immediately conform to the latest fashions in world-views.

2. The Current Situation

When we take a look at some of the overarching lines within church history, it appears that the church, during almost all her existence has attempted to throw light on the socio-cultural situation in which Christians found themselves. This is, of course, an honorable endeavor, yet not without its own dangers. Since, after all, there always lurks the danger of going somewhat or totally along with the mainstream of a culture. Whereas the *"ichthys"*[2] that is alive should swim against the stream.

Thus, many bad things can be said about the church in general and about Christians in particular. They even may be true. Either partly or totally. Yet, it were these strange new communities in the Greco-Roman society, that were perceived as endangering the social coherence of civil society, that actually were providing a new bond for connecting people.[3] Not based anymore on rigid loyalty to the Emperor for whom you had to sacrifice yourself, but on the loving loyalty to a heavenly Lord who sacrificed himself for them. Few people were caring for the poor in the Roman Empire. But Christians did. Few people were willing to care for sick people. Yet Christians cared. An outbreak of the plague in the Roman Empire usually made the rich and healthy people to run for the hills. Who would be so foolish as to stay and nurse the sick and bury the dead? There were those crazy Christians – and many of them paid with their lives.

And slowly but steadily these small communities that considered themselves to be a kind of "intersections" between heaven and earth, changed society. I know – some call the Constantinian shift the original sin of the church. After all, from then on, followers of the Messiah were no longer persecuted, and for many people it became expedient to pose as Christians. Yet what should the poor church have said or done differently? "Please, Emperor, be so kind as to continue to persecute us, and please do not become a Christian"?[4] This view that the church from then on could do nothing else than obey its political masters is plainly wrong.[5] Quite the opposite, the church showed that she was able to speak truth to power, which is one of the activities of the Holy Spirit inside the church,[6] as illustrated by the famous case of Bishop Ambrose forcing Emperor Theodosius to do penance after his massacre in Thessalonica.[7] What was less obvious in this political and cultural shift, was that Christianity had succeeded in sensitizing society for the poor, the sick, and the handicapped.

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[1] Credits for the wordplay on "roots" and "fruits" go to N.T. Wright, who used it – if I remember well – in one of his lectures.

[2] The Greek word "ἰχθύς," ("fish") and its depiction became an ancient Christian symbol, based on the acrostic "Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Ὑιὸς Σωτήρ" ("Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior").

[3] For a detailed analysis of the theological place of Christianity within the religious world of the Roman Empire, see N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 4; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2013) 1330–1353.

This concern for people in need was based on the biblical notion that humans are created in the image of God. This theological notion implied that in the sight of God all humans are equal. And the church tried to implement that. At least in theory. But often in practice as well, although the implementation might not have always been perfect. Nevertheless, this attitude to humanity became so much embedded in western culture that it became – as it were subconsciously – part of the approach of governments and secular social institutions. However, with the gradual change towards postmodernism, other kinds of groups came into view. Currently, the emphasis is put on groups based on either gender or skin-color. Interestingly, these groups center themselves around immutable biological traits. This, in itself, is not so shocking, as it consists of a new form of a very old phenomenon, namely tribalism. Moreover, it leads to a new kind of victim mentality, giving "advantages" to people who belong to a group that is seen as being discriminated against. These groups even call themselves "communities" as if sharing biological traits automatically will lead to a feeling of belonging together. They are called identity-groups, which might be a paradoxical designation, as if identity hinges solely on these rather trivial traits. Even more victim-points can be scored, if one belongs at the same time within several of these discriminated minorities, which is called intersectionalism.[8] E.g. someone possibly can – let's say – be a black-trans-woman, which places such a person automatically in three different identity-groups at the same time. The shocking part in all these postmodern versions of tribalism is that this is in fact a form of cultural regression, because a *grosso modo* Judeo-Christian value-system was actually the *victory over tribalism*. After all, the Judeo-Christian worldview locates someone's identity not in being part of a group, but in having permission to see oneself as a unique person, created in the image of God. This uniqueness of all of us in relation to the Creator-God leads to being responsible, in the literal sense as well, meaning that with our existence we are challenged to *respond* to the God who is our Creator and Redeemer.

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[4] Cf. N.T. Wright, "The Truth of the Gospel and Christian Living," M.J. Borg – N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus. Two Visions* (New York: HarperCollins 1999) 219–220.

[5] Cf. N.T. Wright, "God and Caesar, Then and Now," *The Character of Wisdom. Essays in Honour of Wesley Carr* (eds. S. Lowe – M. Percy) (London: Routledge 2016) 166–167.

[6] See John 16:8, the Spirit, when he comes, "will convict (ἐλέγξει) the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment (ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ κρίσεως)".

[7] See e.g. S. Doležal, "Rethinking a Massacre: What Really Happened in Thessalonica and Milan in 390?," *Eirene* 50/1–2 (2014) 89–107.

[8] Currently, the intersectional approach is not solely a colloquially fashionable term, but is also present in biblical scholarship, see e.g. M.J. Smith – J.Y. Choi (eds.), *Minoritized Women Reading Race and Ethnicity. Intersectional Approaches to Constructed Identity and Early Christian Texts* (Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts; Lanham, MD: Lexington 2020). To me, it seems, however, that such intersectional terminology, e.g. "white supremacists," "minoritizing," "ethnicizing," "deforming effects of whiteness," "the patriarchy" and the like are read into the ancient texts. Moreover, most of these terms are neologisms and their value or truth can be disputed. As a result, this intersectional approach in biblical scholarship gives to me the impression of an echo chamber, not much allowing

Thus, we can state that the current situation of emphasizing group-identity has its roots in Judaism and Christianity. After all, it was through Christianity that societies learnt to pay attention to everyone who was oppressed. Yet at the same time, it is a *deviation* from Judaism and Christianity, as a result of wanting to leave God out of the equation. This easily leads to postmodern forms of tribalism, something that Christianity intended to abolish.

It is, therefore, interesting to pay attention to how the Old and the New Testaments handle peoples' belonging to a group or different groups. Of course with the disclaimer that a biblical *description* not automatically equals a *prescription*; in other words, we cannot jump carelessly from a biblical *is* to a present-day *ought*. Yet with that important warning in mind, the way how the place of minority groups is reflected upon within biblical literature may give insightful views that may help us to come to grips with comparable issues within our own societies.

3. The Old and New Testaments on Groups and Group-Identity

3.1. The Chosen People

Superficially viewed, one would expect especially the Hebrew Bible to be a perfect candidate for promoting and sustaining group-identity, moreover a group-identity of the rather privileged kind. After all, the Israelites could consider themselves to be the chosen people, thus being different from all others. However, it may be a doubtful honor to be singled out to form the vanguard in a battle with enemies. Add to that the fact that to be chosen by no other than *God* implies you will be judged according to divinely high standards of righteousness. Therefore, in hindsight, being God's chosen people is perhaps a privilege, yet not the most enviable one.[9] In other words, the word "privilege" has to rhyme with the word "responsibility."

