PROMISE AND FREEDOM, FLESH AND SLAVERY: PAUL'S

HERMENEUTICAL KEY IN GALATIANS 4:21-5:1 IN LIGHT

OF THE THEMES AND STRUCTURE OF GALATIANS

_____

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____

In Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

_____

by

Douglas Robert Wallaker

December 2017

APPROVAL SHEET

PROMISE AND FREEDOM, FLESH AND SLAVERY: PAUL'S

HERMENEUTICAL KEY IN GALATIANS 4:21-5:1 IN LIGHT

OF THE THEMES AND STRUCTURE OF GALATIANS

Douglas Robert Wallaker

Read and Approved by:

_____
Robert L. Plummer (Chair)

_____
Jonathan T. Pennington

_____
Jarvis J. Williams

Date_____

To my beloved wife and children, who have suffered more than I in producing this work.

You all have been a source of joy and happiness through the process; I am indebted to

you for your love, kindness, and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iv

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB   Anchor Bible

b. Pesḥim   Babylonian Tulmud; Pesḥim

b. Yoma   Babylonian Talmud; Yoma

BDAG   Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Edited by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Danker, and F. W. Gingrich

BECNT   Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

BBR   *Bulletin for Biblical Research*

BTB   *Biblical Theology Bulletin*

BZNW   Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

CBQ   *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

ECNT   Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

EvQ   *Evangelical Quarterly*

Exo Rab.   *Exodus Rabbah*

ICC   The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments

JBL   *Journal of Biblical Literature*

JETS   *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

JSNT   *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

L&L   *Language and Literature*

LSJ   Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement*. Edited by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie

LCL	Loeb Classical Library
M&R	*Meaning and Relevance*
NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Num Rab.	Numbers Rabbah
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary.* 2nd Edition. Edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
SBJT	*The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
Tg. Onq.	Targum Onqelos
Tg. Ps.-J	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

PREFACE

        Like any work, this dissertation has not been done in isolation. I owe much to those who have aided me in producing this work, many of whom know little of their influence on me. Not least of these is my family, whose sacrifices of time have not gone unnoticed. I am truly grateful for each of you. All my devotion will never be able to repay you for the joy each of you provides me. I am further grateful for my extended family, who provided much needed financial assistance to me during the time of my stay in Louisville. This dissertation truly would not have been completed without your generous support.

        I also indebted to those who shared time and sharpened me during my Ph.D. work at Southern Seminary. Many professors there have challenged me, and in doing so have made me not only a better exegete, but a more understanding and compassionate pastor as well. My fellow students helped me work through difficult issues which touched upon my dissertation and provided me with much comfort and encouragement. I would like to particularly offer a sincere and heartfelt thanks to Robert Plummer, whose care and assistance helped me in innumerable ways through this process.

        Finally, I would like to thank the kind congregation at Crossway Christian Church. You have graciously allowed me the freedom to finish this work while pastoring you. It is my prayer that the work done in this dissertation benefits you in no small way, either directly or indirectly, and leads you toward a deeper walk with the Lord.

<div align="right">Doug Wallaker</div>

Bay City, Michigan

December 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul's argument against the Galatians' use of the law finds a somewhat quixotic pinnacle in Galatians 4:21-5:1, primarily due to its use of allegory and the surprising association of Hagar and Ishmael with the law.[1] In this passage, Paul claims two women are covenants, compares them to mountains and cities, and further connects these events to the Galatian believers themselves. Even if the main focus of the passage is primarily without controversy, the difficult associations Paul draws have plagued interpreters for centuries.[2] Especially difficult is Paul's association of Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem, a rhetorical move that scholars have claimed is "puzzling and disturbing"[3] and "jenes unerhorte [*sic*] philologische Possenspiel um das Alte

---

[1]Karen Jobes correctly asserts that the use of "allegory" may unnecessarily prejudice hearers with a loaded term, hence her preference for "trope" (Karen Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *WTJ* 55, no. 2 [1993]: 299n1). A trope is simply any rhetorical device that, in classical rhetoric, replaces one word with the use of another; hence metaphors and allegories are prime examples of tropes (at least, that is, according to the classical understanding of metaphor), so Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson (Boston: Brill, 1998), § 552–57. However, it is precisely because this trope *is* an allegorical interpretation that such difficulties arise, and "trope" has a wider implications in modern vernacular than simply the identification of a rhetorical device, being at times aligned with "motif" (see *OED*, s.v. "trope", I.7). Because of these facts, I will avoid the term "trope" and continue to refer to the passage as allegorical.

[2]For instance, Richard N. Longenecker writes, "There is much in Paul's allegorical treatment of 4:24-27 that deserves comment, for the text is replete with textual and interpretive issues. . . . Obvious, however, are the lines of 'salvation history' that Paul draws" (Richard N. Longenecker, "Graphic Illustrations of a Believer's New Life in Christ: Galatians 4:21-31," *RevExp* 91, no. 2 [1994]: 194). Augustine likewise states, "What the law says about Abraham's two sons, at any rate, is easily understood, for he interprets this allegory himself (et de duobus quidem filiis Abrahae quod dicit, facile inelligitur, nam ipse interpretatur hanc allegoriam)." From Eric Antone Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 192, 193. This thesis will challenge Longenecker's statement of "obvious . . . lines of 'salvation history.'" Further, the wider one listens to scholarship, the less consensus there appears to be on the obviousness of the passage, especially as it focuses on Paul's purpose in quoting Gen 21:10. See Steven Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *NTS* 52, no. 1 (2006): 120–21.

[3]Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The

Testament."[4] A natural question, then, is why Paul has chosen to make his argument

through the use of such associations. As Susan Elliot notes,

> Paul's allegory has proved enigmatic on several levels. Scholars have sought to explain why this passage has been included at all and why at such a pivotal position in the structure of the letter. Explanations are especially difficult because Paul makes the links in each chain of elements as if the connections were obvious, yet the logic of the connections is hardly self-evident. We are left with an apparently confusing and weak argument where we would expect a clear and strong one.[5]

Elliot's insight strikes at the heart of the difficulty found in Galatians 4:21-5:1.

Even if the general tenor of Paul's conclusion is rather straight-forward, it is unclear why

Paul thought this particular passage was worth including. Whatever point Paul is

attempting to make, *why make it in this manner*?[6]

Thesis

I will argue that Paul's untraditional uniting of Hagar, Sinai, and the present

Jerusalem together was accomplished through the interpretive key provided in Galatians

4:23: *the one who comes from a slave has been born because of the flesh, and the one*

who comes from a free woman has been born through the promise (ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης

κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι᾽ ἐπαγγελίας). Paul no longer reads the

story of Sarah and Hagar through the lens of ethnic separation based on genealogical and

---

Liturgical Press, 2007), 172. Pheme Perkins likewise states that understanding Paul's "shocking" alignment of Hagar, Sinai, and Arabia has been a source of much scholarly effort, "Without much success" (Pheme Perkins, *Abraham's Divided Children: Galatians and the Politics of Faith*, The New Testament in Context [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001], 88–90).

[4]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Morgenöte*, in *Werke* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschafthche Buchgesellschaft, 1963) 1:1068, quoted in Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 244. Betz does not deflect the force of the statement, but merely moves on, stating, "At least Paul's intentions are easy to detect."

[5]Susan M. Elliott, "Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21-5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods," *JBL* 118, no. 4 (1999): 661.

[6]As Charles K. Barrett states, "Many commentators have found difficulty in it – not only in the interpretation of its details but over the question of why Paul should have used it at all" (Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982], 154).

legal realities,[7] but rather through the lens of promise and flesh, as helpfully stated in

4:23. Ishmael was not "cast out" because of his sinfulness or supposed ethnic

deficiencies, but rather because he was born "κατὰ σάρκα" and not "δι᾽ ἐπαγγελίας."

While the story of Sarah and Hagar was traditionally interpreted by Jewish

exegetes in light of the ethnic differences of the progeny,[8] Isaac gaining the promise and

the law while Ishmael was "cast out," Paul reads the story through a different controlling

lens. The former lens was centered on separating out Jew from Gentile, and thus focused

on the ethnic basis built into the law. The gospel revealed to Paul, however, has radically

transformed his understanding of the people of God, and consequently, the law. Because

Christ has ended the curse of the law (3:13) and invoked a new aeon (cf. 1:4, 3:19, 23,

25; 4:2, 4), all are now freely justified through faith, and not the law, whether Jew or

Gentile (cf. 2:16, 3:28). This reality has its basis in the story of Abraham, who believed

in the promise (cf. 3:6ff.).

The law is from an old aeon now surpassed, an aeon typified by slavery and

the weakness of the flesh. The promise, however, now as always, supersedes the

weakness of the flesh and produces God's promised people. Therefore, the story of Sarah

and Hagar still concerns the exclusive nature of the people of God. However, the

difference is no longer ethnicity, but the power by which one becomes a child;

differences manifested in the inability of the flesh to make true children of God and the

---

[7]Claiming an ethnic basis in the law does not, by default, exclude an ethical basis as well. That "true" Jews were expected to keep the law is not contentious. That both ethnic (or genealogical) and ethic foundations were found supported in many traditional Jewish readings of the narrative, see chap. 5 below. Further, while outside of the immediate concerns of this thesis, the concepts of race, ethnicity, and religion have spawned their own scholarly debates and concerns. Studies that touch on these matters, as well as Pauline and early Christian thought, include Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*, Library of New Testament Studies 410 (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

[8]For a good collection of examples, see Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 200-206. These interpretations are interacted with more thoroughly in chap. 5, below.

power of the promise to do precisely the same. This difference is highlighted in 4:23, which is Paul's interpretive key for the story of Sarah and Hagar.

This thesis is established by two basic assertions. First, it provides a more coherent understanding of the entire allegory. Viewing the allegory through Paul's hermeneutical key of 4:23 will help alleviate several difficulties in the allegory itself, including the reticence of Paul to name Sarah and the import and meaning of the difficult 4:25. Secondly, it incorporates both the themes and the basic argumentative style of the epistle from Galatians 2:1ff. The allotment of characteristics and associations throughout the epistle falls to two primary spheres, as Paul's argument from 2:15ff. has continually drawn contrasting lines between the realms of faith (connected to promise, Spirit, freedom, inheritance, temporal permanence), and works of the law (connected to law, flesh, slavery, curse, an ephemeral temporality). Paul's purpose in assigning such characteristics to both realms was to show definitively that any establishment of ἔργα νόμου was in fact a negation of the collectively agreed upon and revelatory gospel core: *we believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law* (ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, 2:16). These mutually exclusive associations are affirmed in Paul's allegory of the two sons, as it provides both a fitting summary and pinnacle to the *probatio* section of the epistle.

Methodology

This argument will proceed in three stages. First, I will survey and categorize previous attempts to understand Paul's connection of Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem, as well as the historical impetus behind the connections. The limited exegetical value of these methods will be highlighted through the nature of Paul's relationship with the Galatians, the nature of allegory itself, and Paul's freedom in selecting and arguing the allegory. Second, I will exegete the allegory of 4:21-5:1 in

light of the interpretive key of 4:23, in the hope that reading the allegory through this lens will provide a more cohesive, coherent, and relevant understanding of it. Lastly, I will argue for a specific structure of the letter, from 2:1-5:6, based around Paul's statements to Peter in 2:15-21. This structuring of the letter has two basic functions: first it will place Paul's allegory as both a summary and pinnacle of his argument, and second argue that the nature of his overall argument coheres well with the exegesis of 4:21-5:1.

History of Research

The unique and difficult nature of Galatians 4:21-5:1 has inspired a good deal of scholarship on the passage. Due to the volume of work, the history of research will focus on summarizing general trends in the scholarship. The main focus of this chapter will be the introduction and categorization of how scholarship has treated Paul's grouping of Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem. The scholarship will be placed into five categories: polemical, authoritative, metalyptical, typological, and allegorical interpretations. The grouping of these viewpoints is not meant to draw hard and fast lines; many scholars will find their interpretations are able to fit neatly into more than one category. The critique of these positions will be explored in chapter 2.

Polemical Interpretations

Polemical interpretations can take many forms; generally, however, they assert that the allegory was not a production of Paul's own free choice, but was rather a necessary rebuttal to the Agitators own interpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar. Such interpretations of the text are not explanations of Paul's connections of Sinai, Hagar, and the present Jerusalem, *per se*. Rather, this historical recreation is best seen as a way to explain the presence of the allegory, even if interpreters must provide a further explanation as to how the passage actually functions. As the reconstruction does speak to

Paul's intent in including the allegory in his epistle, and thus in some manner the nature of the meaning of the passage, such a historical recreation is worth noting.

Charles K. Barrett's essay "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar" has been exceedingly influential in the understanding of Paul's use of allegory in Galatians.[9] Most scholars post-Barrett, even if they assume some parenetic function in the passage, believe that the general orientation of the passage to be polemical.[10] Barrett, after surveying some possible interpretations of the passage and roundly dismissing them, avers that Paul is simply turning over the allegorical arguments of the Agitators.[11] Barrett's argument is not that Paul just picks up on the Agitators' argument in 4:21ff., but rather that he has been doing so sporadically throughout the letter, citing the use of the law in passages in 3:6, 10-13, 16 as likely fodder for them. Paul then takes back up the Agitators' argument in 4:21ff., denying it through his own allegorical interpretation which completely reverses the conventional reading of the story. Barrett sums up: "[Paul's] so-called allegorical treatment of Abraham and the two women was evoked not

---

[9]Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Rechtfertigung (FS E. Käsemann)*, ed. Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pohlmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1976), 1–16. Later republished in Barrett, *Essays on Paul,* 159–70. Future references to this work will be from the later work, *Essays on Paul*.

[10]Jeremy Punt notes the general polemical framework, although he claims that a "deeper level" reading will allow one to see the importance of the identity issues Paul is both addressing and creating (Jeremy Punt, "Revealing Rereading. Part 1: Pauline Allegory in Galatians 4:21-5:1," *Neotestamentica* 40, no. 1 [2006]: 87–100). Punt attempts to display the interplay between hermeneutics and identity, and claims that Paul is attempting to forge a "new" Christian identity. It is here that he differs with the thesis of this paper, as the relationship to Isaac indicates an identity that is not new but, in some sense, radically old. Cf. J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 432ff.

[11]Although Paul's Galatian opponents are commonly referred to with the titular "Judaizers," I find the term unhelpful historically and exegetically. Furthermore, scholars use their own particular terms for the opponents, often following their own unique designation (i.e., Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], who uses the designation of "instigators," and Martyn, *Galatians,* who uses the term "Teachers"). To simplify, I prefer to call Paul's opponents Agitators, not Judaizers, excepting quotations. I will do use this terminology primarily because the term "Judaizer" means, at its most basic level, one who attempts to proselytize to Judaism. I doubt highly that proselytizing is happening in Galatia. See chap. 4 for details.

by a personal love of fantastic exegesis but by a reasoned case which it was necessary that he should answer."[12]

Richard N. Longenecker's argument builds off of Barrett's, whom he cites approvingly. Thus, the primary concern for Paul was to counter the argument placed forward by the Agitators, namely that what Paul preached was an "Ishmaelian" form of truth.[13] The Agitators' argument expounds a typically Jewish understanding of the Sarah/Hagar story, although Longenecker does not (and, one would think, cannot) provide a detailed analysis of what their argument would be. Nevertheless, this background, Longenecker argues, forces the argument of Galatians 4:21ff. The use of allegory is explained by the above facts, thus, "In *ad hominem* fashion he [Paul] is asserting that he, too can set up an allegorical understanding of the Hagar-Sarah story, in contra-distinction to how the Judaizers were reading the story."[14] According to Longenecker, the style of the argument was a choice for Paul only inasmuch as he sought to show himself superior to the Agitators. Thus, Paul's use of Jerusalem terminology has little meaning beyond the use of typical Jewish symbols which Paul can flip to serve his own purposes rather than those of his interlocutors: "[Paul produces] what was undoubtedly a shocking realignment of personages and places in a Jewish understanding of salvation history."[15] Longenecker does not appreciate Paul as having placed more specific meaning behind the symbol; it is enough that the future Jerusalem, the great eschatological hope of the Jews, was actually the present reality (in some fashion) of law-free Christians.

---

[12]Barrett, "The Allegory," 165.

[13]Longenecker, *Galatians*, 199.

[14]Longenecker, "Graphic Illustrations," 191, italics original.

[15]Longenecker, *Galatians*, 213.

For Hans Dieter Betz, because the passage is clearly polemical, the metaphors take on the role of simply overturning the Agitators' position.[16] For instance, in reference to the ἄνω Jerusalem Betz states, "In reaching this conclusion Paul takes up, no doubt polemically, a famous dictum of Jewish theology, 'Jerusalem [or: Zion] is our mother,' and claims it for Christians . . . Paul's inclusion of the Gentile Christians must have been offensive."[17] It is, then, unclear if the metaphor of the above Jerusalem does little more than become conceptual ground to claim for Paul's side. The Jerusalem metaphors perhaps provide double-duty, first as a one-to-one substitution to compare the Spirit and flesh,[18] and secondly as a polemical trick to claim the high eschatological ground for Christians.

Many, if not most, scholars believe that some polemical impetus exists to help explain Paul's use of the Genesis account.[19] Thus, Paul's response was not of his own choosing, but a necessary reply to the exegesis of the Agitators. The polemical situation, then, is believed to give a historically reliable account for Paul's unlikely interpretation of the Sarah/Hagar story, and its inclusion in the epistle.

Scholars who have accepted this historical reconstruction of the impetus of the passage rightly recognize that it is a bold step to take on the most difficult section of the Genesis account and provide an even more unlikely interpretation.[20] While the responses

---

[16]While Barrett's work does antecede Betz's, Betz does not mention Barrett's analysis. However, it is clear that Betz analyzes the text in line with Barrett, even if he does so through rhetorical rather than historical lenses.

[17]Betz, *Galatians*, 247–48.

[18]Ibid., 247.

[19]See Martinus C. De Boer, *Galatians*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 288; Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC 30 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994); A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 485.

[20]Much like Richard B. Hays, who states, "The audacity of the maneuver contributes to its rhetorical effect. Like Elijah dousing the sacrifice with water before calling down fire from heaven to consume it, Paul takes on the most difficult case and provocatively raises the stakes" (Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 112).

to this step vary, there is typically an understanding that the polemical explanation for the presence of the allegory possibly explains why Paul included it, but not how he expected it to function.

Authoritative Interpretations

Many commentators aver that Paul is not trying to mount an argument, rather, he is using his place as an apostle of the Lord to simply claim that the associations he has made are true, or he is relying on the ephemeral nature of allegory to carry the burden of proof. These scholars argue that Paul's interpretation stands more-or-less on whether the audience accepts it as a congenial reading of the Genesis events. Thus, Paul neither needs nor desires to ground the connection between Hagar, Sinai and the present Jerusalem; he rather states it as a fact that he believes will win the day.