Seen from a biblical-theological viewpoint, Israel's election is nowhere grounded in their moral superiority or whatever other excellence. The book of Deuteronomy makes

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in a word from outside the adopted stance that almost every relationship in society is power-driven. Yet this should remind us that any scholarly system runs the risk to become deaf for correction.

[9] Being elected can also lead to isolation, not only of a people, but also of the individual. See H.W. Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments* (Munich: Kaiser 1973) 316–320.

clear that Israel's election is solely based on God's love and on God's being faithful to his promise made to the patriarchs.[10] Thus, according to the theology of Deuteronomy, this "elected group" finds its identity *outside* of the group's boundaries, namely in the God who chose them. As soon as this group collectively forgets its *externally rooted identity*, it changes into nothing more than a run-of-the-mill nation. In the same vein, some of the Old Testament prophets make shockingly clear that God can as well choose other nations. There is no inherent difference between peoples, as Amos emphasizes, "'Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, people of Israel?' declares[11] YHWH." Moreover, the prophet audaciously employs Exodus-language to convey God's message: "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt" – so far so biblical, but then he continues with "and the Philistines from Caphtor[12] and the Arameans from Kir?"[13] The book of Jonah apparently has the same message, relating how the archenemy Nineveh repents, hoping that God will have compassion and turn away[14] from his plans.[15]

Amos's prophecy obviously implies that many in the Northern Kingdom connected their identity to being a member of the chosen people. In light of the prosperous economic circumstances and the relatively calm geopolitical situation under King Jeroboam II, this attitude is perhaps understandable. Yet soon there will loom high the shadow of the Assyrian Empire with its kings Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II. In these seemingly comfortable circumstances, Amos's prophecy intends to wake up his listeners from this dangerous dream. After all, as soon as the relation with YHWH and righteous behavior are left behind, such appeal to being the chosen people as a group-identity becomes an empty shell.

Much like Amos in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, so Jeremiah, years later, fought against a similar attitude in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The inhabitants of Jerusalem apparently were convinced that they would suffer no harm, because their capital had God himself present in its midst. As a consequence, they would be protected against all harm. Yet Jeremiah has to declare that they deceived themselves by their saying repeatedly, "This is the temple of YHWH, the temple of YHWH, the temple of YHWH."[16] This kind of trust as if a sacred building automatically contains God's presence is completely misplaced. To prove his point, Jeremiah announces that the sanctuary will be destroyed, just as once the Tabernacle in Siloh was destroyed.[17] This dire prediction was enough for the priests and the cult-prophets to seize Jeremiah and to pronounce a death threat against him.[18] Before long, the prophet Ezekiel has a vision in which he sees that God's throne is a mobile throne. He sees how God is moving out of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, leaving the temple as nothing more than an empty building. Idolatry, immorality, and social injustice corrode the essence of being elected.

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[10] Deut 7:7–8.

[11] Here, the prophetic formula "נְאֻם־יְהוָה" is used.

[12] Cf. Deut 2:23; Jer 47:4.

[13] Amos 9:7.

[14] Interestingly, the language of "conversion" is used here for God, "יָשׁוּב וְנִחַם הָאֱלֹהִים". Cf. Jer 26:3.

[15] Jonah 3:6–9.

[16] Jer 7:4.

[17] Jer 7:12–14; 26:6.

[18] Jer 26:7–15. Jeremiah is only saved by the elders who remember that the prophet Micah also prophesied against the temple, without this being a reason, back then, for King Hezekiah to condemn him to death,

It, thus, becomes obvious that election is rooted in God's love and in his faithfulness. This election elicits humans to act accordingly. As soon as these roots of the covenant bear no fruits, any appeal to a "group-identity" becomes futile. In other words, being God's chosen people finds its identity only in the relationship with God and in the fulfilment of how God intends to guarantee life. Looking for identity in the group of the elected itself, is like trying to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps or attempting to moor a ship by throwing its anchor into its own cargo hold.

We should also pay attention to the fact that the Old Testament encompasses passages conveying that membership of God's chosen people was not an exclusive right, connected to genetic descent.[19] Non-Israelites were also allowed to participate in Israel, on condition that they kept the rules.[20] The Torah, thus, seems not to bother that much about "blood" or descent. It was only in post-exilic times that group-identity appears to have become more strictly maintained.[21] Yet this change in behavior most probably must be viewed against the backdrop of the exile. Factually, the exile never properly ended, since many Jews stayed in the diaspora. The pressure to assimilate must have been relatively high in Hellenistic times, which strengthened for some of the groups among Israel the need to emphasize their ethnic identity. However, the flipside of the coin of strictly observing the rules of the Torah as identity-markers, was that Jewish identity was also met with contempt or even hatred in the Greco-Roman empire.[22]

It is, therefore, too easy to see Israel's view on being chosen by God as solely privilege-based. Israel as a people was not completely sealed off for newcomers. Moreover, according to the above-mentioned theological approaches from the book of Deuteronomy and the messages of the prophets Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, being elected was neither self-evident nor solely located in genetic descent, let alone based on the presence of YHWH's

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Jer 26:16–19. However, a contemporary of Jeremiah, called Uriah, prophesied in a similar way, subsequently received death threats from King Jehoiakim, became afraid, fled to Egypt, where he was fetched by soldiers of Jehoiakim, who brought him back to Jerusalem where he was put to death.

[19] It should also be noted that Israel was genetically connected to its neighbors in many ways, see e.g. L. Köhler, *Der hebräische Mensch. Eine Skizze* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1980) 5–6.

[20] According to Lev 24:22, the same laws applied to native Israelites and sojourners in their midst. Sojourners were also allowed to participate in the celebration of Pesach, if they kept the rules for this religious festival, Num 9:14.

[21] E.g. Ezra sending away pagan spouses, Ezra 10:10–44. The rules of the Qumran sect may also fall into this category, see 1QS, F. García Martínez – E.J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill 2005) I, 68–99. Cf. 1Q28a, *ibidem*, 98–103.

[22] This happened despite the fact that for outsiders in antiquity it was not always obvious who was a Jew and who was not. See S.J.D. Cohen, "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?," *Diasporas in Antiquity* (eds. S.J.D. Cohen – E.S. Frerichs) (Brown Judaic Studies 288; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1993) 1–46.

temple in Jerusalem. It was always meant to be a *relational* category, having its roots in God's love and faithfulness. As soon as being elected was severed from faithfulness to God's covenant and from social justice, the whole responsibility of being chosen turned against them.

3.2. Minority Groups

Among Old Testament Israel were several groups that can be considered as minority-groups. The main distinctions for these groups were either social or religious, or a combination of both. The poor, the non-native sojourners, and the slaves among Israel occur as separate categories of concern in the Hebrew Bible. These were socially discernable groups, and often the poor and the strangers are mentioned together. It is possible that also the so-called "sons of the prophets" were not mainly a religiously, but a socially distinct group as well. A probably mainly religiously distinct group were the so-called Rechabites. How does the Old Testament deal with these minorities?