Betz's interpretation fits such a description well. He notes well that a key in understanding Paul at this point is in making sense of "how we understand Paul could have justified" equating Sinai and Hagar.[21] Betz provides two different possibilities, noting that while the information that Paul used might have been incorrect, Paul certainly thought it was true. Betz easily rejects both possible justifications, noting that the deficiencies inherent in them "would not bother a man who is absorbed with 'allegory' and who would be guided even by the most superficial similarities."[22]

Betz's interpretation implies both that Paul seems to have a need to justify his connection of Sinai to Hagar, and that his justification is so weak that it warrants no further discussion. Important here is Betz's assumption that the link between Hagar and Sinai, based upon the faulty and weak connection of the word/name "Hagar" to Mt. Sinai, is thought to be enough as long as it is conceived as sufficient in Paul's mind. Therefore,

---

[21]Betz, *Galatians*, 245.

[22]Ibid.

for Betz, it is enough if Paul thought that the connection was made sufficiently *for himself*; Betz gives little consideration to the need of Paul to convince the Galatians. Based on this reading, it appears that Paul argues only from fiat and apostleship. The connection is true, not because there exists a reasonable argument that aligns it with the gospel and God's revelation (or any outside authority), but simply because Paul says so.

Longenecker affirms the same basic position, and quotes Martin McNamara along these same lines.[23] While Longenecker quotes and affirms Betz, arguing that Paul was taken away with allegory at this point, he believes that more is at play. To this end he quotes McNamara, who argues that there is a larger constellation of ideas in Paul's head, which will give veracity to the Sinai-Hagar connection. McNamara insists on the correctness of Paul's word-play, precisely where Betz has doubted it.

However, both Longenecker and McNamara note the difficulty in assuming that the Galatians would have rightly understood what Paul was saying, as the constellation of ideas swirling in Paul's head had to do with isolated geographical arguments, particular interpretations of the Targums, and detailed linguistic arguments based on the phonetics of other languages outside of Greek. Again, both McNamara and Longenecker shrug off such difficulties.[24] McNamara, like Betz, seems to argue that what mattered to Paul in the moment was not whether the Galatians would understand, but whether he was right in his own mind.

To this point, Longenecker further inserts that Paul was likely dealing with the Agitators here, with the Galatians caught in the crossfire. Thus, he argues, the Galatians understood more than what the text might let on, although he gives no indication how they might handle the threefold difficulty of Paul's argument noted above.

---

[23]Longenecker, *Galatians*, 212; see Martin McNamara, "'To de (Hagar) Sina Oros Estin En Tê Arabia' (Gal 4:25a): Paul and Petra," *Milltown Studies* 2 (1978): 36.

[24]Longenecker, *Galatians*, 212; McNamara, "Paul and Petra," 36.

Others have taken the same tack. Boice argues that "the best explanation [of Paul's connecting Hagar, Sinai and the present Jerusalem] is simply that Paul wishes to carry through on his allegory, drawing a line from Hagar, who represents the old covenant, to Sinai, where that covenant was established, and beyond it to Jerusalem, where it was centralized at the time of his writing."[25] De Boer is more forceful, stating, "It is difficult to maintain . . . that Paul here pursued an argument 'based on the authority of scripture.' Paul's argument is based rather on a Christologically informed authoritative *interpretation* of Scripture. . . . He is confident that the Galatians will now accept his daring alternative interpretation of it."[26] Likewise Jeremy Punt: "Paul's radical hermeneutical shift was dependent on a disposition of trust towards the interpreter and his expectation that the Galatian churches would accept him as faithful [*sic*] interpreter of Scripture." To this end, Punt quotes Stephen Fowl, who argues that Paul's allegorical treatment of Genesis was a display of interpretive power. This power was not used through brute force, however, but needs to be convincing. Fowl rightly asks, "How might such a counter conventional reading convince an audience?" Fowl argues that this needed convincing is accomplished through the appeal to Paul's character and standing as apostle in Galatians 1 and 2.[27]

All of these views coalesce into the idea that, while Paul's argumentation may have been fanciful and generally without ground, it was winsome to Paul, and is the

---

[25]James Montgomery Boice, *Galatians*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Everett F. Harrison, Donald A. Hagner, and Robert K. Rapa, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 485n25.

[26]De Boer, *Galatians*, 288, italics original. Here De Boer quotes D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, WUNT 190 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 169. Along these lines Ben Witherington III states, "Here Paul, in order to be persuasive, may be counting on the fact that he knows the Scriptures far better than they [the Galatians] do, and that they will respect and perhaps even defer to his expertise on this matter" (Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 328).

[27]Stephen E. Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 90.

primary need Paul had at that time. Fowl and Punt, for their parts, do recognize that it was important for the Galatians to assent to the interpretation, but still assign this assent to Paul's position as a valid interpreter, and not to any particularly convincing argument.

A separate group of scholars fall into this category much by default. Many scholars do not actively state that Paul desires to avoid argumentation within this section of his epistle, yet they forego any discussion of how precisely Paul's argument proceeds. They are content, for the most part, to highlight the contours of Paul's allegory, but do little to indicate how the argument is meant to be functioning, or why it is in any sense convincing to the Galatians. Much of this type of scholarship is found in the annals of commentaries; perhaps confined by space, scholars are content to speak of *what* Paul means without investigating how the Galatians were to understand it.

Metalyptical Interpretations

Richard Hays' groundbreaking work *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* devotes a section to Paul's allegorical interpretation of the Sarah/Hagar story. Hays' point in turning to the Sarah/Hagar story in Galatians is not strictly exegetical, but rather to demonstrate how the passages comports to his larger theological endeavors.[28]

For Hays, Paul's Christological and ecclesiological understanding of the gospel is the ground on which the allegory rests. The events of Genesis have a meaning that goes beyond mere history, as Hays says, "A latent sense of some sort."[29] That latent

---

[28]Prior to commenting on his treatment, however, it might be helpful to first stress Hays' program of interpretation, and his general thesis. What Hays argues for is a reading of Paul that sees ecclesiology at the center of Paul's hermeneutic. This refocusing does not displace what is typically thought of as the Christocentric nature of Pauline hermeneutics. Rather, it is the logical extension of Paul's understanding of Christ's work in effecting the final eschatological age. Thus, "Paul's understanding of Jesus Christ as the one true heir of the promise to Abraham is the essential theological presupposition for his hermeneutical strategies, though these strategies are not in themselves Christocentric" but are, rather, ecclesiocentric (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture,* 121). Hays, therefore, believes that Paul sees the central and important work of Christ as finding its final purpose in the building of the Church; this fact then centers and grounds Paul's reading of the OT.

[29]Ibid., 116.

sense is not just of "some sort," however, but is rather a sense that is provided to the text of Genesis through Paul's understanding of the gospel. The quotation of Isaiah 54:1 follows. If Paul's gospel declares that the Gentiles are heirs of the Abrahamic promises, as sons of Sarah through Christ, then the prophetic ἄνω Jerusalem implied in Isaiah 54:1 naturally points to the Gentiles as heirs. The connection Paul sees in Isaiah is between Sarah, Jerusalem, and the eschaton.

Hays' program is not only that Paul read the OT ecclesiocentrically, but that he used it with intertextuality in tow. Hays sees Paul's quotation and references to the OT as reverberations of other texts. This understanding of Paul's hermeneutical lens has sparked an entire cottage industry of papers using metalyptical reading of OT texts in the NT, especially Paul. In line with this style of reading, Karen Jobes seeks to unpack what Hays only passingly refers to as the "rippling" that the quotation of Isaiah 54 is meant to have over the rest of the final chapters of Isaiah.[30]

Jobes argues that Isaiah transforms the notion of barrenness from the birth of a promised son to the birth of a promised people.[31] Not only does Isaiah shift the imagery of barrenness, but he shifts the imagery of motherhood: from the woman Sarah to the city Jerusalem. Jobes goes on, at length, to trace the themes of seed, Spirit, resurrection, and redemption through the latter chapters of Isaiah. Jobes' essay is particularly insightful, and helps to ground Paul's understanding displayed in Galatians 4:21ff. in the text of Isaiah.[32] What Jobes is doing is a defense of Paul, clearing Paul from playing fast and loose with the Genesis text. She faces difficulty, however, as the gold she seeks must be sifted out from the other concerns of Isaiah, a problem Jobes is not blind to: "This

---

[30]Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother."

[31]Ibid., 307. For this insight, Jobes is particularly indebted to Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash*, SBLDS 91 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

[32]Grounding the allegory in Isaiah is especially important for Jobes, as she believes the γάρ in 4:27 grounds Paul's earlier assertions; see Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 301ff.

journey through the intertextual space defined by Galatians and Isaiah and Genesis . . .

has been arduous. One can only wonder how Paul could have expected the Galatians

Christians to understand his argument."[33] Jobes' answer to this difficulty is to propose

that Paul previously taught these connections to the Galatians. The allegory, then, is

simply a reminder of what they have already heard.

Jobes and Hays stand in line with seeing the passage as a whole functioning in

a polemical fashion. Hays employs the word "jujitsu" to describe Paul's rhetorical moves

here, signifying that Paul's interpretation was a clear reaction to and attack against the

Agitators.[34] Jobes, like most modern scholars post-Barrett, sees the passage as a

hermeneutical argument against the proposed reading of the Agitators. She argues, "The

radical reversal effected in Galatians 4:21-31 pivots on the resurrection of Jesus Christ

and indicates that the resurrection has far-reaching *hermeneutical* implications."[35] These

implications were not seen or used by the Agitators; Paul's allegorical interpretation of

the story attempted to point out the viability of his approach while discrediting the

Agitators' reading.

Matthew Emerson likewise wishes to distance Paul from claims of

mishandling the text of the OT. To this end, he uses intertextuality as a tool to

demonstrate that "the Hagar and Sinai narratives are intricately related and therefore

appropriately read by Paul."[36] Emerson notes the linguistic and contextual similarities

present in the accounts of both Sinai and Hagar's narrative, as well as the Genesis

account of the fall and Cain. The linguistic similarities are based on the Hebrew words

---

[33]Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 318.

[34]Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 112.

[35]Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 318, italics original.

[36]Matthew Y. Emerson, "Arbitrary Allegory, Typical Typology, or Intertextual Interpretation? Paul's Use of the Pentateuch in Galatians 4:21–31," *BTB* 43, no. 1 (2013): 14.

barach (flee), *anah* (oppress), *garash* (cast out), and *qalal* (curse).[37] Emerson's analysis

leads to his conclusion:

> Because, from the above analysis and from the evidence within Genesis itself (e.g. the fate of Ishmael in Genesis 25), the Hagar covenant is evidently not eternally salvific but only for physical protection, one must consider the possibility that the links presented are intended to show that the Sinai covenant too is only for physical protection and not eternally salvific. This is the crux of the point Paul is making in Galatians 4:21-31. The evidence from the Pentateuch seems to indicate that the Sinai covenant is, at least in some respects, a covenant of slavery, not of freedom.[38]

Ardel Caneday likewise deserves some recognition here. In "Covenant

Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically'" he argues

that Paul has grounded his interpretation in Scripture, primarily based off of the four-fold

mentioning of Scripture within the allegory. He believes that the narrative in Genesis

was written with the allegory firmly in place, and that Paul took a hold of this particular

embedded allegory and used it to his advantage. The connections that Paul makes, then,

are grounded not by Paul, but by Scripture, and one must find the connections there. His

analysis, then, is metalyptical, even as he forgoes the use of the term.[39]

Typological Interpretations

While not all want to deny the presence of allegory,[40] many scholars rest

heavily on typological symbols within the passage. Typology, whatever else may define

it, is founded on the perception of similar occurrences (events/people) over time.[41] Many

---

[37]Emerson, "Arbitrary Allegory," 19, tables 2 and 3.

[38]Ibid., 20.

[39]A. B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)," *SBJT* 14, no. 3 (2010): 50–78.

[40]Although some clearly do; see below.

[41]For similar definitions, see R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 7; G. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, SBT 22 (Naperville, IL: A.R. Allenson, 1957), 40. This temporal dimension typically separates typology from allegory in modern thought. Lausberg states, "Typology is a semantics of realities, allegory (ἄλλο ἀγορεύειν) a semantics of words" (*Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, § 902).

scholars appeal to typology as Paul's exegetical basis here to eliminate the implication of over-zealous allegorical exegesis claiming warrant from this biblical text.

John Chrysostom's strong distaste of allegorical exegesis is well documented,[42] and led him to assert that Paul may have slipped a little: "Καταχρηστικῶς τὸν τύπον ἀλληγορία ἐκάλεσεν" or "contrary to usage, he calls a type an allegory."[43] That is, Paul was using typology, not allegory. Most, however, have not followed Chrysostom fully. Other scholars have noted the presence of allegory while asserting that, in Martyn's words, it is "fundamentally tempered by typology."[44] While not denying the obvious allegorical nature of the text, they proffer that there is some chronological movement in Paul's argument, some unfolding of the plan of God through the shadows and types of the OT.[45]

Chrysostom interprets the story of Sarah and Hagar as typifying, in some way, the later work of Christ in the Galatians believers.[46] It is likely that Chrysostom believes that the symbolic nature of this story simply indicates the future reality, and that Isaac, as well as the people of Israel as a whole, were exempted from this reality. Therefore, he

[42]See Patrick G. Barker, "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1994): 193–209; Robert J. Kepple, "An Analysis of Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26," *WTJ* 39, no. 2 (1977): 239–49; Curtis D. McClane, "The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegorical Method in Galatians 4:21-31," *ResQ* 40, no. 2 (1998): 125–35.

[43]John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 13 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 34. Καταχρηστικῶς may be interpreted harshly (Paul misused the word ἀλληγορία) or with some grace (Paul used ἀλληγορία inexactly). See LSJ, s.v. "καταχρηστικῶς."

[44]J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 436.

[45]See especially Betz, *Galatians*; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 300.

[46]Chrysostom, after denying that such events or happenings (τὸ γενόμενον) are not recent, states, "Ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν καὶ πρὸ πολλῶν διετυποῦτο χρόνων" (but had been before typified many ages ago, *Homilies on Galatians*, 34). Chrysostom's choice of διετυπόω highlights the distinction between seeing the story of Sarah/Hagar as typical of the salvific economy of God and just a way to foreshadow an upcoming reality, as the word implies simply a form, and used metaphorically indicates imagining or conceiving of something, clearly removed in some way from reality. See LSJ, s.v. "διετυπόω."

argues that the above Jerusalem is aligned with the Church, even more specifically the Gentile church.[47]

Augustine makes an argument similar to Chrysostom's, although he does rely to a greater extent on the symbolic nature of Isaac, Sarah, and Hagar. [48] For Augustine, Paul's basic purpose was to prove that "in order for Isaac to signify the people of the New Testament as their heir it is not enough that he was born of a free woman-what is more relevant here is the fact that he was born according to the promise."[49] The women and children are simply shadows of the greater realities to come (the current and above Jerusalems) and thus exist to provide a picture of those realities.

For both Augustine and Chrysostom, a shadow/type theology loomed over the passage, thus allowing for the exclusion of the reality of the Galatian experience to be found in the participants of Abraham's story. Undoubtedly, both assumed a historical reality behind the story itself; the participants, however, were unable to enjoy the significance of their own story. Therefore, they were just symbols, awaiting the reality, and thus can be (must be!) replaced and supplanted with that reality.

Other modern scholars follow suit. George speaks of the passage as an analogy through typological language, but never uses the term allegory on his own.[50] Bruce concurs with a typological treatment of the passage, as does Oepke.[51]

---

[47]Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians*, 34.

[48]Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 597–600.

[49]Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 195.

[50]George, *Galatians*, 338–41.

[51]Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 217. Albrecht Oepke states, "Nach dem heute geltenden Sprachgebrauch würde man hier eher von Typologie reden" (Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*, Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 9 [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973], 148).

Allegorical Interpretations

Those who think that Paul was working in a straight-forward allegorical manner can provide the needed conceptual links without the requisite temporal proof needed by typology. Moreover, they argue that such exegesis was normal in both Greco-Roman thought and Second Temple Jewish interpretation. Formative Judaism used allegorical exegesis quite regularly, with the Sarah-Hagar story being treated numerous times and in numerous ways.[52] The argument rests on the fact that allegory would have been a natural form of argumentation for Paul to use, as allegorical interpretation was simply part of the exegetical world in which Paul breathed.

For example, Curtis McClane builds off of the historical context and the widespread use of allegory to argue for its presence in Galatians 4:21ff.[53] McClane himself provides five reasons why Paul uses allegory at this point. Three of these reasons rest on the widespread use of allegory;[54] two others deal with contextual issues.[55] Further, many scholars have noted that Paul's exegesis does not just contain "tempered" allegory, but rather a more full-throated allegory than many post-reformation scholars desired to admit, not only here but further within other passages in the epistle.[56] Yet, while the widespread use of allegory makes such a passage possible, it tells us little about the importance of Paul choosing it, or its effects on his interpretation.[57]

---

[52]See the excursus in Longenecker, *Galatians*, 200–206.

[53]Others typically argue for allegory more subtly by referencing the widespread use of allegory in the first century. McClane is more forceful, but the intention appears to be the same ("Hellenistic Background," 130).

[54]McClane appeals to "acceptable illustration," the fondness of allegorical exegesis amongst the Jews, and the borrowing of the tradition for "emotive appeals" (ibid., 132).

[55]Here, McClane appeals to keeping Abraham in context and the fact that the allegory "provides him a basis for saying something difficult that needed to be said, namely, that the Judaizers needed to be cast out" (ibid., 132–3).

[56]See especially David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2 (London: Athlone Press, 1956), 438–44. While each treatment is certainly not equivalent, there is a good reason that Origen appealed to Paul to justify his choice of allegorical interpretation. See Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 192.

[57]Although it can provide corroborating evidence for a number of features of allegorical

Many who argue for allegorical interpretations rest their understanding on simple word-play. Thus, Di Mattei argues that what Paul is engaged in is a simple this-for-that word substitution. Thus, Hagar = Sinai is the substitution, which is done on the basis of the fact that both bear children into servitude. He writes, "There need not be anything offensive nor heretical in these remarks. That the covenant of Sinai demanded submissiveness is not unknown to Judaism."[58]

Barrett, along with an insistence on the polemical nature of the passage, also insists that Paul is making arguments typical of allegorical exegesis in Second Temple Judaism. Barrett believes that Paul's particular brand of allegory here turns on the use of two common allegorical maneuvers: first, the reinterpretation of a specific word, a k^emin $\d{h}\={o}m\ae r$; and second, the use of a common word link, a $g^ez\={e}ra\ \^s\={a}w\={a}$. Barrett maintains that Paul reinterprets Ἁγάρ as connected with Sinai, and uses στεῖρα in Isaiah 54:1 to then link Sarah with the above Jerusalem.[59]

Luther's important *Lectures on Galatians* in 1535 represent his most condensed thoughts on the epistle. Even though Luther desires to make clear distinctions between Paul's interpretation of the OT and those of Origen and Jerome, it is clear to Luther that Paul engages in allegory to highlight and beautify the argument set down previously in Galatians. Luther writes, "Just as a picture is an ornament for a house that has already been constructed, so an allegory is a kind of illumination of an oration or of a case that has already been established on other grounds."[60] Those "other grounds" are

arguments. See the discussion in chap. 2 below. Matthew Bates argues that Paul had several reasons for choosing to represent his point in an allegorical manner, but that his argument could have been made through other metaphorical tropes. While Bates' argument is primarily hermeneutical, and I agree that Paul would be less contentious over the manner of interpretation than many modern scholars, I also believe that some sense of allegory was essential to Paul's interpretive project, even if the importance attached to "allegory" is overblown. See Matthew Bates, *The Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 157n139.