3.3. The Sojourners

The semi-assimilated stranger in Israel (גֵּר) received explicit legal protection.[23] They usually lived permanently among Israel, without completely integrating. Being such a "sojourner" was not necessarily a permanent state, as the biblical narratives give examples of these strangers becoming full members of the Israelite community.[24] However, one can imagine that as long as these foreigners stayed more or less separated, their position as "aliens" must have been more vulnerable, as they depended on the goodwill of the locals, hence the protecting prescriptions in the Torah.[25] As long as these "strangers" were not in any sense hostile, they were not only tolerated, but also positively protected. These laws are unique within the Ancient Near Eastern cultures; so far, no parallels have been found outside of Israel.[26]

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[23] The Old Testament makes a difference between the semi-assimilated "sojourner" (גֵּר, also called "תּוֹשָׁב," "dweller, resident" in some texts) and the non-assimilated "stranger" (זָר; נָכְרִי / נֵכָר), who was often seen as being hostile and whose ethics and culture had to be avoided, or were enemies from foreign countries, see e.g. Ezek 11:9 "וְנָתַתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד־זָרִים," cf. 28:7.10; 30:12; 31:12; 39:23. Cf. P. Jenei, "Strategies of Stranger Inclusion in the Narrative Traditions of Joshua–Judges: The Cases of Rahab's Household, the Kenites and the Gibeonites," *OTE* 32/1 (2019) 128–131. The semi-assimilated strangers were, much as the second-class citizens, not exempt from possible conscription for forced labor, see P. Jenei, "Subjugating and Exploiting the Second-Class Population of the Ancient Israelite State: The Case of Forced Labour (מַס) in Light of the Population Economy of Ancient Israel," *JNSL* 45/1 (2019) 64–65.

[24] See e.g. Jenei, "Strategies of Stranger Inclusion."

[25] It is forbidden to oppress strangers, they must rest from labor like all of Israel on the Sabbath, they are allowed to live from leftovers on the fields and from a three-yearly tithe of the harvest of the Israelites, they can participate in religious festivals, see Exod 22:20; 23:9; Deut 14:29; 16:11.14; 23:8; 24:14.17.19–21; 26:11–13. There are also situations in which actions towards sojourners are less strict, e.g. when it is forbidden to sell the meat of an animal that died by itself to Israelites, yet it may be sold to strangers, see Deut 14:21. Interestingly, even the visionary geographical division of the "new Israel" in Ezek 47:13–23 pays attention to the rights of strangers, see Ezek 47:22–23.

[26] Protection for the widow, the orphan, and the poor are not uncommon in the Ancient Near East; the inclusion of the "sojourner" into this group is only found in the Old Testament, see Jenei, "Strategies of Stranger Inclusion," 134–135.

Even based on the biblical narratives we can conclude that the position of strangers outside of Israel was always a precarious one. We can think of Abraham sojourning in Egypt,[27] or Lot residing in Sodom.[28] Moreover, even spending time in another environment among fellow-countrymen was not always safe, as the end of the book of Judges testifies in the narrative about the Levite and his concubine.[29]

We can be tempted to praise the New Testament for outbidding the Old Testament in making clear that we should not only have love for vulnerable groups in society, but even for our enemies.[30] However, love for enemies is not completely strange to the Old Testament. Its Wisdom literature instructs us to feed a hungry enemy.[31] Not only Wisdom literature with its possibility of drawing an ideal that is too far from everyday reality, but also Old Testament narrative literature applies this same principle. The Elisha narratives mention how the prophet advised the king to give bread and water to captured Syrian soldiers and then release them.[32]

The most interesting for our theme of group-identity is, however, the *motivation* behind these laws. The prescriptions in the Torah forbidding the oppression of strangers are motivated by the fact that Israel should remember that they had first-hand experience of what it is to live as a stranger in another culture.[33] The other reason mentioned in the narrative of Gen 20:11 by Abraham when defending his white lie of his wife being his sister is, "I thought there is surely no fear of God in this place,[34] and thus they might kill me because of my wife." Within a situation of brutal social Darwinism, "fear of God" is the main factor behind ethical behavior towards strangers.[35] In any event, the group identity of the "strangers" and their being worthy of protection is located not within the group itself, but in the relational element, both the relation of their being fellow-humans and in the relation towards God whom they should "fear."

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[27] Gen 12:10–20. Similar narratives are told about Abraham and Isaac dwelling in Gerar, Gen 20:1–18; 26:1–11.

[28] Gen 19:1–11.

[29] Judg 19:10–30. The narrative explicitly relates that the protagonists decided to spend the night not in Jebus, which was a city of non-Israelites, but in the Israelite Gibeah (19:10). The narrator probably suggests between the lines that their spending the night among foreigners might have been safer than among their own kinsfolk, thus emphasizing with the book's returning refrain how low Israel had sunk in those days when "there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes." (Judg 21:25, cf. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1).

[30] Matt 5:43–48.

[31] Prov 25:21–22, "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. And if your enemy is thirsty, give him water to drink. Because this is how you place burning charcoals on his head; and YHWH will reward you." This proverb is quoted by the apostle Paul in Rom 12:20, "*ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν πεινᾷ ὁ ἐχθρός σου, ψώμιζε αὐτόν· ἐὰν διψᾷ, πότιζε αὐτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν ἄνθρακας πυρὸς σωρεύσεις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.*"

[32] 2 Kgs 6:8–23. Cf. Rom 12:21, "*μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.*"

[33] See Exod 22:20; 23:9; Lev 19:33–34; Deut 10:19; 23:8.

[34] Gen 20:11, "אֵין־יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה."

[35] Cf. Deut 10:19–20, where the command to fear God is given right after the instruction to love sojourners.

3.4. The Poor and the Slaves

In the Old Testament, there are many passages about the protection of poor people or slaves. Who happened to be poor was reminded that whatever they experienced, God would not forget them.[36] Moreover, the Torah provided a plethora of laws aiming at social justice for the poor,[37] and a humane treatment of slaves, something that was unique in the Ancient Near East.[38] The fact that these laws were not always applied becomes manifest through the exhortations of the prophets.[39]

Neither the Old Testament, nor the New Testament strives to terminate poverty or to abolish slavery. The biblical authors accept that certain circumstances are too complex to solve at a given moment, and that forms of inequality[40] always will exist.[41] Abolishing slavery would have been something comparable to fighting for the abolition of the use of electricity or money in the modern world. That is why the apostle Paul accepts the fact of slavery, but at the same time declares slaves and their owners to be equal for God.[42] In the long run, his approach, combined with his letter to Philemon with the concrete request to give the runaway slave Onesimus his freedom, formed a ticking bomb under the institution of slavery in the western world. Moreover, the same scriptures also abundantly emphasize that everyone is obliged to soften the fate of anyone who is in dire straits.[43] The Early Church maintained that attitude in its care for the poor.[44]

Again, the incentive to care for the poor and for a humane treatment of slaves[45] in the Old Testament is based upon the fact that Israel has to remember that they had been in bondage in Egypt; it is only thanks to the love of their God that they are free. This collective memory of slavery and poverty must open their hearts towards poor people among them.[46] In the New Testament, this readiness to help the poor is underlined by the fact that the Messiah became poor for humans in order to make them rich.[47] In the New Testament, too, the instruction to do good deeds is not restricted merely to actions towards fellow-Christians, but reaches out to all.[48] Viewed biblically, care for the poor is rooted not in something inherent to that group, but in something transcending the group, namely the relationship to God.[49] Thus, honoring the poor is honoring God.[50]

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[36] E.g. Ps 9:12; 10:12.