[58]Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 110.

[59]Barrett, "The Allegory," 164.

[60]Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther's Works* (St. Louis:

19

the previous arguments of Galatians, especially Galatians 3.   Thus, the allegory presents

the Galatians with little to no new information; rather Paul is simply condensing the

argument down to an allegory to appeal to those who might not be able to follow the

more difficult argument that has preceded.[61] For Luther, then, the allegory is a means to

highlight the distinction between promise/Spirit and flesh in the gaining of the

inheritance, although he does see some typological connections at work (thus the ἄνω

Jerusalem as the "church militant").[62]

Calvin's commentary on Galatians 4:21ff. is in the same vein as Luther;

upholding allegory as not "very powerful" as an isolated argument, yet stating that "as a

confirmation added to a most satisfactory chain of reasoning, it is not unworthy of

attention."[63] Thus, the allegory does not stand on its own as an argument, but simply

provides an additional way of stating what Paul had claimed earlier in the letter. While

Calvin's interpretation explicitly affirms allegory, it also contains typological elements as

described above. Paul, he avers, desires to answer the present situation through the

appeal to scriptural history, and so interprets that history to make it a "figurative

representation of the Church."[64]

Summary

All of the above interpretations fail to fully or rightly account for Paul's use of

allegory and his intended meaning. To support such a claim, I will argue for the

importance of the following points in understanding the allegory:

Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 26:436.

[61]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, 26:433

[62]Ibid., 26:440.

[63]John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle, *Calvin's Commentaries* 21 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 134.

[64]Ibid., 136.

First, the polemical situation did not dictate the nature of Paul's exegesis. While the presupposition that Paul was in a polemical situation standing against the Agitators is beyond doubt, how much of a role that situation played in his allegory considerably changes the nature of the allegory and scholars' interpretation of it. By nature, necessitating an argument from a passage that he is unlikely to take, Paul would be presenting a much weaker argument that one would expect at this location in the letter. This weaker argument allows for scholars to assume that Paul is straining the text for his allegory, and thus to not truly seek out Paul's own justification for the allegory, or simply assume that he does not have an adequate one. The fact that scholars can recreate a historical context that possibly leads to this weakened argument does not mean that it is in fact the case.

Second, Paul desired to communicate to the Galatians. This supposition seems clear, given the introduction both of the letter (ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, 1:2) and the allegory (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, 4:21).[65] Yet, as shown above, some scholars believe that Paul is talking past the Galatians to the Agitators, or is simply convinced in his own mind that his argument is sound. But Paul's public letter is neither a private mediation on the nature of the law and Hagar nor a disguised and coded argument for the Agitators. The connections built, then, must be clear to the Galatians, and avoid overly technical, specialized, and narrow implications that the Galatians would not have been expected to understand.

Third, the polemical situation necessitated that Paul be convincing. While the situation does not dictate that Paul interpret these particular chapters of Genesis against his better judgment, it does necessitate an argument to the Galatians that they would have to wrestle with, and that he understood as convincing as it stands. Paul fears he has lost

---

[65]The fact that the audience of the allegory were still desiring circumcision (θέλοντες) without having actualized it yet indicates that the Agitators are not in view. See chap. 3, below.

the Galatians to this ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, and cannot rely upon his apostolic standing to put things right in Galatia.

Therefore, it is important the interpretation not only highlight what connections Paul produces, but why he does so. By ignoring Paul's reasoning, the allegory becomes an argument without grounds, leading to assertions that he has mishandled Scripture, making doubtful the effectiveness of the passage as a whole.

Combining these premises indicates that Paul conceived of the allegory as a convincing argument against the Galatians' attraction to the law. The thesis of this dissertation, that Paul provided the interpretive key for his allegory in Galatians 4:23, seeks to demonstrate how Paul accomplished his goal. Thus, this dissertation will first establish the premises above (through a critique of the approaches to the allegory already summarized) and, second, work out their application within the allegory and to the epistle to the Galatians as a whole. A summary of the flow of the argument is presented below.

Chapter Summaries

In chapter 2 I analyze the solutions of chapter 1. The basic and assumed premise of this chapter is that Paul was a capable and knowledgeable communicator, and that he accurately related his meaning to the Galatians. Thus, all of the above interpretations of the allegory are found wanting, for they do not adequately cohere with the assumption that Paul accurately communicated his argument in the letter. The purpose of chapter 2 is to argue this point.

In chapter 3 I exegete Galatians 4:21-5:1. This exegesis avers that Paul has supplied 4:23 as the hermeneutical key by which the allegory proceeds, and is vital to understanding the connections that he produces in the argument. This exegesis not only focuses on the nature of the connection between Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem, but argues that this premise relieves many focal points of tension within the allegory,

22

including the avoidance of naming Sarah, the connection to νόμος, and the interpretation and textual problem in 4:25.

Chapter 4 argues that the exegesis of Galatians 4:21-5:1 comports to the problems addressed in the rest of the literary and historical context of Galatians. This chapter argues for a concrete placement and purpose for the allegory through a structural analysis and (brief) exegesis of Galatians 2-5:6. The structural analysis focuses on the importance of 2:15-21 as the basic blue-print for the building of the letter. The exegesis not only establishes this structure, but illustrates the strong thematic connections of the allegory as well, centering on the conception of the law as incapable of freeing humans from the power of sin and the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.

Chapter 5 argues that Paul's allegorical interpretation of Genesis does not stand in contradiction to a more literal reading of the narrative. Modern linguistic theories of communication are used to better define the nebulous term "literal," and are then applied to the so-called literal interpretation traditional in Jewish thought. In doing so, the Jewish interpretations are shown to bring assumptions to and retrieve implications from the text that the text itself does not strictly provide. Thus, there are not truly literal readings of the Sarah/Hagar narrative. This chapter ends with a look at further implications of the study for both understanding of Galatians and wider hermeneutical issues.

CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF PROPOSED
APPROACHES TO THE ALLEGORY

Introduction

The current chapter will begin to ground the premises listed at the end of

chapter 1; namely that while the polemical situation in the Galatian churches necessitated

a convincing argument the Galatians would understand, that same polemical situation did

not hamstring Paul into providing an exegesis of portions of Genesis he otherwise would

have avoided. Thus, Paul's exposition of the Sarah and Hagar narrative stands on its own

as a legitimate and convincing argument that was intended to sway the Galatians from

acceptance of the law alongside Christ.

Evaluation and Critique

The critique provided below follows one main presupposition: that Paul

excelled at both communication and argumentation.[1]   Thus, Paul used media and

methods that would relay the intended implications to the Galatians when they read the

letter. Therefore, the next three chapters are not meant as apologetics for Pauline

---

[1]I mean "communication" in terms of pragmatics, which understands communication through an audience apprehending an author's intended inferences. Argumentation, on the other hand, is meant to persuade, and takes advantage of logical formulations, the presumed character of the arguer, and attempts to orient the hearer to the world in a certain manner (cf. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese, LCL 193 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927], 17ff.). For an example of how this threefold perception of argumentation fit into a pragmatic theory, see J. L. Campbell, "An Applied Relevance Theory of the Making and Understanding of Rhetorical Arguments," *Language & Communication* 12, no. 2 (1992): 145–55. This understanding of communication and argumentation can be contained within the general concept of the perspicuity of Scripture; modern linguistic theories, such as the Gricean maxims (see H. P. Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989]), and Relevance Theory (see Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 2nd ed. [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995]) would speak of the adequacy of interpretation in light of pragmatic implications.

hermeneutics. While the nature of his hermeneutical work is an important field of study in its own right, these chapters not taken up with the task of outlining or inspecting how Paul read the OT, or the validity of that reading. I will simply assume its validity. The question then becomes slightly more narrow: if Paul said what he said, how he wanted to say it, how did he intend the Galatians to understand his allegory, and, moreover, to be convinced by it?

Given that Paul's epistle would lead the Galatians to the appropriate implications,[2] as stated above, this chapter will illustrate the weaknesses in other approaches to the allegorical treatment of the Genesis narrative in Galatians 4. The positive case for the thesis of this dissertation will be made in chapter 3.

Critique of the Allegory as a Polemical Response

The most pervasive hermeneutical tactic used today when approaching Paul's allegory is to see the passage as a polemical response to the Agitators. The points that Paul makes, the comparisons which he draws, and the conclusions that he reaches are in light of and deliberately focusing upon the Scriptural interpretation placed forward by the Agitators. The problems that Barrett, who first proposed this historical/polemical solution, sees in this passage are not unlike the problems that others have noticed; regardless of Paul's normal type of interpretive strategy, the argumentation in this passage appears to be slightly odd, and its importance not immediately obvious.[3] Thus, Barrett's reconstruction desires to answer these questions, providing a plausible ground for the *style* of the passage as it stands. In essence, what he argues for is a historical

---

[2]Understanding the appropriate implications from Paul does not mean the Galatians necessarily found the argument compelling. Rather, it simply means that they understood Paul's argument rightly.

[3]Cf. Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982], 154.

situation where Paul is responding to the interpretation of the Agitators regarding specific passages of Scripture, namely Genesis 16-21. This reconstruction, however, goes far beyond the claim that the situation that Paul was responding to was polemical in general. Rather, Paul's allegory was built as a reactionary and necessary measure against the interpretation of the Genesis account argued by the Agitators.

The upside of Barrett's theory is clear. While many interpreters will uphold the hermeneutical implications of his theory, as it removes from Paul's hand a supposedly arbitrary allegory,[4] what Barrett has done is apparently reduce the effort needed to understand the allegory. That is, he has provided a historical reconstruction that helps place Paul's choice of story, the figures within the allegory, and the conclusions for which Paul strives. The difficulties inherent in the metaphors are thus drastically reduced. The problems that generally exist are related to connecting the concepts of covenant, Sinai, and Jerusalem back to Hagar; problems that are aided when Barrett's analysis is taken into consideration. The relationships are built, not by Paul, but rather by the preaching of the Agitators, who would naturally align Jerusalem, the law, and Sarah/Isaac together.[5] If this alignment was a major part of their interpretation of the OT, which is a very sensible assumption, Paul's "allegory" becomes a refutation (or, perhaps better, rebuilding) of the metaphors that the Agitators have already built. Paul has not chosen the difficult metaphors to articulate his point, rather he used the hand that the Agitators dealt him, so to speak. Thus, the *raison d'être* of the passage is explained, and its particulars are smoothed out through the polemical appeal.

---

[4]The removal of any supposed arbitrary allegory is something that Barrett himself claims. "[Paul's] so-called allegorical treatment of Abraham and the two women was evoked not by a personal love of *fantastic exegesis*" ("The Allegory," 165, emphasis mine). Yet it is unclear how Paul's supposed polemical response solves the problems Barrett seeks to answer. On Barrett's reconstruction, the subjects of the allegory are not arbitrary, as Paul is simply responding to a particular interpretation already put forth. However, his handling of it was quite distinct from what one would expect the Agitators would have done with it, and thus the connections that Paul builds are completely new. While the newness of the connections does not make them arbitrary, neither does it clear up these problems within the allegory itself.

[5]See Barrett, "The Allegory," 161.

Thus, Paul's hand is forced. The Agitators have put forward an interpretation of the OT which denies the gospel that Paul has proclaimed. Paul, then, must respond to this interpretation, although it is a passage he would not of his own desire seize upon. This proposed historical context has led to interpretations of the allegory that include negative epitaphs directed at Paul's handling of Genesis. Ian Elmer states, "It seems an incredible stretch of the imagination to speculate that Paul would have used such a *convoluted exegesis* of a quintessential Jewish story to win over Gentile converts to his gospel."[6] Das likewise states that "Paul would never mention these Abrahamic covenant texts with the emphasis on circumcision (esp. Genesis 17; cf. Gen 21:1-4) unless he were forced to do so. The *contortions of the Genesis narrative* convey his discomfort."[7]

I question the usefulness of this theory, as it prejudices interpreters against the genius and power of Paul's argument, distorts its rhetorical importance in the letter, inverts the relationship between Paul's exegesis and his argument, and is doubtful textually. I do not intend to totally refute Barrett's historical reconstruction, which is outside of the scope of this thesis. Rather, I desire to show its limited use in understanding the import of Paul's allegory, and to further show its quite limited ability to explain Paul's choice either of the passage's contents or allegorical interpretation. At best, Barrett's historical reconstruction, in which the polemical situation requires a response by Paul to the interpretation of the Agitators, plays a (limited) role in Paul's exegesis, and may be more distracting than helpful for interpreters of the passage.

---

[6]Ian J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem, and the Judaisers*, WUNT 258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 137, emphasis mine.

[7]Das, *Galatians*, 485, emphasis mine. See also Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 172, who mentions *twice* that the allegory is "disturbing."

The textual basis of the reconstruction. Barrett himself invites this textual analysis, offering that Paul was refuting the arguments of the Agitators from 3:1ff.[8] This analysis is understandable, as Paul gives no indication that he is changing tack; if it seems he has been steadily refuting the Agitators' arguments, then the historical reconstruction gains probability. If, on the other hand, he appears to only turn toward their arguments here, in 4:21 ff., then the reconstruction becomes a case of special pleading. While noting this aspect of the polemical solution of Barrett here, I will attempt to demonstrate its insufficiency in chapter 4, where I trace Paul's argument throughout Galatians.

The rhetorical importance of the allegory. Betz's commentary is known best for the application of Greco-Roman rhetorical strategy to the book of Galatians. It is generally acknowledged that Betz's insight is helpful to the organization and structure of the book of Galatians, specifically the nature of the argumentative section, the *probatio*, which ends after the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in chapter 4.[9] Betz further offers a basic rhetorical insight: the last argument is typically not the weakest one.[10] This insight he gleans primarily from Quintilian, but the point is generally accepted.[11] Thus, we

---

[8]So Barrett, "The Allegory," 158ff.

[9]An increasingly large number of works that take issue with Betz's assessment. For instance, Philip Kern argues that while Betz's study has made the Greco-Roman rhetorical background of Galatians "practically axiomatic," such handbooks "add little" to the overall rhetoric of Galatians (Philip Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 101 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 90). Note also the reservations cited by Stanley Porter concerning the analysis of Pauline epistles within the context of classical rhetoric, especially in determining the outline of the work, including the *probatio* and *paranesis* portions of the letter in "Paul of Tarsus and His Letters," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C. - A.D. 400* (New York: Brill, 1997), 533–35.

[10]Indeed, this point is so basic that Paul likely followed such custom even if critics of aligning Paul too closely with Greek rhetoric are correct. Catherine Steel, when discussing the work *Rhetoric to Herennius*, states that the author repeats the "*familiar point* that the strongest arguments should come at the beginning and end of the proof, and weaker points should be placed in the middle," although the author of *Rhetoric* has little else to add ("Divisions of Speech," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, ed. Erik Gunderson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 83, emphasis mine). The familiarity of the point, as I took it, referred not just to the familiarity of the claim in more modern eras, but to Greek rhetoricians as well.

[11]Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 239n13. Quintilian argues, "The question is also asked, whether the most powerful Arguments [*sic*] should be put at the beginning, so as to take possession of the

would expect that Paul here is providing a strong, if not the strongest, argument for his case.

Yet, this insight contrasts with the scheme presented by Barrett. Betz argues forcefully that the standards of Greek rhetoric apply throughout the nature of Paul's argument to the Galatians; and that the allegory therefore represents a strong argument in order to finish off Paul's overall rhetorical strategy.[12] However, Barrett argues that the allegory represents Paul's forced hand; that Paul is herein engaging in an argument through compulsion, and not by choice. The presenting of Paul's argument as one that is given only by necessity demands the view that Paul would not have normally enlisted this particular passage had it not been for the Agitators' initial interpretation. It is, therefore, not as strong of an argument as one that is placed forward by choice. There then seems to be a dichotomy that is quite unavoidable. Either Paul flouted, without apparent reason, a canon of rhetoric or Barrett's insistence on a forced interpretation is incorrect.[13] While reasons may be given for Paul's late provision of a weak argument, they seem unlikely. Given Paul's isolation of the allegory, and the fact that he places it as the conclusion to

judge's mind, or at the end, so as to leave a final impression on him, or be divided between the beginning and the end, in any case following Homer's tactics of putting the weakest in the centre and, as it were, giving them more courage? In fact, they should be arranged according to the demands of the particular Cause [*sic*], with (in my opinion) only one exception, namely that the speech should never descend from the strongest argument to the weakest" (Quintilian, *The Orator's Education [Books 3-5]*, trans. Donald A. Russell, LCL 125 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001], 462-63). While the order must not end with the weakest, it is also worth noting (which Betz does not) that Quintilian holds that the weakest arguments should be clustered together. The allegory in Paul is quite separated from other arguments, which has led to some difficulty in explaining its presence. Thus, there is all the more reason to question why a weak argument is not only saved for last, but isolated the way that it is. Cicero argues that while the arrangement of a speech might be flexible, depending on the context, those arguments that find their way to the beginning and end of the proof and refutation (confirmatione et confutatione) sections must be the strongest (Cicero, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, LCL 403 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954], 189).

[12]Even though Betz's own interpretation implies a rather weak allegorical argument from Paul. See Betz, *Galatians*, 245–46 and pp. 48-51 below on arbitrary word-play.

[13]Barrett's initial article "The Allegory," was released in 1976 and republished in 1982; Betz's commentary was published in 1979. Thus, Barrett's original article does not take account of Betz's rhetorical approach. Later, however, Barrett does give approval to Betz's overall rhetorical scheme (see Charles K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985], 50).

his *probatio*, signs point to Paul thinking that the allegory was a strong and convincing argument.[14]

The missing argument concerning circumcision. The most damaging problem facing Barrett's reconstruction is Paul's rather stark avoidance of the issue surrounding circumcision. The chapters of Genesis dealt with in the allegory, from Genesis 16-21, provide several problems for Paul. It is clear that it is the genealogical offspring of Abraham *through Sarah* that are included in the promise given to Abraham, not just any offspring. It does not take much biblical acumen to trace this line through and into the Mosaic covenant. Furthermore, the law was specifically given to this line of promise, and not to Ishmael. It is not hard to see how the Agitators may have argued: as the promise and the law were given to the same stream of children, within the economy of God's *Heilsgeschichte* both are intertwined. Thus, to belong to the promise means to be given to the law. Such is a literal reading of the Pentateuch.[15]

However, it is doubtful that the Agitators, in appealing to this section of text, would have missed the obvious opportunity provided to them by Genesis 17. Within that chapter, God provides circumcision as the process all male children involved in the promise must undergo. The language is both universal and unequivocal ("if any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant," Gen 17:14). The sign of circumcision is perhaps all the more

---

[14]Albrecht Oepke suggests that there may have been a pause in Paul's dictation, hence he had time to reconsider and rethink his argument, and add a supplemental argument which would more adeptly placed in chap. 3: "Der Wechsel des Tons ist auffallend. Eben noch weiche Gemütsklänge, jetzt nüchterne Reflexion. Der folgende mühsam wieder von vorn anfangende Schriftbeweis hätte seinen gegebenen Platz in Kap. 3 gehabt. Er ist dem Apostel wohl erst nachträglich eingefallen. Das setzt neues Nachdenken über den Gegenstand, vielleicht auch neue Septuagintalektüre voraus. Zwischen V. 20 u. 21 liegt daher vielleicht eine Diktierpause" (Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*, Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 9 [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973], 147). Especially odd is his contention of a change in Paul's tone, something that appears to run counter to Paul's own contention in 4:20.

[15]Cf. Barrett, "The Allegory," 163. I take up the issue of literal readings in chap. 5.

important as it glues the connection between the law and the promise. Not only was the law given to the promised-son Isaac and his descendants, but the rite of circumcision was primary to both law and lineage. This text would likely have been the lynch pin in the Agitators' argument.

What is not clear is why Paul does not tackle the interpretation head on, especially if circumcision was almost certainly an important part of the Agitators' argument, and was easily built from this portion of Genesis. Barrett argues that the presence of the Sarah/Hagar allegory "stands in the epistle because his opponents had used it and *he could not escape it*."[16] If such inescapability is so for the story of Sarah and Hagar, Paul's treatment of circumcision is exceptionally suspect. Why choose to interact with this story, while ignoring the elephant in the room?

Many commentators argue as if Paul has handled the issue of circumcision within the allegory itself. Matera states that the allegory takes up "Paul's reading of Genesis 17."[17] Elmer believes that "Paul's innovative" interpretation of Genesis indicates that he is responding to the agitators, because, "It seems unlikely that Paul would have used such an argument against circumcision" on his own, without provocation.[18] Yet it does not appear that Paul actively takes on Genesis 17 in the allegory. Paul takes on the entirety of the law, not the practice of circumcision in isolation from the law, nor specifically Genesis 17. Paul's argument appears to run on a separate plain of thought completely. While it is possible that Paul does tackle the question obliquely, as the issue of circumcision in relation to the entirety of the law comes up in Galatians 5:3, this verse references the relationship of circumcision and the law, not the promise, and therefore is unlikely related to Genesis 17.

---

[16]Barrett, "The Allegory," 162, emphasis mine.

[17]Matera, *Galatians*, 172.

[18]Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem, and the Judaisers*, 136.

According to Barrett's theory, Paul needs to make a refutation of the Agitators' interpretation of the story – which he does through his own allegory. The problem is acute, and is not here inappropriately addressed through an appeal to silence. Barrett's theory predicts a loud proclamation precisely on this point; the fact that Paul feels no need to even mention the passage is a strike against the reconstruction, specifically that he wrote the allegory *precisely because* his hands were tied.

Further, the text of Genesis 16-21 only *implies* the link of Sarah-Isaac and the forthcoming law; the case for the connection is not built out of this text alone, but through a wider and longer appeal to the arch of the story through the entirety of Genesis and into Exodus.[19] On the other hand, if Paul's hands were tied, and if Paul would be expected to answer a textual interpretation specifically, it would be the explicit connection of the Abrahamic covenant with circumcision in Genesis 17. That Paul does not feel the need to do so argues against the strong form of Barrett's reconstruction.[20]

Conclusion. What Barrett is really engaged in is not an explanation of the passage, but an explanation of *the presence* of the passage. It is the discomfort that modern exegetes have with the allegorical interpretation that is relieved, as though such an interpretation was forced upon him. In fact, Barrett expands this view, arguing that polemical backgrounds were likely standing behind the other passages of "similar exegesis" including 1 Corinthians 10 and 2 Corinthians 3.[21]

---

[19]Here, Matthew Y. Emerson's article "Arbitrary Allegory, Typical Typology, or Intertextual Interpretation? Paul's Use of the Pentateuch in Galatians 4:21–31," *BTB* 43, no. 1 (2013): 14-22, is very helpful.

[20]By "strong" form of Barrett's argument, I mean the precise argument he raises in his essay, namely that Paul is forced to deal with a text he is better off ignoring. A "weaker" form of the argument could insist that Paul himself thought that an answer to the Agitators' analysis was a good idea, but not necessary. Thus, he willingly responds to their interpretation without compulsion, thinking that his interpretation was indeed superior to theirs. Even this weaker form of the argument, however, does little to address why Paul does not take on Gen 17 if he is responding to the Agitators' argument.

[21]Barrett, "The Allegory," 165.

Barrett's initial reconstruction argued that while the nature of the connections was different in Paul's allegory, the basic outline was already built by the Agitators. However, the problems surrounding Paul's lack of concern for the issue of circumcision and Genesis 17 indicate that a re-calculation is necessary. Barrett's reconstruction assumes that the Galatians understood what Paul was up to; directly where he seemed most prone to attack, Paul was providing a counter-interpretation. However, Genesis 17 and circumcision would likely have been the focal point of the Agitators' analysis. If the Galatians understood what Paul was up to, they would presumably be left trying to determine what they were to make of an allegory that refused to tackle the central portion of the Agitators' argument head-on. Thus, Barrett's reconstruction has set up expectations that Paul's allegory cannot deliver on.

Critique of Authoritative Interpretations

Regardless of the historical reconstruction offered, many see allegorical exegesis as an avoidance of argument; it is simply a reading that is placed forward, which Paul thinks is compelling. De Boer adequately sums up this view: "[Paul] is confident that the Galatians will now accept his daring alternative interpretation of [Genesis 16-21]. . . . He will now provide the Galatians with an alternative reading of the material for which he has effectively already prepared the way in 3:6-29."[22] In this position, De Boer is not alone.[23] According to this line of reasoning, Paul's allegorical analysis wins the

---

[22]Martinus C. De Boer, *Galatians*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 288. De Boer disagrees with D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, WUNT 190 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 169, who asserts that Paul is mounting an argument "based on the authority of scripture." Rather, Paul desires to present a "christologically informed authoritative interpretation of Scripture" (De Boer, *Galatians*, 288). It would appear that the authority in Paul's interpretation would be based on his understanding of the gospel, forged through his apostolic calling. This concept is certainly correct, but incomplete. Paul is arguing for his interpretation because it is the reading that makes both the revealed gospel of Gal 2:16 and Gen 15-21 work together. De Boer wrongly sets up a false distinction.

[23]Jeremy Punt states, "Paul's radical hermeneutical shift was dependent on a disposition of trust towards the interpreter and his expectation that the Galatian churches would accept him as [a] faithful interpreter of the scriptures" (Jeremy Punt, "Hermeneutics in Identity Formation: Paul's Use of Genesis in Galatians 4," *HTS : Theological Studies* 67, no. 1 [2011]: 2; also see Stephen E. Fowl, "Who Can Read

day not through convincing argument, but more through fiat, an *argumentum ad verecundiam* that is based on the position Paul holds over the church rather than on a careful reading of Scripture.[24]

I doubt both the necessity and legitimacy of reading Paul as offering what amounts to a reading of Genesis (and other material through Isaiah) as the main locus of persuasion in Galatians 4:21ff. This critique rests on three arguments. First, Paul appeals to many different epistemological sources to demonstrate the validity of his gospel. He is not resting on his apostolic authority alone, as though a mental ascension to that fact would win him the day. While such an agreement of Paul's status would help to move the Galatians in that direction, in isolation it is not enough. Second, there are textual indicators in Galatians which imply that Paul does not consider his previous arguments for apostolicity to be totally comprehensive or complete. Importantly, many of these indicators come in 4:12-20, directly before the allegorical appeal to Sarah and Hagar.

Lastly, the nature of allegory itself needs to be elaborated upon. Allegory does not entail a simple reading of any source material, thereby imbuing the text with deeper details which may or may not be agreed upon. Rather, it can stand as an argument itself, and is often backed with logical appeals. That allegory can contain argument does not mean, out of necessity, that Paul is doing the same. It does indicate, however, that allegory itself does not necessitate a lack of grounded argument.

Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 77-95; Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* [New York: T&T Clark, 2004], 130–35). Matera states, "Paul does not explain the criteria that he employs in his allegorical exegesis; he simply interprets the text" (*Galatians*, 175).

[24]François Vouga apparently reads the allegory along these lines, linking the passage to Paul's statements in Gal 1:10-12 (where Paul argues that he is not preaching man's gospel nor pleasing men) and stating that he is not making an exegetical argument: "Gal 4,21-5,1 ist deshalb nicht als exegetische Beweisführung, sondern vielmehr als Zusammenfassung der theologischen Grundthese von Gal 1,10-12 und der daraus folgenden Argumentation zu verstehen" (François Vouga, *An Die Galater*, Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament 10 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 114).

Paul's appeal to apostolic authority. It is unlikely that the initial autobiographical response from Paul, affirming the divine nature of his apostolic calling, was meant simply as a support for his apostleship. Naturally, such an appeal does support Paul's claims of apostleship. Yet, Paul does not include the details of his conversion and calling by God to primarily support his authority, but to demonstrate the nature of the gospel previously preached to the Galatians.[25] The gospel, not Paul's authority, is the subject grammatically in 1:11b and thematically in 1:12. God was pleased, not just to give Paul authority, but εὐδόκησεν . . . ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

Likewise, the doubting of Paul's apostleship played a role in the larger problem of denying the gospel, but was not of sole importance. There are several ways to notice this in the letter. First, Paul's statement in 1:8 clarifies that his authority as an apostle is limited by the gospel that he proclaims. The gospel, and hence the subject of that gospel, Jesus Christ, has authority over the Galatians and Paul both. Therefore, Paul includes himself in the anathema: καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζηται ὑμῖν παρ᾽ ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. While this self-incrimination is a certainly rhetorical flourish by Paul, it nevertheless would be quite out of place if the truth of the gospel was based on Paul's authority and not vice versa. Apostleship itself was not enough to ensure the truth of the gospel. Thus, it is unlikely that Paul's appeal to his apostolic commission was to support his authority, and not the gospel.

To affirm that it is unlikely that Paul argued for his apostolic role simply to assert his authority is not to say that the Galatians' diminishing affirmation of Paul's

---

[25]So Bernard C. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians?," *NTS* 34 (1988): 411–30; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*, WUNT 140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 11. John Howard Schütz states, "Paul does not hesitate to subordinate to this one gospel himself. . . . If his opponents wish to equate gospel with tradition, he must show that it transcends tradition. To this he turns in 1:10-2:11. To do this he turns to himself" (John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, The New Testament Library [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007], 128).

apostolic authority did not play a role in their turning away from the gospel. It certainly played a role. The question, however, is whether that authority is assumed to be sufficient proof for the gospel by Paul. It does not appear to be. Not only does Paul include himself in the anathema in 1:8, but he also clearly uses the hypocrisy of Peter as a sign of the denial of the gospel.[26] Apostleship was not enough.

Further, Paul uses several lines of proof to demonstrate the truth of the gospel he had preached to the Galatians. Paul is not content to argue for his apostleship alone and, when sufficiently proven, to turn toward imperatives. Instead, Paul seems to use a variety of approaches to display the trustworthiness of his gospel throughout the letter. He clearly does argue for his own apostleship, both as being from God himself (1:11-24) and recognized by the pillars (2:1-10). He argues further (perhaps somewhat in parallel) that his gospel makes sense of revelation (3:6-14, 16) and logic (3:15-4:7). Paul does not appear to rest on his apostleship alone to lure the Galatians back to the truth, but rather appeals to a host of theological, scriptural, historical, and personal issues that all point at the truth of the gospel originally proclaimed to the Galatians.

All of the above is to point to the problematic nature of assuming Paul rests on his apostleship to prove the gospel at hand, or to force the Galatians into (retro)action. Paul's apostleship plays a role in demonstrating the truth of the gospel, but never does he appear to argue for the truth of his position through an appeal to his own God-given

---

[26]Paul goes so far as to call Peter κατεγνωσμένος, which given the context of 1:4, clearly indicates condemnation (see Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 151–52). Yet, there is little doubt that Paul still considered Peter an apostle. While Paul is not specific of those whom he considered τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους in 1:17, he immediately thereafter states that he met with only Cephas after his 3-year sabbatical in Damascus. Paul states that he did not go immediately (εὐθέως) to consult with flesh and blood nor to meet with those apostles. The quick mentioning of Peter in the next verse (v. 18) indicates that Paul strongly felt Peter to be in this group, which is further emphasized in 1:19 when he claims he did not see ἕτερον τῶν ἀποστόλων. Further, Paul notes that Peter was an apostle in equal standing and in like mission as him; as he was sent to the Greeks, so Peter was sent to the circumcision; as God had worked in Paul for his apostleship, so had he worked in Peter; as Paul was entrusted with the gospel, so was Peter. Given Paul's quick reflex to qualify notions of authority in 2:6, the fact that he notes Peter's apostolic standing even after the Antioch accident indicates his clear view of Peter as an apostle of the Lord, even one that could be severely wrong.

authority. Stanley summarizes well: "Apparently, Paul had concluded that a stark assertion of his own authority (i.e., a direct command) would be ineffective, since many of the Galatians were solidly aligned with the circumcision party."[27] If Paul is ill-content to argue for the gospel through his authority earlier in the letter, why does he now change tack in the allegory?

The persuasiveness of Paul's argument for apostolicity. While the above questioned the *purpose* of Paul's arguments for his apostleship, there is little question that he has strenuously argued for it.[28] Given that, is it possible that Paul believes, prior to the allegory, that he has won the Galatians back?[29] Perhaps, when he mounts his reading of Genesis, he is more assured that he will be heard and followed. Such a supposition, while possible, is unlikely.

First, Paul's use of rhetorical questions indicates his reticence to assume his arguments for apostolicity have had their full effect. Paul has littered the emotional section prior to the allegory, from 4:12-20, with rhetorical questions. These questions are meant, in essence, to drive the Galatians to remember what *was*.[30] Thus, Paul is in effect reminding them of their great love for him, without asserting that such love has been resumed. In fact, the very point of such questions is lost if Paul assumes a resumption of

---

[27]Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 120. This is an odd statement from Stanley, who will later, when discussing the allegory, suggest that the Galatians would defer to Paul's understanding of Scripture (see ibid, 130). Stanley would oddly have Paul feign his authority through the use of Scripture.

[28]While it seems out of place today, given the importance placed on logical fallacies such as *ad-hominem*, it was clear that persuasion included an understanding of the ethics of the speaker in the ancient world; see Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 17, and n1 in this chapter, above. Paul had good reason, then, to argue for his authority and his *ethos* as an apostle of the Lord; it was not that his argument rested on it, but that it made his argument more persuasive.

[29]"This account [Gal 1:10-2:21] serves to validate Paul as someone who is fit to exercise the sort of interpretive power we find in chs. 3 and 4. The aim of such rhetoric is to persuade the Galatians that in a dispute over how to understand Abraham's story, Paul is the kind of person who can render a faithful and decisive, albeit allegorical, account" (Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?," 94).

[30]"Rhetorical questions . . . are often reminders, designed to prompt the retrieval of information the speaker regards as relevant to the hearer" (Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 252).

love for him by the Galatians.   Such a move would only pour salt in old wounds.

However, if they are still, in Paul's mind, cold toward him, then the questions remind

them that they once loved him fiercely. Thus, Paul's questions are attempts to move the

Galatians back to a stance of love toward the apostle, and imply that he does not consider

them as having altered their opinion of him during the course of his letter.   The rhetorical

questions allow the Galatians to see just how far their love of Paul has diminished, and

allows Paul's own continual love for them to have an even greater emotional impact.

Also, 4:19 itself states that Paul is not changing his tone with them.[31] He is

unsure if the arguments presented thus far have had their effect – if present he would be

able to dialogue with them about the problem, and could judge the effectiveness of his

arguments by their responses, both verbal and bodily. Because he is not present with

them he cannot judge the efficacy of his arguments, and must presume that his arguments

have not won the day. He thus enters into the allegory with this mindset.

Further, the nature of the verbs used in 4:12ff. suggests that Paul does not

believe that his appeals to the Galatians have been fully persuasive. When speaking of

the love that the Galatians have had for him, Paul often uses aorists.[32] Thus Paul sees

these actions as complete, and does not attach any lingering effects. The use of aorists

does not mean, out of necessity, that such lingering effects are absent. It is interesting,

however, that when speaking of the change in relationship between he and the Galatians,

Paul uses a perfect (γέγονα, v. 16). The perfect here implies that Paul had become an

enemy in the minds of the Galatians and that he remains as such today. In light of Paul's

switch in tenses, the use of aorists strongly implies that the love of the Galatians remains

---

[31]Ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου.

[32]Ἐξεπτύσατε (you despised, v.14); ἐξεπτύσατε (you rejected, v. 14); ἐδέξασθέ (you welcomed, v. 14); ἐδώκατέ (you gave, v. 15).

a thing of the past, in contrast to the continued state of Paul as enemy. The present θέλοντες used in 4:21 further indicates that Paul does not think the matter settled.

Given that Paul provides no indication that his former relationship with the Galatians has been resumed, it is safe to assume that Paul does not think that his previous arguments for apostolicity has won the day. In fact, the linguistic and contextual evidence point to exactly the opposite conclusion: Paul still considered the Galatians as hostile to him. To consider that Paul would move from this attitude to arguing from authority therefore seems specious.

Allegory and grounding. Further, allegorical interpretations were not used in lieu of arguments. Simply because Paul uses a well-known form of biblical exegesis does not mean that his particular choice of style does not also intend a form of argumentation. By argumentation here I do not mean that Paul's interpretation of the Sarah/Hagar story is not in and of itself meant to clarify or counteract a previous understanding. That it stands as an argument as such is clear in and of itself. Rather, Paul provides reasons for his argument, grounds which provide a basis for the reading that he intends the Galatians to accept. Thus, Paul argues for his position, he does not just assert it. Allegory often consists of such grounds, although many commentators speak as though such grounds are absent due to the allegorical nature of the interpretation.[33] Cosgrove states,

> Moreover, on those points where the allegorist anticipates resistance, he is always
> ready with warrants for his exegetical judgments. It is characteristic of Philo, for
> example, that he *argues* for his allegorical interpretation, a fact we must bear in
> mind when we consider Paul's exegesis of the story of Abraham's wives and sons.[34]

---

[33]So (again) Betz's comment is telling: Paul is so absorbed in "allegory" (which Betz places in quotations) that he does not care if his allegorical connections had solid grounds or not (Betz, *Galatians*, 245). So also Oepke, who states that Paul's word-play "ergibt sich unmittelbar nur die Zusammenstellung Hagars mit dem Sinai, nicht mit dem Sinaibund, geschweige denn mit dem jetzigen Jerusalem. Aber das sind zwirnsfäden, über die die Allegorese nicht stolpert" (Oepke, *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*, 150).