[37] E.g. Exod 23:3; Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut 10:17–19; 14:28–29; 15:7–11. Apart from warnings not to oppress the poor and to be impartial in legal cases, the poor had certain privileges: they were allowed to glean in the fields and vineyards, while the owner was obliged to leave something of the harvest and the fruits for the poor and the sojourner (Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut 24:19, cf. Ruth 2–3). They also had rights to sabbatical fruits (Exod 23:10–11; Lev 25:6). The tithe of the third year was for the poor and needy (Deut 14:28–29; 26:12–14). They were allowed – as everyone else – to pluck from vineyard or grain field, but only proportionally: plucking by hand and not collecting in any bucket or vessel (Deut 23:25; cf. Luke 6:1). For an overview, see C.U. Wolf, "Poor," *IDB* III, 843–44.

[38] See I. Mendelsohn, "Slavery in the OT," *IDB* IV, 383–391.

[39] See, *inter alia*, Isa 1:23; Ezek 16:49; 22:7; Amos 2:6–7; 4:1; Mic 2:2; Mal 3:5.

[40] Within the church, equality is, however, one of the goals to be attained, see 2 Cor 8:13–15.

[41] See Deut 15:11; Matt 26:11; par. Mark 14:7; John 12:8.

[42] See e.g. Ef 6:5–9; Col 3:22–4:1; 1 Tim 6:1–2; cf. 1 Pet 2:18.

[43] High expectations were put on the Messianic king, see Ps 22:26; 72:2.4; Prov 29:14.

[44] See e.g. Acts 2:45; 4:34: 11:29; Gal 2:10; Jas 2:1–7. In 2 Cor 8–9, the apostle Paul writes amply about the collection (already mentioned in his earlier letter, 1 Cor 16:1–3) for the Jerusalem church with its many poor members, meanwhile masterly avoiding the word "money."

[45] See, *inter alia*, Exod 21:1–11.20–21.26–27. Jer 34:8–22 emphasizes that God took the obliged manumission of slaves seriously.

[46] See e.g. Deut 5:15; 16:12.

3.5. The "Sons of the Prophets" and the Rechabites

There are two other groups to be considered in ancient Israel, both of them have a religious and a social aspect to them, namely the so called "sons of the prophets" (בְּנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים)[51] and the Rechabites.

The expression "sons of the prophets" is obviously not referring to physical descent, as if these persons were in a literal way the children of a prophet. The Hebrew Bible usually refers to them as a group, and apparently, some of them were living together under the guidance of a prophet who was their leader.[52] Therefore, the exegetical consensus is that they were a kind of "prophetic guild" or perhaps a "prophetic school."[53] In any event, they seem to have been a different group than the cult-prophets connected to a temple or a royal court.[54] The expression "sons of the prophets" only occurs in the books of Kings and within the context of the so-called Elijah and Elisha cycles.[55] Notably, these "sons of the prophets" appear to have been living in relative poverty.[56] This might seem logical: Who dedicates his life to prayer, prophecy, and theology has little time left to work for a living, and consequently will be as poor as a church mouse. Yet what if it was the other way around? They may have been people who had become debt-slaves, who had lost their property and their land. In order to solve their problems, they turned to a leader-prophet, and formed a kind of communities, living together, helping each other.[57] We cannot know for sure, but this picture fits well into the social situation of the mid-ninth century BCE. In that case, the "sons of the prophets" were mainly a social category and formed a living accusation against a social order that had abandoned the laws of the Torah and did not heed prophetic exhortations.

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[47] See 2 Cor 8:9.

[48] See Gal 6:10, "Ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως."

[49] The Document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on biblical anthropology typifies the care for any disenfranchised group as an act of solidarity among humans, see Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man? A Journey Through Biblical Anthropology* (trans. F. O'Fearghail – A. Graffy) (London: Darton, Longman & Todd 2021) 244–247. As such, the concept of solidarity is useful, since it generates a possible dialogue between the Judeo-Christian traditions and other worldviews. However, arguing merely from solidarity as a requirement in inter-human relationships runs the risk of leaving out the added value of the biblical tradition embedding this requirement in the relationship with God as Creator and Savior.

[50] Cf. Matt 25:44–45.

[51] See 2 Kgs 2:3; 4:1.38; 5:22; 6:1.

[52] See 2 Kgs 6:1, mentioning the "sons of the prophets" living under the charge of the prophet Elisha.

[53] See B.D. Napier, "Sons of prophets," *IDB* IV, 426.

[54] See e.g. 1 Kgs 18:4.19; 22:6; 2 Kgs 23:2; Jer 26:7–8.11.

[55] 1 Kgs 20:35 is placed within the Elijah-Elisha cycles, although there is no textual indication that the "certain man from among the 'sons of the prophets'" is in any way connected to a group of prophets around Elijah or Elisha. All the other occurrences are, as regards content, connected to Elisha, see 2 Kgs 2:3.5.7.15; 4:1.38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1. The only occurrence in the singular is in Amos 7:14, where Amos states: "I am not a prophet, nor am I a 'son of a prophet'(בֶּן־נָבִיא)." This double reference may indicate that the expression "son of a prophet" most probably must be understood as "member of a prophetic group," otherwise Amos would have phrased a tautology.

[56] Cf. 2 Kgs 4:1–7.38–44; 5:22; 6:1–7.

The other socially and religiously distinguishable group were the so-called Rechabites. The book of Jeremiah is practically the only source of information about them.[58] They had a nomadic lifestyle among sedentary Israel. Moreover, they consumed no alcohol. They considered a certain Jonadab ben Rechab[59] as the founder of the group, who is known from the book of Kings as a fervent fighter for Jahwism and supporter of Jehu's coup against the Omride dynasty.[60] Among Israel, there was no pressure to follow these stricter rules for life, yet they received prophetic praise because they even kept the precepts of their ancestor, a mere human being, while the other Israelites did not obey the commandments of their God.[61]

Even these groups at the intersection of the religious and the social dimensions are not rooted only within these groups themselves. The "sons of the prophets" may have organized themselves around a prophet who acted as their leader, because in this way they took recourse to the God of the prophet. The Rechabites may have been conservative in maintaining a nomadic lifestyle, which partly may have originated from their belief in YHWH. As a group, they were tolerated, even praiseworthy, yet no one was obliged to join their movement.

Looking back to how Israel dealt with groups, either privileged or disenfranchised, a picture arises in which groups in one way or another had a religious dimension to them. This means that members of a given group never received their identity merely through belonging to one or more social groups, but always through their relationship to God who created them in his own image. As soon as anyone would try to find an identity immanently as part of a minority-group without this transcendent connection to the Creator, the group itself will almost inevitably risk to become a substitute religion. As a consequence, this fragile identity must be defended at all costs.

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[57] Cf. H. Schulte, "The End of the Omride Dynasty: Social-Ethical Observations on the Subject of Power and Violence," *Semeia* 66 (1994) 140–141.

[58] See Jer 35.

[59] The question remains why they are called Rechabites, when Jonadab was the founder of the group. A clue may be found in 1 Chr 2:55, where three families are mentioned belonging to the tribe of the Kenites, "who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab." This may imply that the "house of Rechab" (cf. Jer 35:2–3) was already an existing tribe among the Kenites. The Kenites were a semi-nomadic tribe, living at the borders of Canaan. According to some scholars, they were the original worshipers of YHWH, which may explain the fact that Jonadab was a zealous supporter of Jehu's extermination of the Baal cult. See M.H. Pope, "Rechab," *IDB* IV, 14–16.

[60] See 2 Kgs 10:15–27.

[61] Jer 35:12–19.

4. Group Identity in Postmodern Societies

Social groups and their designations within the Hebrew Bible are notoriously difficult to describe in modern sophisticated anthropological terminology and models.[62] Let alone by applying to these groups in the Ancient Near East a modern concept of "identity."[63] Ancient Israelites probably would have been baffled when asked what their identity was. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to approach the ancient text of the Bible with a modern concept, as long as we do not put an equal mark between then and now. Thus, if we try to get an impression about social groups mentioned in the Old Testament and about what their identity was based upon, a rather clear picture arises. In all cases their – what we nowadays would call – "identity" was embedded *externally*, and never in the group itself. These groups, often minorities, deserved to be reckoned with based upon their relationship to YHWH who created and delivered them.

Postmodern identity policies, however, seem to base a group's identity *within itself*. This leads to paradoxical situations. Interestingly, postmodern group identities are often based on skin color, sex, or gender; traits that are biologically-based immutable characteristics. Of course, social constructivism sees any of these traits usually as a social construct, in which for example skin color is described as "whiteness" or "blackness" and refers rather to a state of mind or to adherence to certain political ideologies than to biology.[64] This implies that according to social constructivism, any person can identify as anything, independent from biological facts. To my mind, this makes little sense, except in a Wonderland where Humpty Dumpties randomly make words to mean what they choose them to mean.[65] This, however, does not alter the fact that in postmodern group-identity victimhood plays the leading role. Paradoxically, such an identity group has to fight for the abolition of that what makes its members victims. Yet at the same time, in order for the group to keep the privileges offered by being a victim, its victimhood must be continued. This is why victimhood *proclaims* need for change, but has no incentive for *real* change. It is all "rights" and no "responsibilities." Such internally opposite directions inevitably must lead to resentment. A resentment that all too easily can escalate into violence.

Even seen empirically, it seems that humans always have to *believe* in something. As soon as the connection to God is severed, emptiness and boredom fills the human spirit. The *horror vacui* of the human mind instantly refills itself with surrogate religion.[66] The New Testament "rule" for this process is aptly expressed as, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." This implies that anything offered to Caesar – or whatever earthly phenomenon – that only ought to be offered to God, makes a god out of "Caesar."[67] The Old Testament "rule" about the consequences of creation's deification is even more alarming. Namely, idolatry turns humans made in God's image into *sub-human* beings. The Psalms give a vivid description of this rule, when describing idols of silver and gold. They have mouths, but do not speak;[68] eyes, but do not see; ears, but do not hear; hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk.[69] And then follows the appalling consequence: "Those who make them, will become like them, just as anyone who trusts in them."[70] Having a mouth, but not any longer being able to speak truth. Having eyes, but turning away from the suffering of fellow-humans. Having ears, but not hearing cries for help. Having hands, but being powerless or not willing to help. Having feet, but walking away from those in need. Idolatry eats away our humanity. Exactly because of the fact that God does not need a man-made image, for God has already his image representing him in his creation.[71]

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[62] See e.g. J.W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Growing Points in Theology; Oxford: Blackwell 1978) 86–101.

[63] Even for the church fathers and for medieval theologians, the word "*identitas*" would have meant simply "sameness" and not so much more. See e.g. P. Thom, *The Logic of the Trinity. Augustine to Ockham* (New York: Fordham University Press 2012) 67, 213, 227.

[64] Hence, paradoxical political statements on social media addressing a person with dark skin color who disagrees with a given political stance in words like, "You are not black!" or "You are the black face of white supremacy!"

[65] See L. Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass. And What Alice Found There* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications 1999) 57.

5. New Routes for the Church in Uncharted Postmodern Territory

So, what can be the role of the church in this uncharted postmodern territory? The Christian church – in many of its flavors – seems to be keen to please the surrounding culture by buying into postmodern views on group-identity. It is laudable that Christians want to be relevant. However, embracing postmodern cultural narratives makes the church just one of the many social movements and will obscure precisely that what gives the church its added value. Our current situation is quite similar to what Jesus observed: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men claim it for themselves."[72] In other words, people leaped onto the band-wagon of the gospel and insisted that the kingdom of God would come in the way *they* envisaged. I think we can agree that some ideologies concentrating on group-identities have real compassion. Yet, why should the church leap onto the band-wagon of any ideology, if the church has to offer much more value?

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[66] As already observed by John Calvin (*The Institutes of the Christian Religion* [trans. H. Beveridge] [New York: Pacific Publishing Studio 2011] I.11.8) in his famous phrase, "the human mind is, so to say, a perpetual factory of idols (*hominis ingenium perpetuam, ut ita loquar, esse idolorum fabricam*)." The Latin quotation is from the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, see J.-W. Baum – E. Cunitz – E.W.E. Reuss (eds.), *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia* (Corpus Reformatorum 30; Braunschweig: Schwetschke 1864) II, 80.

[67] Matt 22:21.

[68] These remarks are the more interesting when considering that the Israelites most probably must have known about the Babylonian ritual of the "opening of the mouth" or the "washing of the mouth" of a cult statue; the procedure by which the image was thought to become the real presence of a deity, see M. Dick, "The Mesopotamian 'Washing of the Mouth' (*mīs pī*) or 'Opening of the Mouth' (*pīt pī*) Ritual. (4.32A–C)," *The Context of Scripture*. IV. *Supplements* (ed. K.L. Younger) (Leiden: Brill 2016) 133–144.

[69] Ps 115:3–7; 135:15–17.

[70] Ps 115:8; 135:18.

[71] Gen 1:26–27. There is much exegetical debate about what exactly is the meaning of the expression "image of God," but representing God by mirroring his rule to creation is obviously an important characteristic.

[72] Matt 11:12.

Which is this added value in a postmodern world of identity policies? Much can be said about this, but for now, I will only point to three main themes, based on what we saw represented in the above-mentioned biblical texts.

First, any identity needs a transcendent relationship. When identity is only based on itself, it easily can develop into self-worship and become an idol. Both the Old and the New Testaments suggest that what we would call group-identity has its roots in a relationship to God as Creator and Redeemer.

Second, the proper level of identity is ultimately the individual, and not the group. This is rooted in the unique characteristics and talents of every single human being. Moreover, according to the Old and New Testaments, human responsibility is *personal* responsibility.[73] This means that people cannot be punished for the sins of their ancestors or evil committed by their offspring.