[34]Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21-30)," *NovT* 29, no.

Thus, allegory itself does not imply the validity of Paul's interpretation outside of any argument or grounds. Rather, when confronted with anticipated resistance, allegorical authors will argue for their interpretations, rather than simply allowing them to stand as one of many possible readings. Paul's use of allegory is no escape from this fact.

Further proof is found in Origen. It is well known that Origen read the Sarah and Hagar story allegorically. Important at the present moment is the fact that Origen seeks to ground his assertion that Sarah is allegorically virtue:

> For this reason, therefore, God says to Abraham: "In all that Sara has said to you, hearken to her voice." This saying, at any rate, is not appropriate to physical marriage, since that well known statement was revealed from heaven which says to the woman of the man: "In him shall be your refuge and he shall have dominion over you." If, therefore, the husband is said to be lord of his wife, how is it said again to the man: "In all that Sara has said to you, hearken to her voice"? If anyone, therefore, has married virtue, let him hearken to her voice in all which she shall counsel him.[35]

Regardless of whether Origen's reasons are sound, he feels the need to provide them. He is not just interested in giving a reading of Genesis. Rather, he argues for his position, specifically the difficulty of aligning Sarah with virtue embodied.

Likewise, Heraclitus, a close contemporary with Paul, uses a significant amount of argumentation to support his reading of Homer.[36] This comparison is made all the more important for the polemical situation Heraclitus is in, as he immediately argues for allegorical interpretation as a legitimate hermeneutical way to approach Homer,

---

3 (1987): 220–21, emphasis original. See also the study by Irmgard Christiansen, who argues that Philo's allegories are logically explained (logisch begründet) in their relationship to the biblical text (Irmgard Christiansen, *Die Technik der allegorischen Auslegungswissenschaft bei Philon von Alexandrien,* Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik 7 [Tubingen: JCB Mohr, 1969], 27).

[35]Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, *The Fathers of the Church* 71 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 122.

[36]David Konstan, ed., *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, trans. Donald A. Russell, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 14 (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2005), xii, dates the composition of Homeric Problems (*ΟΜΗΡΙΚΑ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΑ*) to around AD 100, although it is admitted that such a date is "highly speculative" and the date may be somewhat later (ibid., xiii).

specifically in light of Plato and Epicurus, as well as other more recent attacks.[37] Not

only does he argue for this manner of reading Homer, but this particular situation forces

him to prove the allegorical connections he builds.[38]

The point is not that authors must argue for their validity or their allegorical

reading. Rather, even in a work that does not sit in polemical tenseness, Origen is

content to provide reasons for his reading of Genesis. Such argumentation is all the more

necessary in Heraclitus, whose whole method of reading Homer was under attack. It is

therefore likely that Paul, who finds the churches of Galatia no longer favorable to him,

who have replaced their love of him with the Agitators, and who are nearly led astray by

a false-gospel, would do the same.[39]

Conclusion. Many interpreters look to Paul's allegory as simply a way of

reading the OT in light of the Christ-event and its entailments. For these, Paul foregoes

grounding and arguing for his position and instead relies upon his status as both apostle

and authoritative interpreter of the OT to make his argument. Such a position, however,

misunderstands both how Paul intends the autobiographical sections of Galatians and

how persuasive even he believes his argument has been, and further underestimates the

argument embedded within allegory. Paul does not intend the allegory to be a reading

offered on the basis of his authority, but rather as an argument based on the logical

entailments of the gospel worked out through the OT story.

---

[37]Konstan, ed., *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, 3–9. Heraclitus is likely also responding to critics such as Plutarch, who despairingly calls allegory a forcible distortion of certain works (διαβεβλημένων μάλιστα); Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 1, LCL 197 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 100-01.

[38]In the very first allegorical connection Heraclitus makes, he states that such proof is his goal: "I shall now try to prove [πειάσομαι διδάσκειν] that the season when the Greeks fell sick of the plague was the summer, and that the event therefore was not due to Apollo's anger but to a spontaneous corruption of the air" (Konstan, *Heraclitus*, 17).

[39]See also Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 192.

Critique of Metalyptical Interpretations

Instead of a substitution with an abstract concept (i.e., the heavenly Jerusalem with the Church), or as the spoils of authority, metalyptical interpretations see the allegory instead work as a textual note, a way to invite the inspection of Genesis and Isaiah for the conceptual strands introduced by the allegorical interpretation placed forward by Paul. The metaphors exist as a shorthand for a lengthier discussion Paul simply wishes to imply, but not explicitly engage in. In this way the text presented can be related to an iceberg: 10 percent showing on the surface and 90 percent submerged in background connections and unconscious threads.

The use of metalyptical analysis in theology building is invaluable; it aids readers in trying to plumb the unconscious or unstated 90 percent; to dig, as it were, into the mind of Paul.[40] To this end, works such as those of Jobes, Emerson, and Caneday are not only important but extremely helpful in providing insight into the possible connections that Paul saw in the text but refrained from stating clearly out of necessity of space or consideration of audience.

But theology building in this manner is not why Paul, in the first instance, wrote Galatians. The question that is at the forefront of this dissertation is not answered in a straightforward sense by such analysis. The use of intertextual relationships seeks to provide analysis and an apology of Paul's interpretation of Scripture. What is of first importance in this work is not to provide a defense of Paul's OT hermeneutic or a way to explain it, but rather to explain what he expected the Galatians to understand in light of the text with which they are confronted. What concerns this particular thesis is what, precisely, Paul is attempting to communicate to the Galatians. While Paul's intent may

---

[40]A point of contention surrounds what some see as Hays' over-emphasis on the human author in his metalyptical studies. See Thomas J. Millay, "Septuagint Figura: Assessing the Contribution of Richard B. Hays," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, no. 1 (2017): 93–104.

be co-terminal with aspects of metalyptical analyses, such results do not always attain nor are they necessary.

This distinction between Paul's intent and metalyptical analyses can be seen in several ways. Hays argues that Paul's hermeneutic can be seen as being ecclesiastically centered, rather than Christocentric. Perhaps this argument is true, and Hays' analysis clearly has much to commend it. But did Paul expect that the Galatians would come to that understanding? The answer to that question is undoubtedly no, at least not in the way that modern scholars understand "ecclesiocentric."[41] Such a term is loaded with implications and baggage (good and bad) that would have been temporally impossible for the Galatians to comprehend. While a helpful term for modern exegetes, it is nevertheless an imposition, even if a useful one, on the text.

Jobes and Emerson provide better examples.[42] Jobes' article is involved and rewarding, as her look at the interplay between Paul's typical theological interests and Isaiah is helpfully illuminating. Such a journey leads her to see connections to many common Pauline themes, including the central importance of the resurrection of Jesus. She posits that the resurrection held such a central hermeneutical status in Paul's thinking that it was behind Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:21ff. However, if part of the issue confronting the Galatians was the hermeneutical implications of the resurrection, it would be more beneficial for Paul to mention it explicitly. It is difficult to know how the Galatians would have picked up on the trail of crumbs that Jobes has found. Jobes herself has admitted this problem, noting that the trail was "arduous," and is practically

---

[41]Peter J. Leithart argues along the same lines, stating that he differs with Hays because the distinction of Christocentric and ecclesiocentric emphases "for Paul, and Augustine, [would] make no sense" ("The Quadriga or Something Like It: A Biblical and Pastoral Defense," in *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future,* ed. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008], 118n30).

[42]Karen Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *WTJ* 55, no. 2 [1993]: 299-320; Emerson, "Arbitrary Allegory," 14-22.

possible only if Paul had blazed such a trail before. There is no textual warrant for this

belief, however, other than it makes Jobes' construction possibly work.[43]

Emerson's article fails at precisely the same point.[44] While he provides a

necessary and helpful apologetic for Paul's hermeneutical strategy in the allegory, he

does little to illuminate how the Galatians were to either come to the right conclusions in

the allegory or be convinced once those conclusions were reached. Emerson hangs much

of his analysis on the use of Hebrew terms that build a connection between Hagar and

Sinai. As far as an apologetic for Paul goes, it is useful. It does little, however, to help

understand how Paul thought that his allegory was convincing on its own right.

Critique of Typological Interpretations

Many theologians have appealed to typology to explain Paul's exegesis in

Galatians 4:21ff. These appeals are not primarily based upon exegetical concerns, but on

hermeneutical concerns raised over the use of allegory, and for two primary reasons.

First, allegory can be conceived as ignoring the physical reality symbolized by the source

material. Thus, for many Christians not wanting to jettison the belief of a physical reality

supporting the truth of Paul's analysis of Genesis, not to mention the rest of the OT, a

move away from allegorical interpretations was a necessary development.[45]

---

[43]Nanos, in *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), attempts to forge the argument that the Galatians would have been better versed on the OT than previously assumed, and indeed had access to those with specialized knowledge. There are, however, problems with his overall thesis (see A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*, Library of Pauline Studies [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003], 24–29). Even if Nanos is correct, and the Galatians were much better versed on the context and nature of the OT because of a close association with synagogues, it is still unlikely that they would have followed the path laid out by Jobes.

[44]Emerson's article does not fail in its strategy or stated purpose, which was solely focused on Paul's hermeneutical strategy. But it does fail to indicate how the Galatians would have understood and have been convinced by the argument that Paul placed forward, especially as the links that Emerson highlights are based on Hebrew word-connections that would have been obviously lost on the Galatians.

[45]For instance, Daniel Boyarin states, "For Paul [a faith substituted for works] becomes the actuality of a new religious formation which deprives Jewish ethnicity and concrete historical memory of value by replacing these embodied signs with spiritual signifiers" (Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994], 25). NT scholars often run from such conclusions, not wanting to replace the signs, but transform them. See the interaction with John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of

Secondly, allegorical interpretation lacks many of the boundaries seen as necessary for faithful interpretation. Thus Barrett's denial that Paul was offering "fantastic exegesis."[46] If Paul is found to be using full and perhaps untamed allegory here, there is little that argues against such uses today.[47] Allegory can untether exegesis from the text as communication, and thus open it to all manner of ungrounded readings. While I have sympathies with both of these concerns, appeals to typological exegesis is not the answer to these particular problems in light of how Paul reads the Sarah/Hagar story in Galatians.

Paul's use of ἀλληγορέω does not clinch the argument for allegory outright. While Chrysostom's famous comment, claiming that Paul had misrepresented his own treatment, seems to imply a strong division between typology and allegory, it is unlikely that such a strong division existed.[48] While τύπος was used by Paul elsewhere, it is not clear that Paul would have put such a fine distinction between the two methods of interpretation.[49] Even the most ardent supporter of typological interpretation admits that

---

California Press, 2002).

[46]Barrett, "The Allegory," 165.

[47]Notwithstanding Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

[48]Dawson traces the separation of typology from allegory to the Reformation's attempts to maintain the importance of the historicity of the source text (i.e., the OT). Dawson demurs, "The decision to divorce typology from allegory has obscured the underlying formal similarity of the two procedures by focusing on material theological considerations. . . . Typology is . . . simply one species of allegory; the historical practice of giving texts other meanings (allegory) includes a certain subpractice of giving texts their meanings according to certain 'rules' (typology)" (John David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 15–16). While I find Dawson's understanding of allegory insufficient, his underlying connection of allegory and typology still holds. For further scholarly testimony of typology as a subset of allegory, see ibid., 256–57, n56.

Further, it is doubtful that ancients separated allegory, metaphor, and typology into such fine categories. For example, the author of ps. Demetrius states that Dionysius utters an allegory when he states that "their cicalas shall chirp from the ground" when he speaks a (not so veiled) threat against the Locrians (Demetrius, *De elocutione*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, LCL 199 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995], 408-11). How this statement becomes an allegory, over against a metaphor, is unclear.

[49]While typically referring to the setting of an example, Paul does use τύπος in Rom 5:14 and 1 Cor 10:6 in this manner.

Paul, at most, tempers his allegory with typology.[50] The fact that the two methods were able to be considerably intermingled demonstrates something of the foolishness in suggesting that there is a hard and fast line between the two.

However, it is not clear that a chronological approach yields reliable results in the interpretation of the allegory. Such appeals understand the covenant symbolized and embodied by Sarah as the new covenant. The nature of typological exegesis necessitates such a move; it hardly works to have the reality placed temporally before the shadow.

That the Mosaic covenant is in view with respect to Hagar is little in doubt; constant references to the law and Mt. Sinai bear that out (4:24-25). Paul never explicitly states the second covenant, however, and interpretations differ. Hays and Dunn see the term only referring to the Mosaic covenant seen two opposing ways.[51] Others see two distinct covenants, the first being the Mosaic covenant and the second varying between the New and the Abrahamic covenant.

The δύο διαθῆκαι, however, are most likely two distinct covenants, the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant. The evidence that Paul is referring back to the Abrahamic covenant is overwhelming. The proximity that Abraham plays to the allegory, his prominence in the letter, the connection of ἐπαγγελία to Abraham (3:14-29) and σάρξ to νόμος (2:16, 3:3), the fact that Isaac is so close to the heart of the continuation of the Abrahamic covenant,[52] and the fact that the new covenant is often seen as a

---

[50]Cf. J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 436; R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 81–82.

[51]According to Hays, Paul insisted on one single covenant because "Paul claims that the covenant of promise and freedom is what the law itself, rightly understood, teaches. . . . It is a matter of two rival interpretations of Israel's history" (Richard B. Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000], 302). See also Edgar H. Andrews, *Free in Christ: The Message of Galatians*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Faverdale North, England: Evangelical Press, 1996), 244–45; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians,* Black's New Testament Commentary 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 249.

[52]Cf. Gen 12:1-4; 17:1-19.

47

fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant all give weight to the idea that Paul intends this covenant as the contrast to the Mosaic covenant.[53]

Given that the covenant equated with ἐπαγγελία is best seen as the Abrahamic covenant, appeals to typological analysis are turned on their heads. It is unlikely that the shadow of the Abrahamic covenant, presumably Sarah, would occur simultaneously with the reality. Typological arguments do not work in this manner. While Paul does apply a typological-type proof later in the passage (cf. 4:29-30 and the use of τότε . . . οὕτως καὶ νῦν), it is unlikely that the main portion of the allegory, and the connection of Hagar to Sinai and the present Jerusalem, is built on typological arguments.

Critique of Allegorical Interpretations

The discussion of typological analyses leads directly into the nature of the allegorical analyses offered by many. While my thesis will advance what I consider to be the correct use of allegorical interpretation within the passage at hand, there are a few things to press upon first.

Arbitrary Word-Play. First, the allegory cannot be "arbitrary"; Paul must be grounding the allegory in understandable categories for the Galatians. While I disagree with Barrett and others that Paul's hand has been forced and the Agitators' argument dictated to him the passages he must deal with, I also deny that the allegory can stand on its own, as Paul was writing into a combative situation. Much of this critique is linked to the problems enunciated above in connection to Paul arguing by sheer interpretive power and fiat. Given the polemical situation, an interpretation based solely on hermeneutical power would carry little weight, something that Paul himself seems to acknowledge.

---

[53]See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 301. The careful reader will note that Paul has not, to this point in the letter, referred specifically to Abraham with the word διαθήκη but with ἐπαγγελία (although, note the interplay between διαθήκη and ἐπαγγελία in 3:15-20). But Paul certainly is capable of referring to God's dealings with Abraham in terms of διαθήκη and not just ἐπαγγελία (cf. 4:17). See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 245.

This critique, however, can go further than simply saying that Paul must mount an argument through his allegory. He also must mount a *convincing* argument through his allegory. If Paul must argue for his position, it then does no good to only argue for his position satisfactorily in his own mind; his allegory must be pointed at winning over the Galatians as well. Many treatments of the allegory fail at precisely this point. Jobes, dealt with above, is one case in point.[54] But there are many others, including those whose interpretations stand on word-play in the allegory. The best candidate for this type of treatment is a word-association between the Semitic word for rock and the *word* Hagar.[55] This word-play is primarily discussed in relation to Paul's linking of Hagar and Sinai in 4:25a: τὸ δὲ Ἁγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ.

This sort of word-association is deemed a typical exegetical procedure in allegory. This allegorical maneuver, if accepted, would provide connection between Hagar and Mt. Sinai (which is, after all, a rock). Yet, even in terms of allegory, this is an exceptionally loose connection. First, the association between Hagar and a Semitic word for rock are just generalized approximations, and are not exact. [56] Secondly, Paul goes out of his way not to mention *rocks*, but names Sinai as a mountain (ὄρος).

---

[54]But Jobes is certainly not the only case. Matthew S. Harmon strongly affirms Jobes' position that the resurrection and Isa 54:1 are the central concerns and the main hermeneutical lenses of the allegory (Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, BZNW 168 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010], 183). The problems with such a solution is its difficult explanation within the Galatian churches themselves, hence again Jobes' concerns over an "arduous" journey through Isaiah (Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 318). Harmon is convincing in his argument that Isaiah played a large role in shaping Paul's thoughts about both the gospel and the OT; he is less convincing, however, in his argument that Isa 54:1 is the central hermeneutical concept over the allegory. See chap. 3 below.

[55]The association is typically between and some variation of *haǧar* (Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 211) or *hadjar* (Betz, *Galatians*, 244).

[56]This fact, however noted, does not dissuade some interpreters. "That the Arabic ḥ does not correspond to the Hebrew ה, not to mention the Greek, would not bother a man who is so absorbed in 'allegory' and who would be guided by even the most superficial similarities" (Betz, *Galatians*, 245). So also Bonnard, who states that Paul "interrompt la marche du raisonnement" to provide this allegorical alignment (Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épitre de Saint Paul Aux Galates*, Commentaire Du Nouveau Testament 9 [Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1953], 97).

Martin McNamara insists that because Sinai's location was believed to be in the area of Petra, which was generally thought of as the dwelling place of Hagar, Paul is geographically connecting Hagar to Sinai. This contention obviously impacts the somewhat loose connection of "rocks" to Sinai. Further proof is the fact that the area may have been pronounced as "Hagar," and may have had some importance attached to it.[57] McNamara agrees that it is unlikely that the Galatians would have understood this connection. Yet, he, like Betz, argues that Paul is prone to flights of fancy in the heat of an argument, and would not have really meant for the Galatians to understand it.[58] Longenecker, while affirming McNamara's assessment, further notes that this subtle argument fits well with the idea that Paul is really only writing against the Agitators. Thus, Paul would only have needed them to understand.[59] Yet, Paul is exhorting the Galatians, not attacking the Agitators, and a good portion of his argument rests here.