And third, individuals are called to function as part of a community. Since the resurrection of the Messiah and the coming of the Spirit, humans worldwide are invited into a community that is the avant-garde within this old world of a coming new world where heaven and earth will intersect again.

This should be the alternative narrative of the church. As soon as Christianity entirely buys into the postmodern identity policies, chances are that it not only will lose its own identity, but also stops being attractive in a world of ideologies in which there are only other groups to hate, but no God and no neighbor to love.

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[73] This is a unique contribution of the Old Testament within the collective societies of the Ancient Near East, see e.g. Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6; Ezek 18; cf. 2 Cor 5:10.

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Phillip Ray Callaway, *Extending the* Torah. *The Temple Scroll in Modern Research* (Qumranica Mogilanensia 19; Kraków – Mogilany: Enigma 2022). Ss. XX+297. € 60. ISSN 0867-8707. ISBN 978-83-86110-85-8

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Phillip Ray Callaway jest absolwentem Uniwersytetu Emory'ego w Atlancie (GA, USA). Jako stypendysta fundacji Fulbrighta wyjechał w początku lat 80. ubiegłego wieku do Marburga, a potem do Getyngi. Tam prof. Hartmut Stegemann wprowadził go w tajniki badań nad zwojami z Qumran, a zwłaszcza nad Zwojem Świątyni. W rok po obronie pracy doktorskiej Callaway został zaproszony z wykładem do Manchesteru na konferencję poświęconą temu właśnie zwojowi (1987). Tam, jak pisze we wstępie do swej książki, spotkał dr. Zdzisława Kaperę, który zachęcił go do współpracy.

Prezentowana tutaj książka jest dojrzałym owocem tej długoletniej kooperacji. Ponieważ Callaway był zatrudniony nie na uczelni, lecz w szkolnictwie państwowym, ciągle odkładał publikację swego doktoratu. Nagabywany jednak przez Kaperę, po przejściu na emeryturę zakończył wreszcie redakcję książki i oddał ją do wydawnictwa Enigma. Ukazała się ona drukiem na początku roku 2022, na 80. urodziny Z. Kapery, jak zauważył Callaway w dedykacji.

Książka nie jest zwykłym przedrukiem rozprawy doktorskiej sprzed 35 lat; nie miałoby to większego sensu. Autor włączył do niej przepracowaną wersję swoich późniejszych artykułów dotyczących Zwoju Świątyni. Dzięki temu czytelnik otrzymuje do ręki praktyczne narzędzie, informujące o obecnym stanie badań nad tym niezwykłym rękopisem z jedenastej groty (11Q19). Jako nauczyciel klas licealnych Callaway wykazał się talentem popularyzatorskim. Dzięki temu trudna tematyka Zwoju Świątyni staje się pasjonującą lekturą dla średnio przygotowanych czytelników.

Zwój Świątyni (a nie: *Świątynny*; taką poprawną nazwę proponuje Z. Kapera) to najdłuższy z kompletnych zwojów znalezionych w grotach obok Qumran. Prezentuje się on jako bezpośrednie objawienie przekazane Mojżeszowi wprost od Boga. Treść Zwoju Świątyni stanowią nakazy Tory, poszerzone o pewne dodatki prawne, zwłaszcza z dziedziny czystości świątyni; stąd tytuł książki: *Extending the Torah*. Dziś używa się równie ogólnej

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nazwy: „rewritten Bible". Szczególną cechą tego zwoju jest jego charakter pseudoepigraficzny, przy czym mówiącym jest tu sam Bóg.

Brak w tym piśmie słownictwa jawnie sekciarskiego, co świadczy o tym, że Zwój spisano jeszcze przed założeniem osady esseńskiej w Qumran i tutaj przyniesiono go z zewnątrz. 11Q19 wykazuje jednak pokrewieństwo ideowe z grupą tekstów, które były ważne dla tamtejszej wspólnoty (1 Henoch, Jubileusze, Lewi Aramejski czy też Dokument Damasceński). Podobnie jak tamte księgi, Zwój uznaje kalendarz różny od świątynnego (364 dni) i opowiada się za ścisłą interpretacją Tory.

Książka Callawaya składa się z 18 krótkich rozdziałów, z których każdy ma formę artykułu adresowanego do szkolnego audytorium. Nawet tytuły tych rozdziałów są zwięzłe, aby nie odstraszać, lecz zachęcać do lektury. Po przedstawieniu przeglądu treści zwoju 11QTemple (11Q19), Callaway opowiada o swojej przygodzie z tym rękopisem, dzieląc się własną ekscytacją w zetknięciu z pierwszą edycją tekstu. Chodzi o monumentalną pracę izraelskiego oficera i zarazem archeologa Yigaela Yadina. Fascynująca jest opowieść o okolicznościach zdobycia tego zwoju po wojnie 6-dniowej w roku 1967. Odtąd przez 10 lat Yadin przygotowywał *editio princeps* obszernego zwoju, wydane najpierw po hebrajsku (1977), a w kilka lat potem (1983) po angielsku.

Ta właśnie edycja dała początek przygodzie Callawaya z największym zwojem biblioteki z Qumran. Opowiada o tym z pasją we wprowadzeniu (s. 1–6). W kolejnych rozdziałach swej książki (s. 7–188) dokonuje literackiej analizy Zwoju Świątyni i prezentuje kolejne części dokumentu (kol. II: preambuła Przymierza; kol. III–XXIX: sanktuarium i kult; kol. XXX–LXVII: kodeks prawny). Całość książki zamykają trzy krótkie apendyksy (s. 189–205): pierwszy z nich ukazuje Zwój na tle historii rządów hasmonejskich, drugi zestawia *Zwój Świątyni* z treścią innych pism qumrańskich, trzeci wreszcie ukazuje, jak treść Zwoju wiąże się z późniejszymi przepisami Miszny.

Pomysłowym zakończeniem książki jest obszerny rozdział (s. 207–250), omawiający podstawowe monografie na temat Zwoju Świątyni. Poczynając od pierwszych prac Yadina, autor przedstawia tu zarówno materiały z sympozjum w Manchesterze (*Temple Scroll Studies* [ed. G.J. Brooke] [Sheffield: JSOT 1989]), jak i najważniejsze prace nad tym zwojem (J. Maier, M.O. Wise, D.D. Swanson, S.W. Crawford, M. Riska, S.L. Jacobs, L.H. Schiffman, C.D. Elledge, D. Volgger, S. Paganini, B.M. Levinson). Nie mogło też zabraknąć w tym wykazie późniejszych edycji Zwoju Świątyni (E. Qimron – F. García Martínez, 1996; J.H. Charlesworth, 2011; czy wreszcie L.H. Schiffman – A.D. Gross, 2021). Nowsze edycje uwzględniają dodatkowe rękopisy Zwoju Świątyni (11Q20 i 11Q21) czy też jego źródła (4Q524, 5Q21 i 4Q365a).