It is likely that the Galatians would not have picked up on this particular rhetorical move, even if Paul intended it. Several points argue against it. First, the grammar of the subject-predicate relationship in predicate nominative constructions makes the connection quite unclear.[60] Generally, the rules that govern the determination of the subject and predicate is that the subject will be indicated by the presence of (1) a pronoun, (2) the lone articular noun, or (3) the lone proper name. Only outside of these considerations does word order become possibly important.[61] While both Ἁγάρ and Σινᾶ

---

[57]Martin McNamara, "'To de (Hagar) Sina Oros Estin En Tê Arabia' (Gal 4:25a): Paul and Petra," *Milltown Studies* 2 (1978): 36.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Longenecker, *Galatians*, 211.

[60]See Lane C. McGaughy, *Toward a Descriptive Analysis of Εἶναι as a Linking Verb in New Testament Greek*, SBLDS 6 (Atlanta: SBL, 1972), 25; Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. Joseph Smith (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2001), §174-75, for a summation of the difficulty grammarians have had in providing clear guidelines on these rules.

[61]Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 42–45; Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and*

appear, neither is properly articular, and no pronouns appear. These facts mean that

appealing to Paul's word play rests on seeing the neuter article indicating a reference to

the *word* Ἁγὰρ, instead of the person, which is quite an unnatural reading of the verse.[62]

Nothing would prepare the Galatians for this type of treatment, other than the fact that

many believe that such word-play is a common feature of allegory. It is therefore unclear

that Paul has been specific enough to indicate that word-play is going on.

Furthermore, this reading relies on Paul's misuse of the place name for the

language, and thus the locative prepositional phrase is mistakenly seen as a source

(Ἀραβία is a locational name, and is not attested to as a reference to the languages and

dialects of that area).[63] Lastly, this reading is predicated upon the fact that the Galatians

knew Semitic languages or dialects, not to mention geography, and would have picked up

on Paul's extremely subtle hints. Nothing indicates that they would have had access to

these facts or knowledge, which are not explicitly stated but only implied (and weakly, if

at all).

Thus, if Paul must still convince the Galatians, then the allegory cannot rest on

"arbitrary" word-associations that are largely, if not completely, outside of the knowledge

base of the Galatians.[64] Such word-play would fall on deaf ears and would most

assuredly not convince.

Syntax of the New Testament (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 54–56.

[62]So Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 219. Contra Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 302–3; Matera, *Galatians*, 170; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), 254, 759, 766; Martyn, *Galatians*, 438.

[63]See BDAG, s.v. "Ἀραβία."

[64]"Paul ne *démontre* pas sa thèse par des procédés rabbiniques que les Galates ne pouvaient comprendre; il *affirme* plutôt que Jerusalem ‹‹appartient à la même catégorie›› que le Sinaï et Agar *parce qu'elle enfante des esclaves comme Agar et le Sinaï*" (Bonnard, *L'Épitre de Saint Paul Aux Galates*, 98, emphasis original).

This-for-that allegory. Second, the allegory cannot be a simple this-for-that form of argumentation. This particular type of exegesis does honor the nature of allegorical exegesis[65] but both unnecessarily reduces allegorical breadth and poorly fits Paul's use of allegory in the text. Perhaps the best example of a scholar who argues along these lines in Di Mattei, who suggests that allegory is simply a substitution between both Sarah and Hagar and the covenants.[66] Such an analysis raises two problems.

First, it is not at all clear that any figurative language, including allegory, works in this manner. It is telling that Di Mattei's manner of presenting allegory is much like the manner in which classical authors presented metaphor. Metaphor was simply a way of saying something in a different manner – a simple word substitution which avoided monotony. In classical rhetoric, as allegories are in essence extensions of metaphors,[67] they are by nature a "device of *ornatus* [that] must be guided by the other *virtutes*."[68] While *ornatus* is the "most sought-after virtue because it is the most brilliant and most effective *virtus*,"[69] such ornamentation needs to be tempered with clarity, less

---

[65]Helpful here is the famous treatment by C. S. Lewis *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 44–111, which treats not just medieval allegory but allegory in itself. While Lewis does indeed note the development of the allegory throughout antiquity, it is clear that even in its early stages it did more than simply equate a person with a thing, or provide a *simple* this-for-that substitution. The personification of characteristics was such that it spoke about the entire nature of the thing personified. For example, the personification of Mars in *Thebaid* speaks not only of war as a general thing, a static noun that implies nothing more than a definition. But rather, its personification implies its many characteristics: its desire for destruction, its horrific appearance, its raging nature. It is then, in some sense, a this-is-that substitution, but that substitution has far reaching imports that belie that classification (cf. Lewis *The Allegory of Love*, 50–51).

[66]"Paul's allegory . . . also displays this same rhetorical this-for-that: Hagar and Sarah are allegorically two covenants" (Steven Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants [Gal 4.21-31] in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *NTS* 52, no. 1 [2006]: 109). The critique here will be applied further to attempts to see Paul's proof reside on one piece of thematic similarity; namely slavery. See below.

[67]Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson (Boston: Brill, 1998), 398–99 (§895); 256 (§563).

[68]Ibid., 256, (§564), italics original.

[69]Ibid., 243 (§538).

its effects be diminished and its beauty be wasted. Thus, allegory, metaphor, and other tropes are used simply as a means to avoid tediousness in speech and writing, to draw in the audience with their descriptive language, but not to affect the overall and foundational point of the passage.

This classic understanding of metaphor has been challenged. One recent challenge to it has come from the linguistic theory known as Relevance Theory. Viewed within Relevance Theory, metaphor, allegory, and figurative language falls under the same heuristic model as any other speech or communication. As Wilson and Sperber state, "We see metaphors as simply a range of cases at one end of a continuum that includes literal, loose and hyperbolic interpretations."[70] Metaphor is simply another form of language, one which requires more processing cost due to the figurative nature of the language. However, this processing cost is typically offset with numerous weak implicatures which may need to be fortified with other contextual information. A helpful illustration of the exchange of higher processing cost and numerous weak implicatures can be found in Langston Hughes' poem *City*:

> *In the morning the city*
> *Spreads its wings*
> *Making a song*
> *In stone that sings.*
>
> *In the evening the city*
> *Goes to bed*
> *Hanging lights*
> *About its head*

If all Hughes intended to communicate by his poem was that the city seemed alive, or that it had its own personality, or that its sounds made it seem musical, he has failed in his statement, as each statement can be made effective with lower processing

---

[70]Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 97.

53

cost (by stating, for instance, "the city is musical").[71] However, if he means to communicate *all* these things and more besides, only weakly, then he has communicated them well. Metaphors, then, achieve relevance not through one strong cognitive impact but primarily through multiple weak cognitive impacts. Adrian Pilkington clarifies: "Where the addressee is given some encouragement to explore context further, but is less certain as to whether the addresser wishes to communicate the resulting implicatures, then these are said to be *weak implicatures*."[72] These implicatures may take a wide variety of forms; all that is necessary is that they, in some manner, change the way a person views the world.[73]

In the example above, the analysis of Hughes' metaphor of the city-as-alive works because the metaphor specifically *does not* intend one strong implicature (the city is bird-like), but rather a wide range of weaker implicatures. Metaphors inherently provide a basic picture to be explored, and tend not to be used in cases where a one-for-one substitution is meant, excepting dead metaphors. There is, then, an inherent problem with seeing a simple this-for-that substitution in the allegory. Even if that is what Paul meant to do, which is rejected below, the pragmatic effects of the substitution are wider ranging than Di Mattei's understanding of allegory appear to allow. Di Mattei appears to reject such pragmatic effects when he states,

> An expression such as 'the Jews are the sons of Hagar' misreads the allegory by mixing literal and allegorical contexts. 'Hagar' is drawn from the literal narrative, whereas 'Sinai' is its allegorical sense; 'the Jews' are likewise part of this allegorical narrative, and thus properly 'the sons of the Sinai covenant'.[74]

---

[71]See also Adrian Pilkington, *Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2000), 102ff.

[72]Adrian Pilkington, "Introduction: Relevance Theory and Literary Style," *Language and Literature* 5, no. 3 (1996): 159, italics original.

[73]Billy Clark, *Relevance Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 31.

[74]Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 113.

Di Mattei's desire for a strict this-for-that allegory invokes larger implications than he allows. Thus, while it is possible to argue that Paul only desires to substitute Hagar with the Sinai covenant *in form*, pragmatic considerations do not allow the clear lines that Di Mattei wants to draw.[75]

Secondly, it is unclear that Paul even allows a formal this-for-that substitution in his allegory. In the allegory, the women are not just covenants, but are also connected to cities and, in the case of Hagar, a mountain. Di Mattei admits as much when he continually substitutes παιδίσκη with "Sinai covenant/present-day Jerusalem"[76] and further argues that Paul allegorically links the heavenly Jerusalem to Sarah.[77] Thus, a simple this-for-that substitution does not appear to work, either within the understanding of allegory or textually in Galatians.

While the above analysis was focused on Di Mattei, these attitudes towards allegory can also be extended into the grounding of the relationship between Hagar and Sinai by other scholars. For instance, some note that the connection of Hagar and Sinai is done primarily through the "notion of slavery."[78] While the connection to slavery is indeed a highlight of Paul's allegory, it can hardly serve as the ground for the entire allegory itself. Rather, given that Paul has already associated the law with slavery in 3:23-4:11, it is unclear why Paul would muddy the water with further references to promise, flesh, temporal references and geographical markers. The allegory does not rest

---

[75]Further, it is unclear what Di Mattei is even critiquing here. Scholars who claim that Paul is arguing that the Jews are the sons of Hagar are not arguing literally, but are doing so within the scope of metaphor. It further seems as though Di Mattei does not reject the generalized lumping of all Jews into this category either, as he states that the Jews are still properly "sons of the Sinai covenant" and thus subject to the slavery allegorically linked to Hagar.

[76]Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 113.

[77]It appears Di Mattei takes the Sarah/Jerusalem pair as a further allegory that Paul builds through Isaiah. But doing so denies the clear this-for-that allegory that Di Mattei was at pains to build. Ibid., 114–20.

[78]De Boer, *Galatians*, 299; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 304.

on one specific connection of Hagar and Sinai, whether built through διαθήκη or παιδίσκη. Rather, Paul mounts his argument on a collocation of associations that he has built throughout the epistle.

Conclusion

While Paul's use of ἀλληγορέω certainly implied a well-known form of exegesis, how precisely he sought to argue for his interpretation within allegory is left somewhat unsure. If Paul intended for his allegory to be a convincing argument for the Galatians, how did he accomplish this? As Cosgrove helpfully states, "We should not forget that in antiquity allegorizing was employed most typically to bring a revered tradition in line with accepted views."[79] Cosgrove's point can be easily seen, for instance, in Heraclitus, who was at pains to show that Homer's apparent irreverence in certain passages fit with the (then) current manner of honoring the gods.[80] What, then, is this common ground between Paul and the Galatians?

It is the thesis of this dissertation that this common ground has been staked throughout the argumentative sections of the letter, and highlighted by Paul's contention that ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι' ἐπαγγελίας in 4:23. Proving the cogency of this hermeneutical insight within the allegory is the burden of chapter 3, while the thematic and rhetorical relationship to the rest of the epistle is the burden of chapter 4.

---

[79]Cosgrove, "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children," 220.

[80]"It is a weighty and damaging charge that heaven brings against Homer for his disrespect for the divine. If he meant nothing allegorically, he was impious through and through, and sacrilegious fables, loaded with blasphemous folly, run riot through both epics. . . . For these reasons, it is, I think, perfectly plain and evident to all that no stain of abominable myth disfigures his poems" (Konstan, *Heraclitus*, 3).

CHAPTER 3

EXPOSITION OF GALATIANS 4:21-5:1

Translation

The argument of this chapter revolves around a specific understanding of how Paul intended his allegorical argument of 4:21-5:1 to be understood by the Galatians. In an effort to aid this argument, and to clarify the many instances where I differ with current translations, I found it helpful to provide my own. Further, it is also hoped that this translation helps to guide the reader through the following argument.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you hearing the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from a slave woman and one from a free woman. The reality is this: the one who comes from a slave has been born because of the flesh, and the one who comes from a free woman has been born through the promise. These realities are used allegorically; for the mothers are two distinct covenants: the covenant from Mt. Sinai bears children into slavery, this is Hagar. Now, Mt. Sinai is in Arabia, and so corresponds to the present-world Jerusalem, for they both stand in slavery with their children.

However, the heavenly Jerusalem is free, and she is our mother. For it is written:

Rejoice, Barren One, who cannot bear children!
Sing aloud and shout, you who does not suffer in labor!
Because the children of the desolate woman are greater in number
than the children of the one who has a husband!

Now you, brothers, are sons of the promise just like Isaac.

Just as thereafter those born by the flesh persecuted those born by the Spirit, so it is also now. Yet what does Scripture say? "Cast out the slave and her son! For the son of a slave will never inherit with the son of the free."

Therefore, brothers, we are not sons of the one who is a slave, but sons of the one who is free. For freedom Christ has set you free; therefore, stand and do not again yield to a yoke of slavery.

Introduction

The first two chapters categorized and critiqued the most common scholarly approaches to the allegory in Galatians 4. Such approaches were found wanting as they weakened Paul's argument (polemical interpretations), denied Paul's argument (authoritative approaches the allegory), overlooked Paul's argument (metalyptical interpretations), or misrepresented Paul's argument (typological interpretations).

Therefore, this chapter seeks to provide a more cogent interpretation of this difficult section of Scripture by demonstrating both Paul's main desire in the passage and clarifying his hermeneutical technique. Such an improvement is gained by appealing to 4:23 as vital for the rhetorical strategy of the allegory. That is, 4:23 provides Paul's interpretative key that allows him to align Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem through the collection of similar characteristics built throughout the letter, here typified by σάρξ. Thus, Paul is able to align the three because *the one who comes from a slave has been born because of the flesh, and the one who comes from a free woman has been born through the promise*.

Noting 4:23 as the hermeneutical key behind the allegory provides a textual basis for the connections that Paul makes throughout 4:21-5:1. Barrett's polemical theory lowered the difficulty of the allegory by noting the pre-made connections of the Agitators. While Barrett's argument was insufficient to explain the presence and location of the allegory, it is the hoped that the use of 4:23 as the key lens through which the entire allegory is to be read might achieve the same reduction in difficulty.

This reduced difficulty will be achieved through Paul's use of previously built characteristics that enable links between Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem. Hence, the interpretive key of 4:23 is not applied through strict syllogistic logic, but rather through the associations Paul has made concerning both the σάρξ (law, slavery, works, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) and the ἐπαγγελία (Spirit, inheritance, life) throughout his letter. Evidence that Paul is widening the terms to highlight these associations is

demonstrated by (1) the enveloping of the argument with ἐπαγγελία and ἐλεύθερος; (2) the rebuilding of the associations within the allegory; and (3) the implications of Paul's use of συστοιχέω in 4:25. Thus, it will be argued that these terms (σάρξ/ἐπαγγελία) are inclusive, implying previous associations Paul has built within the letter.

While grounding the connections made through σάρξ/παιδίσκη is the primary objective, I will further argue that this thesis alleviates many other conceptual problems within the allegory, namely the connection to νόμος, the interpretation and textual problem in 4:25, and the avoidance of naming Sarah. Such additional benefits will provide further confirmation of the thesis.

Further, the hermeneutical key of 4:23 alleviates the interpretive difficulties inherent in Paul's presumed use of an over-active allegorical imagination, raw power in his exegesis, and empty word-play. Paul seeks, through careful arguments centered on the lens provided in 4:23, to illuminate the fate of those ὑπὸ νόμον (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) as illustrated in Abraham's story. Thus, Paul's allegory provides another argument to those previously presented in 3:1-4:20 while simultaneously summarizing those same arguments in a memorable fashion. The following outline of the passage is tentatively proposed, and the thesis of this chapter will be traced exegetically along these lines:[1]

1. Introduction and Theme (4:21-22)

2. Thesis: The connection of slavery to flesh/promise to freedom (4:23-28)

    a. The Hermeneutical Key (4:23-24a)

    b. Flesh and Slavery (4:24b-25)

    c. Promise and Freedom (4:26-27)

    d. Conclusion (4:28)

---

[1]The literary structure of the allegory is debated. The best discussions are found in Anne Davis, "Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1," *BBR* 14, no. 2 (2004): 161–74; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 294–95.

3. Further Proof from Persecution (4:29-31)

4. Free Children Hold to Their Freedom (5:1)

Exegesis

While the above is the exegetical outline of the passage, problems within the allegory will be addressed through the same textual schematic. The issue of the νόμος and the sons of Abraham will be noted in the introduction and theme (4:21-22). Issues dealing with Paul's lumping of Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem (4:24b-25) and the missing identification of Sarah (4:26-27) will be addressed within the negative and positive sides of the allegory, respectively. Finally, I will sketch out how Paul's treatment of Isaac's persecution as further proof reaffirms the main thesis that 4:23 is to be treated as the interpretive key of the allegory.

Introduction and Theme (4:21-22)

Paul begins with the imperatival statement λέγετέ μοι. While Paul may have drastically changed his tone to demonstrate that he is resuming the argument of 3:1-4:11,[2] the statement is more likely meant to be arresting, as is the imagery from 4:15, 19.[3] Those expected to respond are οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, the participle θέλοντες doing triple duty: implying that the Galatians had not yet surrendered themselves to circumcision and thus to the law, implying that Paul still firmly considered them "desiring" the theological positions of the Agitators, and lastly indicating that Paul is not writing this section to οἱ ταράσσοντες he had mentioned earlier. Given the earlier use of

---

[2]Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*, Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 9 [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973], 147.

[3]So L. Ann Jervis, *Galatians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 122. The imperative is rightly seen by Tolmie as a way of focusing the audience (D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, WUNT 190 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 171).

λέγω as an indicator of clarification,[4] it is likely that Paul here is asking the Galatians a direct question, not a rhetorical one. Paul has previously said to the Galatians "I'm telling you" (λέγω, cf. 3:15, 17; 4:1) and now, as an upset parent (cf. 4:19), Paul wants to see if they have paid attention. The use of the present (ἀκούετε) further illustrates that Paul is not interested in previous discussions of the law between the Galatians and the Agitators. Rather, Paul is interested in the arguments he has just placed forward. A helpful translation would be: "Tell me now, are you hearing the law?" That is, "Are you paying attention to what I have been saying?"

This construction indicates that Paul is not simply suppling an additional argument, but a supplemental one, building off his previous arguments and associations. It is quite likely in what will follow that Paul expects that his audience will keep already built associations from 3:1-4:20 in mind for the duration of the allegory.

The use of νόμος, then, is most likely still focused on the Mosaic law, and not more generally the narrative portions of the Pentateuch.[5] Many who argue for a wider meaning behind νόμος here, as introducing a narrative portion of Torah, do so primarily to soften a tension that Paul himself desires to build.[6] The narrative of Abraham's two sons does not imply a direct relationship to the law, as evidenced by 3:15-20, where the law was strictly contrasted to the promise made to Abraham. However, for Paul to now use

---

[4]See chap. 4 below.

[5]Dunn states that the lack of the article on the first reference to νόμος "has no significance for the meaning here (or elsewhere)" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians,* Black's New Testament Commentary 9 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002], 245). Dunn is essentially correct. The article does not affect Paul's use of νόμος; νόμος maintains its essentially legal characteristic throughout the whole of the Galatian epistle.

[6]Cf. A. B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)," *SBJT* 14, no. 3 (2010): 55; Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 215. Bruce argues that the mentioning of νόμος would not have been linked specifically to the regulations of the law, as Paul was unlikely to maintain a distinction between the narrative and legal portions of the Pentateuch. Yet, it is the keeping of the regulations of the law that is at the heart of the contention in Galatians. Furthermore, while Paul has already forged an argument concerning Abraham and the law (see 3:15-20), the center of that argument was on whether the law could nullify the promise (καταργέω, 3:17). Here, the argument has shifted, and the relationship between the law and the story at hand is unknown.

the term νόμος to refer to the narrative portion he had earlier contrasted *with* νόμος is unlikely. Paul desires to build a connection between Abraham's sons and the law in 4:23, a connection he finishes in 4:25.

Paul's playing on the parallel concepts of hearing and understanding implies that correct understanding of the law is impossible without the correct conceptual framework.[7] Paul's intentions, then, are seemingly clear: "[Paul] calls on the Galatians to take seriously the responsibility for the full implications of the law they believe they want to embrace."[8] The allegory that follows, then, is intended both summarize and complete Paul's arguments from 3:1ff.

Yet Paul makes a somewhat odd shift in 4:22. Having prepared readers for another discussion of the law, Paul instead introduces in very bare terms the story of Abraham and his sons. While the shift in focus runs against the expectation that νόμος conveys, it implies that Paul eventually will draw a connection between Abraham's sons and the law. Paul simply introduces the story at hand, stating very briefly that Abraham "had two sons" (δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχεν). The two children were born from different mothers: one from the slave (ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης)[9] and the other from the free-woman (ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας).

Paul has argued, somewhat separately in the letter, for the priority of faith and promise from both the viewpoint of Abraham himself (3:1-9) and the law (3:19-4:12),

---

[7]So Edgar H. Andrews, *Free in Christ: The Message of Galatians*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Faverdale North, England: Evangelical Press, 1996), 234–35. Andrews, however, argues that understanding the law rightly required a correct understanding of the salvation-history that proceeded it. This theory is misleading, as Paul is arguing on allegorical grounds from a common assumption and not by a more temporal salvation-historical model.

[8]Robert K. Rapa, *Galatians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 616. See also Schreiner, *Galatians*, 298.

[9]While παιδίσκη is technically the diminutive of παῖς, it never occurs outside of reference to the slave class; cf. BDAG s.v. "παιδίσκη."

with some overlap between the two (3:10-18). The allegory is meant to draw the distinction between Abraham's progeny and the law in even greater relief.

That Paul stresses both slavery and freedom indicates that each is here being considered as a category of identity. Here is the first hint that Paul's sights are set beyond the simple facts of the story as related in Genesis; Paul points toward a more generalized understanding of Abraham's sons, focused upon all those who are considered both free and slave. Not only does the circumlocution of the mothers' names point in this direction, but the use of ἐκ also builds a connection to the wider themes of faith and works that Paul has already plumbed.[10]   Thus, whatever connection Paul makes from the sons to the law, that same connection is ready-made to apply to the Galatians and their relationship to the law.

Even with this generalization, 4:21-22 present no new facts to the Galatians. As Barrett correctly notes, the brevity of this section indicates that the Galatians had previously heard this story.[11] The familiarity of the Galatians with the facts of the story is better understood by their relationship to Paul than to the Agitators, however. Paul clearly sees the Abraham story as a foundational piece of the gospel message (cf. Gal 3:6-29; Rom 4:1-25; 9:6-13), and the former references to this story indicate that Paul assumes a familiarity with the texts by the Galatians.[12] The brevity of the introduction, however, does carry important implications for the relevance of the allegory.   As Paul only passingly references the story, the important and salient facts that the Galatians need

---

[10]Paul often references his anthropological dualism through the use of ἐκ. See the usage of ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ throughout the letter. Ἐκ is used often to denote not just manner, but origin, and thus identity.

[11]Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982], 161.

[12]As assumed by John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Minneapolis: James and Klock Christian Publishing Co., 1977), 358.

should be apparent on the surface. The general facts of the case, helpfully illuminated by 4:23, should be all the Galatians need to understand what follows.

**Thesis: The Connection of Slavery to
Flesh/Promise to Freedom (4:23-28)**

While 4:21-22 provide nothing new in terms of bare facts to the Galatians, they have produced an odd pairing which needs resolution. Paul has queried the Galatians on whether they have listened to his argument concerning the law. By introducing the story of Abraham's sons, Paul implies that these two divergent lines will meet; 4:23 begins to draw these lines of intersection. Therefore, in 4:23 Paul provides the conceptual framework, the hermeneutical key, of his entire rhetorical strategy. This reading hinges on several factors. First, the discourse nature of ἀλλά highlights Paul's association of the flesh with slavery and the promise with freedom. Second, the absence (and presence) of certain names involved in the Genesis story indicates a broader and more gnomic meaning is implied in the verse. Third, Paul envelopes the main section of the argument with ἐπαγγελία, which argues for its importance as a key for understanding the passage. Lastly, the value of this particular reading is found in the cogency that it provides to the entire passage.

The hermeneutical key (4:23-24a). The ἀλλά found at the beginning of 4:23 appears to many scholars to be quite innocuous, so much so that some scholars ignore its function entirely.[13] Longenecker states that it continues the contrast from 4:22 concerning the nature of the two births.[14] Longenecker's contention is odd, as ἀλλά would provide a contrast between the two clauses, not the members of each clause.

---

[13]See Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 217; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 329; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 169, 175.

[14]Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 208.

Martyn insists that ἀλλά is present to "correct the Teachers' reading of the patriarchal stories."[15] Betz argues, "The conjunction ἀλλά ('but') does not introduce a point different from the preceding, but marks the transition to the following, on account of which the preceding was told."[16] Each of these (save Longenecker) circles around the main point of Paul's use of ἀλλά. Martyn is wrong on the emphasis of the correction being directed toward the Agitators; he is correct, however, that the focus of ἀλλά here is to provide insight into the summary of the story provided above. Betz is correct that the purpose of the ἀλλά is to highlight what was to come in 4:23, and serves as the purpose for why the summary provided in verse 22 was given in the first place. He does not sketch out how ἀλλά accomplishes this, or (more importantly) why Paul desires it to have this function.[17]

This missing explanation is helpfully provided by appealing to discourse grammars. While noting A. T. Robertson's connection between ἀλλά and πλήν, Steven Runge argues, "Elements introduced by ἀλλά and πλήν are highlighted for rhetorical purposes and could have been conveyed using more simplified structures."[18] These "more simplified structures" are typically manipulated syntax-constructions of previous statements. The forms of previous statements were kept as-is in order to highlight the addition of a new concept or idea. For instance, Paul easily could have implied the nature

[15]J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 434.

[16]Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 242. See also In-Gyu Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, JSNT Supplement Series 81 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 53.

[17]Other scholars note the importance of the use of ἀλλά in v. 23, and see it as the central point of the introduction. De Boer, for instance, translates ἀλλά as "the decisive point is that" (Martinus C. De Boer, *Galatians*, The New Testament Library [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], 292). De Boer, however, sees the connection of Hagar to Sinai made primarily through slavery. For a critique of this position, see chap. 2 above.

[18]Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2010), 92; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*. 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), 1187.

of the births (κατά/διά) in verse 22. The use of ἀλλά, however, singles out the importance of these additions, without changing syntax. Runge argues that ἀλλά is uniquely situated to correct "some aspect of what precedes. . . . In the case of ἀλλά, the correcting member was not a member of the original set; it is a new element."[19]

Therefore, what Paul is doing is not merely contrasting 4:23 with 4:22 but adding a new element to the story, one which gains rhetorical importance by being singled out with ἀλλά. These new elements are the important implications of σάρξ and ἐπαγγελία. Paul amends his non-controversial summary and highlights an overlooked theme: the respective roles of flesh and promise. The use of ἀλλά, then, indicates that 4:23 gains rhetorical prominence in Paul's retelling of the story.

Further, Paul's reticence to supply the character names from the Genesis story implies a broader purpose for the nouns παιδίσκη and ἐλεύθερος. Most commentators simply (and understandably) connect the nouns back to Isaac and Ishmael anaphorically.[20] The same may be said for the genitives referring to the mothers' status. It is not clear on this reading, however, why Paul generally refrains from using the names of the story's characters here.

It is doubtless that Paul has the Genesis characters in mind. However, given the generic manner in which Paul refers to those characters, Paul likely wishes to imply in general terms two classes of people, those born ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα, and those ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι' ἐπαγγελίας. This particular distinction of classes is obviously not limited to Isaac and Ishmael (although it certainly applies to them), as Paul is

---

[19]Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 93. Levinsohn also notes the unique ability of ἀλλά to not just contrast, but add to the argument: "When ἀλλά links a negative characteristic or proposition with a following positive one, the negative proposition usually retains its relevance" (Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. [Dallas: SIL International, 2000], 114).

[20]I.e., Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 217; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 299–300. Bruce argues for a wider purpose behind the use of the perfects ("abiding truths") but proceeds to only speak of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Sarah.

extrapolating this class to fit both parties in the Galatian controversy. Therefore, Paul does not use the specific names, but allows the nouns to carry the work for him, implying both the well-known statuses of the characters while also allowing for extrapolation to the current Galatian controversy. Thus, Isaac and Ishmael (as well as their mothers) become specific manifestations of the juxtaposition of promise and flesh.[21]

If correct, the generalized nature of 4:23 appeals to a larger context than just the story summarized in 4:22, and Paul clearly thinks that such a clarification will help to explain the nature of the νόμος to the Galatians. The fact that the clarification uses two major Pauline theological terms (ἐπαγγελία, and to a much greater extent σάρξ) implies that it stands outside the story itself, and is an interpretive lens Paul himself has placed on the Genesis text. Both terms further imply a possible connection between the Abraham story and the law, the tension of which was built in 4:21-22 (cf. σάρξ in 2:16; 3:3; and ἐπαγγελία in 3:14-29). That these terms are unknown with the LXX version of the narrative further indicates that Paul is reading them back into the story. These theological terms, being read into the text, supplement the already invested implications of the Genesis narrative, namely Sarah as ἐλευθέρα and Hagar as παιδίσκη.[22]

---

[21]The import of naming Hagar in v. 24 will be found in the later exegesis of v. 25 below.

[22]While it might be noted that ἐλεύθερος is missing from the LXX version of the story, it is a clearly implied conceptual link, given the pinnacle of the story in Gen 21:10 as quoted by Paul in 4:30. Given the status of Hagar, and the comparison that is drawn between her and Sarah, the playing off of "free" and "slave" is a natural pairing. Furthermore, given the typical portrayal of Hagar in Jewish Midrash (cf. *Eccl. Rab.* 10.7; *Tg. Onq.* Gen 16:2; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 21:14, 22:1; see the summary in Longenecker, *Galatians*, 200–206), Paul is playing off of well-trod notions. It also should be mentioned that σάρξ is used in Gen 17 concerning the circumcision of the flesh, but this use is somewhat outside of the story at hand, especially in light of Paul's usage in Galatians. However, the continual and repeated use of σάρξ in Gen 17 only provides further confirmation of the connection between σάρξ and law, via circumcision.

The importance of the LXX for Paul's treatment of these texts is clear. Not only does Paul quote, with only minor thematic changes, directly from the LXX, but it would have been the only OT the Galatians had access to. When they went to the text of Genesis and Isaiah to better understand Paul's arguments, they would have done so through the LXX, not the MT. On this point, see the critique of Matthew Y. Emerson, "Arbitrary Allegory, Typical Typology, or Intertextual Interpretation? Paul's Use of the Pentateuch in Galatians 4:21–31," *BTB* 43, no. 1 (2013): 14-22 above. For a defense of the thesis that Paul primarily used the LXX, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 119–25; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Paul and Isaiah in Concert in the Letter to the Romans*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 101 (London: Brill, 2002), 145–57.

It is not that the births of both Isaac and Ishmael have become the pattern for the rest of salvation-history.[23] Rather, it is that they themselves are formed from a deeper pattern, and are unique and purposeful manifestations of it. Therefore, Paul is not interested in the historic repercussions of Isaac's birth, but rather in insisting that the gnomic relations of flesh/slavery and promise/freedom are missing components of the summary in 4:22, and in the typical reading of the Sarah/Hagar story.

Paul's argument centers on the universally held concept that slavery is an undesirable state of affairs, whereas freedom is an unequivocal good. The question is not whether freedom is good, but rather how one attains that freedom. Paul's central focus on σάρξ and ἐπαγγελία provides his interpretive key to this mystery. Freedom is the final goal, but the only method that allows for its attainment is ἐπαγγελία. Thus, Paul envelops his argument with ἐπαγγελία, noting it as both the provider of freedom and the resulting likeness to Isaac.[24] Thus, appeals to "notions of slavery" as the hermeneutical keys of the allegory fall flat. If law and slavery were already aligned, with such an association agreed upon, Paul's work would have already been finished.

Paul's use of κατά and διά requires further explanation. Paul likely uses διά to indicate the instrumentality of the promise.[25] The distinction is not connected with the nature of the births *per se*, but made to note the distinction between fleshly ambition and the miraculous power of God to fulfill his own promises. It is likely that Paul employed κατά to demonstrate the typical result of the flesh, which is the production of slaves.[26] The switch to διά, which is somewhat unexpected, is explained in the manner in which

---

[23]Contra Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), 253.

[24]See the tracing diagram provided in appendix 1. Cf. Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, 52–55.

[25]Rightly, Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 247.

[26]Rightly, ibid., 246. Dunn sees that Paul is indeed setting up the comparison with δι' ἐπαγγελίας. So also Schreiner, *Galatians*, 299; Jervis, *Galatians*, 123.

the promise works. The purpose of the switch is to mark the inability of the flesh to enact

freedom, something only the intervening of the promise of God is able to bring.

Paul's thought in 4:23 then both highlights the interplay of flesh/promise in

Abraham's story and begins to link the story to νόμος through σάρξ. The picture of birth

is conveniently circular for Paul: slaves act in the flesh to produce more slaves. Not a

precise opposite, God's promise stands perpendicular[27] to the flesh, as it interrupts the

natural (fleshy) course of things, and breaks the cycle of slavery typical of the flesh. This

use of the flesh forms the basis of the explanation that Paul will soon provide concerning

the law. Keeping this basis (and attached associations) in mind will make the nature of

the allegory considerably clearer and more straightforward.

The word ἀλληγορούμενα is "one of the most difficult and controversial words

in the entire epistle,"[28] being a *hapax* in both the NT and the LXX as well as a word

whose definition varies widely depending on the source.[29] To better understand how Paul

intends ἀλληγορούμενα, it will be helpful to look at both the nature of Paul's argument in

verses 24-27 along with possible glosses for ἀλληγορούμενα.

---

[27]If a mathematical metaphor is to be used, it is probably best to use orthogonal to describe the relationship of God's acting promise and the normal course of the flesh, as vector terminology better carries the concepts of work, action, and effect that are implied in Paul's allegory. Perpendicular, however, is the better understood phenomenon, and is used for that reason.

[28] Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC 30 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 333.

[29]Stephen E. Fowl states that "allegorical readings (and compositions) are interpretations that either explicitly or implicitly counter conventional views about a text, a character or an event" (Stephen E. Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 [1994]: 79). This definition is out of step with almost anyone else's view, and even Fowl calls it "particular" (ibid). Fowl's understanding of allegory is formed from John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Dawson's work is illuminating, and fits well the tack that Paul takes in this passage. While this dissertation is more concerned with the nature and meaning of the text of Gal 4:21ff. than the precise nature of allegory, it is noted that Dawson's working definition fits well with Paul's concern to re-interpret the OT in light of the revelatory gospel of Christ. In this sense, what Paul is doing does not have to be metaphorical or figurative; instead, it needs to challenge the interpretive status quo, which it most certainly does. Here, however, I am more interested in demonstrating how Paul achieves *convincing* interpretation that revises cultural-interpretive status quo.

The most widely accepted definition of allegory is any interpretation (or text) that seeks meaning below the literal or "surface" meaning. See G. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, SBT 22 (Naperville, IL: A.R. Allenson, 1957), 40. See also Patrick G. Barker, "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1994): 195.

The translation of ἀλληγορούμενα has proven difficult, illustrated well by the number of different translations put forward.[30] The use of the participle, instead of the noun ἀλληγορία, is certainly important, and argues against seeing the use of the participle here as simply a substantive.[31] Caneday, seeing the allegory as part and parcel of the Genesis story, seeks for ἀλληγορούμενα to be translated as "were written allegorically."[32] There are problems with accepting this translation, however. First, both the participle and the controlling verb (ἐστιν) are in the present, not the aorist or the perfect, which would be more intuitive for "were written allegorically."[33] Second, Genesis does not appear to be written allegorically. If the allegory were present on the face of the Genesis text, Paul would not need to appeal to concepts or texts outside of Genesis itself. Paul's appeal to ἐπαγγελία and σάρξ implies that the "deeper meaning" was being provided to Genesis through these terms, not mined out of it. Third, while Paul applies allegorical interpretation to the text of Genesis, translating the participle as "were written allegorically" indicates the author of Genesis as having penned the allegory. The allegory is present, but not by the intention of Genesis' author.[34]

---

[30]HCSB: "These things are illustrations"; ESV: "Now this may be interpreted allegorically"; KJV: "Which things are an allegory"; NAS: "This is allegorically speaking"; NIV: "These things may be taken figuratively."

[31]Barker, "Allegory and Typology in Galatians," 203.

[32]Caneday, "Which Things Are Written," 50–78.

[33]See Andrew C. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1," *EvQ* 65, no. 1 (1993): 34–35; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 614, chart 80. In his important study, Di Mattei notes that ἀλληγορέω is most often used with the meaning 'to speak allegorically' (Steven Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants [Gal 4.21-31] in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *NTS* 52, no. 1 [2006]: 106–8). Yet, Di Mattei notes that multiple times, especially in the present participle, ἀλληγορέω does indeed mean 'to interpret allegorically' (ibid., 107n20). Furthermore, what Paul intends in Gal 4:24 must be determined from the context of the passage, and not just outside usage.