Końcowa bibliografia (s. 251–274) zawiera wykaz literatury związanej ze Zwojem Świątyni doprowadzony do roku 2021. Jest to wielkie ułatwienie kwerendy, gdyby ktoś chciał śledzić rozwój badań nad tym niezwykłym dokumentem. Całość zamykają dwa indeksy: autorów (s. 275–279) oraz źródeł biblijnych i qumrańskich (s. 280–297).

Książka ukazuje się w serii Qumranica Mogilanensia, zapoczątkowanej przez Kaperę już w roku 1990, a więc zaraz po przemianach społecznych w Polsce. Należy serdecznie pogratulować wydawcy jego niestrudzonej pracy nad popularyzacją badań qumrańskich i ogólnie orientalistycznych w Polsce. Jako długoletni bibliotekarz Instytutu Orientalistyki UJ w Krakowie miał on łatwy dostęp do wydawnictw specjalistycznych i chętnie dzielił się nimi nie tylko ze studentami. Symboliczne jest zdjęcie na okładce prezentowanej tu książki Callawaya: wejście do groty 11 w Qumran okryte jest świeżą zielenią. Może to być znakiem nadziei, że po latach posuchy odżyją u nas badania nad tekstami z Qumran, tak ważne dla studiów biblijnych. „Żywe jest bowiem słowo Boże, skuteczne i ostrzejsze niż wszelki miecz obosieczny…”.

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Marek Parchem (tł. i oprac.), *Targum Neofiti 1. Księga Powtórzonego Prawa. Tekst aramejski – przekład – aparat krytyczny – przypisy* (Biblia Aramejska 5; Lublin: Gaudium 2021). Ss. 458. 75 PLN. ISBN 978-83-7548-370-3 (oprawa twarda)

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Prezentowana książka *Targum Neofiti 1. Księga Powtórzonego Prawa. Tekst aramejski – przekład – aparat krytyczny – przypisy* ukazała się pod koniec 2021 r. Jej autorem jest ks. prof. dr hab. Marek Parchem, kierownik Katedry Filologii, Historii Biblijnej i Literatury Międzytestamentalnej na Wydziale Teologicznym Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, wykładowca w Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym w Pelplinie, absolwent Papieskiego Instytutu Biblijnego w Rzymie, a także Uniwersytetu Hebrajskiego w Jerozolimie. W swoich badaniach zajmuje się literaturą z okresu Drugiej Świątyni i jest autorem wielu artykułów oraz monografii z tej dziedziny. Można wymienić tu chociażby: *Interpretacja Biblii w Qumran i inne studia* (Biblica et Judaica 8; Pelplin: Bernardinum 2020); *Obraz Boga w pismach apokaliptycznych okresu Drugiej Świątyni* (Biblica et Judaica 1; Bydgoszcz: KRD 2013); *Księga Daniela. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Stary Testament 26; Częstochowa: Edycja św. Pawła 2008). Parchem jest również znawcą języka aramejskiego, o czym świadczy opublikowana przez niego pozycja: *Biblijny język aramejski. Gramatyka, kompletne preparacje, słownik* (Biblica et Judaica 5; Pelplin: Bernardinum 2016).

Omawiana publikacja ukazała się w serii Biblia Aramejska i jest częścią projektu wydania krytycznego tekstów targumicznych i ich tłumaczenia z języków oryginalnych na język polski. Dyrektorem i redaktorem naukowym projektu jest ks. prof. dr hab. Mirosław S. Wróbel (KUL). Celem tego przedsięwzięcia jest oddanie do rąk polskiego czytelnika aramejskich przekładów Biblii Hebrajskiej, zwanych targumami. Na to monumentalne, a zarazem nowatorskie dzieło będzie składało się aż kilkanaście tomów. Pierwsza część obejmuje 15 tomów do Pięcioksięgu (*Targum Neofiti 1*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonatana*, *Targum Onkelosa*), kolejne będą dotyczyły targumów do Proroków i Hagiografów. Do tej pory ukazały się 4 tomy *Targumu Neofiti 1* (*Księga Rodzaju*, *Księga Wyjścia*, *Księga Kapłańska*, *Księga Powtórzonego Prawa*), a także tom zerowy: *Wprowadzenie do Biblii Aramejskiej*. Równolegle do edycji krytycznej publikowane są wydania popularne, przeznaczone dla szerszego grona odbiorców, które zawierają jedynie tekst z polskim tłumaczeniem. Warto wspomnieć, że dzieło

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serii Biblia Aramejska zostało wyróżnione przez Stowarzyszenie Wydawców Katolickich nagrodą Feniksa zarówno dla autorów przekładu, jak i dla Wydawnictwa „Gaudium".

Niniejszą książkę otwiera „Słowo ks. prof. Mirosława S. Wróbla" (s. VII–X). Podkreśla on, że dzieło to jest „najstarszym przekładem i komentarzem tekstów świętych dla judaizmu i chrześcijaństwa" (s. VII). Ponadto „stanowi istotne źródło dla badań biblijnych, językoznawczych, paleograficznych, socjologicznych i teologicznych" (s. VII). W dalszej części znajdujemy wprowadzenie autora (s. XI–XXII), w którym przedstawia on ogólną charakterystykę Księgi Powtórzonego Prawa w Biblii Hebrajskiej, techniki translatorskie w TgN Pwt, a następnie uwagi do polskiego przekładu TgN Pwt. Po wstępnych zagadnieniach dotyczących TgN Pwt autor umieścił szczegółowy wykaz skrótów (s. XXIII–XXV), który jest pomocny w korzystaniu z aparatu krytycznego.

Na następnych stronach znajduje się podstawowa część książki, a mianowicie sam tekst targumu. Niewątpliwą zaletą publikacji jest synoptyczny układ tekstu aramejskiego i polskiego. Czytelnik znający język aramejski może z łatwością samodzielnie dotrzeć do oryginalnego tekstu. Ponadto w aparacie krytycznym Parchem uwzględnia różne warianty tekstowe: „marginalne i interlinearne (*Targum Neofiti Marginalia* i *Targum Neofiti Interlinia*), manuskrypty (Vatican, Leipzig, Nürnberg, Paris, Sassoon) oraz teksty z genizy kairskiej (Geniza Targum AA, Br, D, DD, F2)" (s. XXII). Precyzja autora przejawia się także w zasygnalizowaniu miejsc, w których widoczne są poprawki bądź uzupełnienia znajdujące się w tekście oryginalnym, a także w podaniu uwag kopisty. Pomocne są również przypisy odnoszące się do polskiego tekstu targumu. Autor wyjaśnia tam trudniejsze wyrażenia, często odwołując się do innych tekstów biblijnych, rabinicznych bądź pism Józefa Flawiusza. Wielokrotnie przytacza brzmienie tekstu z Biblii Hebrajskiej, by wyraźniej ukazać pojawiające się różnice.

W końcowej części książki zamieszczona jest bibliografia oraz indeksy: autorów, odniesień biblijnych i pozabiblijnych. Dzięki bogatej i aktualnej bibliografii zainteresowany czytelnik będzie mógł dotrzeć do źródeł i opracowań dotyczących Targumu Neofiti 1 i innych targumów.

Tłumaczenie i krytyczne opracowanie omawianego targumu z całą pewnością stanowi cenny wkład w rozwój polskiej biblistyki. Dzięki studiom targumicznym można odkrywać, w jaki sposób były rozumiane i interpretowane święte księgi w czasach, w których żył i działał Jezus. Targumy, które były obecne w liturgii synagogalnej, niewątpliwie ukształtowały mentalność Jezusa i pierwszych chrześcijan. Targum Neofiti 1 do Księgi Powtórzonego Prawa jest przykładem, w jaki sposób interpretowano tę księgę. Zawiera on wiele starożytnych tradycji, które łączą teologię Starego Testamentu z Nowym.

W lekturze omawianej publikacji warto zwrócić uwagę na tekst zawarty w TgN Pwt 6,5. Jest to modlitwa *Szema Izrael*, będąca wyznaniem wiary w jedynego Boga. Do dnia dzisiejszego jest ona jedną z najważniejszych modlitw wyznawców judaizmu, wypowiadaną rano i wieczorem. Targum Neofiti 1 rozbudowuje ten werset i przytacza w tym miejscu rozmowę umierającego Jakuba ze swoimi synami. Interesujące wydaje się, że słowa *Szema Izrael* zostają włożone w usta dwunastu synów Jakuba zgromadzonych wokół umierającego ojca, natomiast sam termin „Izrael" jest odniesiony do Jakuba, który to imię otrzymał od Boga (Rdz 32,29). Zatem dwanaście pokoleń Jakuba tak mówi do swojego ojca: „Posłuchaj nas, Izraelu, nasz ojcze! Pan, Bóg nasz, Pan jest jeden, niech będzie błogosławione imię Jego na wieki wieków!" (s. 85). Ponadto targum dodaje, że wypowiadają one te słowa w „doskonałości serca". Wyrażenie „doskonałe serce" (לבה שלמה) pojawia się trzykrotnie w TgN Pwt (5,29; 6,4; 13,5) i oznacza serce bojące się Boga i przestrzegające wszystkich przykazań Prawa (TgN Pwt 5,29). Jest przeciwieństwem „serca podzielonego" (לבה פליג), które oddaje cześć obcym bóstwom (TgN Rdz 49,2). Stąd też synowie Izraela wyznają wiarę w jedynego Boga z sercem oddanym Bogu, dalekim od bałwochwalstwa. W kolejnym wersecie tekst aramejski parafrazuje przykazanie miłości Boga, mówiąc o miłowaniu pouczeń Prawa Pana „z całego swego serca i z całej swojej duszy oraz całym swoim bogactwem" (s. 87). Targum wielokrotnie używa wyrażenia „miłować pouczenia Prawa Pana" (np. TgN Pwt 6,5; 10,12) na hebrajskie określenie „miłowania Boga". Parchem wyjaśnia we wprowadzeniu, że jest to jedna z technik translatorskich zastosowanych w TgN Pwt. Polega ona na tym, że „jeśli w BH jakaś czynność odnosi się bezpośrednio do Boga, to w TgN jest ona odnoszona do *pouczenia Prawa Pana*" (s. XVIII). Celem tego zabiegu było uniknięcie antropomorfizacji Boga, tak by podkreślić Jego transcendencję. Na uwagę zasługuje również targumiczne wyrażenie „całym swoim bogactwem", które oddaje hebrajską frazę: „całą swoją mocą". Autor zaznacza w przypisie, że „podobna interpretacja pojawia się we wszystkich źródłach palestyńskich" (s. 87) i odsyła czytelnika do właściwych tekstów rabinicznych.

W Targumie Neofiti 1 do Księgi Powtórzonego Prawa można zauważyć koncepcję „świata, który przyjdzie" (עלמא דאתי). Jest ona rozwinięciem idei życia wiecznego, która stopniowo kształtowała się w Biblii Hebrajskiej, a jest żywo obecna w Nowym Testamencie. Przykładowo w Biblii Hebrajskiej w Pwt 22,7 pojawia się życzenie „aby ci się dobrze powodziło i abyś długo żył". Nie ma tu mowy jeszcze o nagrodzie w życiu wiecznym, a jedynie o odpłacie, która dokona się za życia doczesnego. Targum natomiast zmienia przytoczony werset i wyraża wiarę w życie w przyszłym świecie: „aby dobrze wam się powodziło w tym świecie, i przedłużycie dni w świecie, który przyjdzie" (s. 249). Ponadto w TgN Pwt 32,39 pojawia się aluzja do zmartwychwstania: „Ja jestem tym, który sprawia, że żyjący umierają w tym świecie, i który przywraca do życia umarłych w świecie, który przyjdzie" (s. 393). Co więcej, w Targumie Neofiti 1 na określenie piekła używa się terminu „gehenna" (TgN Pwt 32,35). Słowo to ani razu nie pojawia się w Starym Testamencie, ale wielokrotnie występuje w Nowym Testamencie (Mt 5,22.29.30; Mt 10,28; Mt 18,9; Mt 23,15.33; Mk 9,43.45.47; Łk 12,5; Jk 3,6).

Podobne nawiązanie do teologii Nowego Testamentu można zauważyć w TgN Pwt 33,24. Mojżesz błogosławi plemię Aszera słowami: „Błogosławiony spośród synów. W [roku szabatowym] będzie dokonywać pojednania między swoimi braćmi a ich Ojcem, który jest w niebiosach, a [jego] ziemia będzie wytwarzać oliwę jako wodę, i będzie myć swoje stopy w oliwie" (s. 417). To określenie Boga jako Ojca, który jest w niebie (אבוהון דבשמייא), nie pojawia się ani razu w Biblii Hebrajskiej, natomiast jest wielokrotnie stosowane w Nowym Testamencie (np. Mt 6,9; Mt 7,21; Mt 12,50).

Czytając opracowanie Parchema, warto zwrócić uwagę na bardzo częste określenie Boga jako *Memra Adonai* (מימרה דייי), czyli Słowa Pana. Jest to typowy zabieg stosowany w celu uniknięcia antropomorfizacji Boga. Można jednak zauważyć również powiązanie z teologią Ewangelii Janowej. Prolog, mówiący o „Słowie, które było Bogiem" (J 1,1), a także słowa Jezusa: „Ja i Ojciec jedno jesteśmy" (J 10,30), są lepiej zrozumiałe w kontekście *Memra Adonai*, które jest Bogiem, a zarazem jakby odrębnym Bytem. Dzięki temu judeochrześcijanie mogli pogodzić wiarę w Jezusa z żydowskim monoteizmem.

Można byłoby wymienić jeszcze wiele inspirujących przykładów pochodzących z omawianego targumu, ale niech będzie to zachętą do dalszego zgłębiania bogactwa tekstów targumicznych. Pozostaje żywić nadzieję, że godny podziwu profesjonalizm Marka Parchema, a zarazem ogromny wysiłek, który został włożony w przetłumaczenie i opracowanie publikacji, będzie doceniony przez szerokie grono odbiorców. Z całą pewnością dzieło przysłuży się do dalszego rozwoju studiów targumicznych w Polsce, a także budowaniu dialogu pomiędzy chrześcijaństwem a judaizmem.