[34]Caneday notes this difficulty by stating that the author of Genesis might not "fully grasp these significances in anticipation of the promise's fulfillment" (Caneday, "Which Things Are Written," 61). Caneday, however, does not adequately adjudicate between the intentions of the author of Genesis, the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and Paul's own reading. These differences certainly matter if readers are to see *how exactly* the allegory is present in Genesis. Burton speaks along these lines when he states that Paul could have conceivably written of Scripture speaking here, with "scripture being conceived of apart from the author of the scripture and as now speaking" (Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 253). Either way, it

While Caneday has much merit in his work, the use of "these things were written allegorically" implies too much for the context to bear. Caneday is right, however, to not shy away from the use of the use of the English "allegory" or related cognates. While it is clear that allegory is an imprecise English term,[35] the verbal meaning behind ἀλληγορέω is likewise imprecise in Greek.[36] We lose no precision in accepting the English cognate.[37] The participle does connote an action of some sort, and the present here does seem to indicate Paul's particular use, not the original intention. Furthermore, "these things" (ἅτινά) of 4:24 are the previously mentioned keys of 4:23. While Paul will apply these to the mothers, the use of the neuter ἅτινά instead of the feminine αἵτινες implies the mothers are not specifically in view. Given this, it is likely that what Paul means is that these two keys, that is, the viewing of the text in terms of flesh and promise, "are used allegorically." This translation captures the verbal nature of the periphrastic construction, the use of the present, the passivity of the participle, and the appropriate application of ἅτινά in relation to 4:23.

Understanding ἅτινά in this manner, however, naturally leads to the question of how ἐπαγγελία and σάρξ "are used allegorically." Paul is using these two terms, already

is unlikely the allegory built into part of Genesis itself. See chap. 5.

[35]See Moisés Silva, "Galatians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 807.

[36]For the connection of ἀλληγορία/ἀλληγορέω to the broader category of metaphor in antiquity, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson (Boston: Brill, 1998), 398–9 (§895); 256 (§563); see also below, p. 168.

[37]Contra Moisés Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 636; Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 206n12. In using "allegory," we lose specific implications, but this loss cannot be avoided. The point is that ἀλληγορέω does not have a good deal greater precision than the English word "allegory." Obviously, any translation needs to be protected from foreign understandings that Paul does not intend. At the same time, it is unclear that a more suitable English word exists for how Paul is using 4:23, or the implied intentions of the word ἀλληγορέω. There is always a cost in translation, and the calculus rarely excludes negative implications. See Moisés Silva, "Are Translators Traitors? Some Personal Reflections," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World*, ed. Glen G Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 38–39. More is lost by replacing "allegory" with another collocation of words than by using it.

defined and highlighted in his letter, as prisms through which the meaning of Genesis 17-21 might be brought forward. Rather than connecting Isaac to the law, as the Agitators would likely think, the story, now read through the lens of both ἐπαγγελία and σάρξ, connects Isaac's miraculous birth rather to Spirit, faith, and promise, and thus ultimately to the Galatians. Paul indicates that these terms and their associates do not just pertain to the nature of the births, but rather speak to something beyond themselves. The use of σάρξ to enact the birth of Ishmael does not become emblematic of earning what God has promised, but, more on point, is precisely what the law itself makes use of. The law, which requires the use of the flesh, is nothing more than Hagar, who also required the use of the flesh to make heirs. But as Paul will show, those who rely on the law and the power of the flesh cannot produce true heirs.

While 4:21-22 looked forward to a resolution concerning the story of Abraham's sons and the law, Paul's statement that the interpretive key of 4:23 will be used allegorically makes the following solution look back to 4:23 for its explanation. Thus, ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι᾽ ἐπαγγελίας becomes the gravitational center of the passage.

Flesh and slavery (vv. 24b-25). Paul mentions that the two women are two covenants (δύο διαθῆκαι), as he begins to explain his use of the interpretive key of 4:23. The copula is not simply indicating that they *represent* two covenants. Rather, Paul is implying more: Hagar is emblematic of the law, the embodiment of it.[38]

---

[38]The μὲν of 24b, which introduces the first covenant, never receives its adversative δὲ, upon which some scholars place importance (i.e., Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 109; Joel Willitts, "Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah," *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 96, no. 3–4 [2005]: 200–201). However, the function of μὲν does not depend fully on the presence of its typical partner, δὲ. Instead, it simply throws attention ahead to another idea, which in this case is the connection of the covenant from Sinai with Hagar (ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἁγάρ). See Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 31–36.

Two further grammatical notes. While typically functioning as a grounding particle, here γὰρ functions to introduce an explanation. Also, there is little doubt that Paul refers back to the narrative mothers in Genesis with the use of the feminine plural αὗται.

While the covenants referred to are the likely the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants,[39] what is unclear is to whom μία refers in 24c. It is easy to place Hagar as the referent. Already identified as a mother, a bearer of a slave child, and not yet identified by name, Hagar is an apparent choice for the subject here. However, it is more likely that one of the δύο διαθῆκαι should be adopted as the subject. It is unlikely at this particular juncture that Paul would make the connection with Hagar and Sinai (and thus the law) by simply stating that Hagar was from Mt. Sinai (ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ). Rather, what Paul desires to do is connect the first covenant considered (which, with the mentioning of Sinai, is clearly the νόμος covenant) with the physical mountain at Sinai.

With the νόμος covenant clearly implied, Paul makes the first controversial move in his allegory, mentioning that this covenant εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα.[40] Given the connection between flesh and slavery in verse 23, it is not hard to anticipate the ending of the verse when Paul will associate the covenant from Sinai with Hagar (ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἁγάρ).

While Paul has hinted at the connection, he has specifically refrained from a direct connection between the law and slavery up to this point in the letter. Even here, however, Paul does not depict the law as an enslaving power; rather like Hagar, whose only recourse was the use of the flesh, the law can only produce children of slavery, for it can only use the flesh to produce them.

Paul's association of Hagar with Sinai finds itself at the heart of the problem of the allegory, and stands as one of the most difficult *crux interpretum* in NT scholarship. On what basis does Paul assume that Hagar and the law share enough characteristics to be allied in this manner? The connection is not made simply on the grounds of slave-

---

[39]See the argument in chap. 2.

[40]Perriman argues that the present tense of the participle (γεννῶσα) indicates that the subject cannot be Hagar, who, having died, no longer bears children (Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 34). The present is important, for while Hagar produces no more children, the flesh-empowered law still produces slaves.

making, for the idea that the law produced slaves would have been controversial and needed grounding in itself.[41] The connection is grounded in the interpretive key of 4:23, and made through the association of σάρξ. The fact that Paul has only mentioned slavery as a ground (and will continue to do so) does not diminish this fact. If 4:23 is taken seriously as a key to the passage, then any connection to the flesh *is* a connection to slavery, and vice versa. By mentioning slavery, Paul is simply keeping the negative connotation of the slavery before the Galatians, who apparently do not have the same aversion to flesh.[42]

In this construction, ἥτις is functioning to signify that Hagar mirrors the νόμος covenant, as both beget children for slavery. That is, both Hagar and the νόμος covenant are manifestations of flesh bearing slaves. The genius of using Hagar is the obviousness of her (and thus her prodigy's) slavery. The slavery of the law's children is hidden to the Galatians, as it is otherwise difficult to explain their current attitude to the law. This connection to slavery by σάρξ is what Paul is at pains to show, and why Hagar is such an important tool to do so. Rabbinical exegesis sought to answer the question as to why Ishmael was rejected and Isaac provided. The answer that came back often centered on Ishmael's wickedness.[43] Paul, while not explicitly reacting to these texts, provides a different answer: Ishmael was rejected, not because of any particular wickedness inherent

---

[41]While the thematic problems of only grounding the allegory in slavery has been noted (see pp. 55-56), the textual and thematic links of slavery to the law earlier in Galatians should likewise be mentioned. While Di Mattei can state that such a link "need not be . . . offensive," it is doubtless that such a statement would be, and would need to be grounded somehow (Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants," 110). To this end, some point back to Gal 3:23-4:11 as though Paul has already aligned the law with slavery (i.e., De Boer, *Galatians*, 299). However, in 3:22-23, Paul has linked the law not with slavery but with confinement and imprisonment (cf. BDAG s.v. "συγκλείω"). 4:3, which makes a strong connection to slavery, is not in reference to the law, but rather the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Paul links all of these terms (νόμος, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, παιδίσκη) together through the flesh. See figure 1 below.

[42]The Galatians' nonchalant view of the flesh is implied; they are willing to use the flesh to gain acceptance as a part of God's people.

[43]Examples include *Tg. Ps.-J* on Gen 21, 35, 49; *Tg. Onq.* on Gen 21; *b. Pesḥim* 119b; *b. Pesḥim 56a*; *Num Rab*. A fuller interaction with these texts is found in chap. 5 below.

in him, or even nobility in Isaac, but rather because of the implications of the manner of their births. Born of the flesh, Ishmael was doomed to slavery. Isaac, however, brought to life through the promise, is free and therefore accepted as both son and heir. The Galatians, if they have correctly understood Paul's arguments in the epistle, should rightly apprehend that because the law requires the use and the work of the flesh, it only εἰς δουλείαν γεννᾷ κατὰ Ισμαηλ.

Further, the naming and use of Hagar helps to explain Paul's use of σάρξ. Paul uses σάρξ here because of its obvious importance in differentiating between the births of Isaac and Ishmael. Yet it also provides a unique bridge between the story and the use of the law; a connection that Paul has implied throughout the epistle. While σάρξ has not been the most important term in the epistle to this point (although the parenetic section of 5:7ff. will make much of it) its importance is felt here in providing a connection between Hagar and the present world, dominated by flesh and the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.

The theological difficulties of 4:25 are compounded by two textual variants that need to be addressed. First, whether the coordinating conjunction should be δέ or γάρ, and second, whether Ἁγάρ is original to the text. Again, appealing to the interpretive key of 4:23 will help to alleviate some of these difficulties.

The issues here are complex, for the readings vacillate between δὲ Ἁγὰρ Σινᾶ (A B D), γὰρ Ἁγὰρ Σινᾶ (Ψ 062 175 0150 6 33), δὲ Σινᾶ (𝔓46) and γὰρ Σινᾶ (ℵ C F G 1241 1739). The external evidence heavily favors δέ over γάρ, even with the strong attestation of ℵ.[44] Internally, the presence of γάρ with Ἁγάρ would indicate that Paul is grounding his connection of Sinai with Hagar from 4:24 in 4:25. Γάρ suggests that Paul was making a word-association of some sort between Hagar and Sinai, as the nature of

---

[44]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002), 527. It is important to note, however, that ℵ clearly had a corrector present, as the manuscript has a correction concerning the presence of πάντων in v. 26 and the word order of ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς (ℵ*) vs. Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς (ℵ). It is unlikely that the corrector would have missed such an obvious mistake, although it is possible.

the prepositional phrase, ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, must either act as the predicate or a modifying phrase attached to Σινᾶ ὄρος.[45] If it is the former, the clause simply provides a geographical reference, which is difficult to make sense of as a *ground* of the Hagar-Sinai connection made in 4:24.[46] This indicates that ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ is acting as a prepositional adjective modifying Σινᾶ ὄρος, leaving Ἁγάρ and Σινᾶ ὄρος as the possible subject/predicate pair. If 25a is acting as the ground of 4:24, it is most likely in some new connection between Hagar and Sinai Paul here introduces. The best candidate for this connection is a word-association between the Semitic word for rock and the word Hagar.[47] There are, however, several internal problems with this solution, as noted above.[48] All of these issues mitigate against the word-play, and thus argue against seeing γάρ as original on internal context.[49]

---

[45]It should be noted that γάρ does not need to function specifically as a ground (cf. Paul's explanatory γάρ in v. 24). For exegetical purposes, however, if explanatory, its meaning varies little from how δέ would be interpreted. Therefore, while still of value as a text critical study, for exegetical purposes an explanatory γάρ has limited impact.

[46]Likewise, the presence of γάρ with the omission of Ἁγάρ. If Paul is grounding the association of Hagar and Sinai through a geographical reference, the exegesis provided here is impacted little. All the same, it appears unlikely that Paul would have grounded the connection in this manner.

[47]The association is typically between and some variation of *haǧar* (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 211) or *hadjar* (Betz, *Galatians*, 244).

[48]Including the difficulty of seeing to refer to Hagar as a word, not a name, which is further complicated by references to geographical and dialectical information unavailable to the Galatians. See chap. 2, on allegorical word-play.

[49]All of these factors could be used to argue that, internally, γάρ is the *lectio difficilior*, and therefore more original. At the same time, it is understandable for the presence of γάρ to be explained by parablepsis from either the γάρ found later in v. 25, or even from the γάρ found above in v. 24 (incidentally, in ℵ the γάρ of v. 24 is found on the right-hand margin, just as the γάρ of v. 25 is). It is true that the *lectio difficilior* is a well-received criterion of text-criticism, but it must not be applied without contextual considerations. See Eldon Jay Epp, "Traditional 'Canons' of New Testament Textual Criticism: Their Value, Validity, and Viability – or Lack Thereof," in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research*, ed. Klaus Wachtel and Michael W. Holmes, Text-Critical Studies (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 106. Kurt and Barbara Aland state, "This principle [*lectio difficilior lectio potior*] must not be taken too mechanically, with the most difficult reading adopted as original simply because of its degree of difficulty" (Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987], 276).

Internally, δέ makes good sense as Paul does seem to be advancing his argument.[50] This conjunction does not necessitate a link between verse 24 and the beginning of 25 that grounds the Hagar-Sinai connection, but rather builds on it. Thus, it is capable of avoiding the traps illustrated above, and is well attested externally. The reading, then, stands with δέ.

Whether Ἁγάρ is original or not is a more difficult question. The external evidence appears to be fairly split. Important and early witnesses favor the omission of Ἁγάρ, including both 𝔓[46] and ℵ. Further siding with omission are the Sahidic Coptic version of the third century and the Vulgate. However, B is an important fourth century witness for the inclusion of Ἁγάρ, and is joined by slightly later manuscripts including A, D and 062 from the fifth century. The geographical placement of the witnesses is varied in both, and while the omission of Ἁγάρ has a slight edge in the earliest witnesses,[51] this edge does not seem enough to tilt the favor of the passage to the omission of the name.[52]

Internally, the same principle objections to a word-association between Hagar and Sinai still attain.   Further, while most translations see the clause as linking Hagar and Sinai again, such a link is unlikely.[53] Dunn is correct that the function of the clause cannot be to associate Hagar and Sinai, since such an association was made previously in 24.[54] Paul's thoughts seem to be condensed here, and it is unlikely that he would occupy

---

[50]See Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 31–36.

[51]Burton notes that ℵ, while lacking Ἁγάρ, adds ὅν prior to ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, implying that "Ἁγάρ has fallen out" (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, 259). This implication, he adds, indicates that the witness of ℵ really favors the addition of Ἁγάρ. This supposition is debatable.

[52]While I do not agree with the complete tenants of Thoroughgoing Eclecticism, I agree with J. K. Elliott's insistence that the preference given to certain manuscripts because of their association with textual families is unhelpful (see J. K. Elliott, "Can We Recover the Original New Testament?," *Theology* 77, no. 649 [1974]: 343–48). Thus, while I place little emphasis on the text families, such an assertion does not undo the importance of larger geographical representation among the witnesses, nor undermine the importance of early witnesses. See the cautious affirmation of both in Epp, "Traditional 'Canons,'" 96, 103.

[53]So the HCSB, ESV, KJV, NASB, and NIV.

[54]Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 251. See also Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 37–38.

space reiterating the Hagar-Sinai connection. This, then, leaves only the bare geographical reference that the mountain stands in Arabia. While the meaning of this reference still needs to be fleshed out, there are good reasons for its preference over understanding ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ as a prepositional modifier on Σινᾶ ὄρος. First, it makes better sense of the use of the neuter article. The article belongs to ὄρος, and the appellation "Hagar-Sinai" works then as a compound title that reinforces the already made connection.[55] Second, it gives prominence to the fact that the prepositional phrase is present in the first place. If, as many scholars aver, a geographical reference is not intended, it is not apparent why Paul would have mentioned it at all.

If the geographical reading is correct, it has the added benefit of diminishing the exegetical importance of the textual problem surrounding Ἀγάρ. If the main point of 4:25 is seen as a geographical reference, placing Sinai in Arabia, it matters little whether Paul reinforces the connection of Hagar to Sinai or is moving on to make a separate yet connected point.[56]

Paul's motives in providing a well-known, while apparently unimportant geographical fact remain unclear. There are various ways in which the geographical understanding of the reference is to be understood. A prominent interpretation is to see the reference as pointing that the mountain stands outside of the promised land, and is therefore in pagan and foreign territory. De Boer, for example, notes that Mt. Sinai is in a land associated with foreign people, including the descendants of Hagar.[57] He argues

---

[55]The τὸ should be understood either to be connected with ὄρος or functioning as the article for the entire clause. For the former, see Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 251. For the latter, see Schreiner, *Galatians*, 302.

[56]I would (very) tentatively hold that, the external evidence being split, internally the nod would go to excluding Ἀγάρ. I would lean this way solely because the connection of Hagar to Sinai seems redundant, whereas Ἀγάρ might easily have been placed in the text due to parablepsis with only four letters separating the name from itself in v. 24. That said, there are good reasons to see the redundancy as a good example of a *lectio difficilior*, and it is easy to see why, on my reading, a scribe might delete it.

[57]De Boer, *Galatians*, 300. See also George, *Galatians*, 341. Heinrich Schlier argues that Paul may be hinting at the association of Mt. Sinai and paganism, as its location is in pagan territory, outside of the holy land. In the end, though, Schlier is uncertain of the meaning: "Der genaue Sinn des Sätzchens

that this territory is further associated with Ishmael in Josephus,[58] the apocrypha,[59] and

Psalm 83:6 (82:7 LXX; 83:7 MT).   There are several difficulties with this interpretation,

however. First, the references provided are not as strong nor as wide-spread as they

would need to be to build a credible connection. Josephus does mention the area of Sinai

as Ishmaelite territory, but it can be doubted as to the broader knowledge of this fact in

the wider Gentile world. The quote he mentions from Baruch likewise only lumps the

"sons of Hagar" in with the wider pagan world, which is obvious and makes no

connection to the geography of Sinai. The second problem is that this explanation does

little to comport to Paul's rather neutral evaluation of the law earlier in the letter.[60]

Paul's primary difficulties with the law are its diametrical opposition to faith and its

antiquated nature. These traits, as will be shown, connected it in some fashion to the

powers of the world and thus paganism, but it is how Paul does this that matters. It is not

through shear geography alone. The importance of the statement finds its home in 4:25,

and is best seen in the wider association of the flesh with the present world.

Paul notes that this mountain συστοιχεῖ with the νῦν Jerusalem.[61] These two

particular lexical choices are important in Paul's argument. Let us first consider νῦν.

V.25a und damit der Grund und Anlaß, der es Paulus ermöglichte, Hagar mit der Diatheke vom Sinai zu verbinden, dunkel bleiben" (Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an Die Galater*, 6th ed. Meyers Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Das Neue Testament [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989], 220).

[58]See *Ant*. 1.221, where Josephus states that Ishmael's sons "inhabited all the country from Euphrates to the Red Sea," i.e., the land of Sinai.

[59]Bar 3:23: "The descendants of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth, the merchants of Merran and Teman, the story-tellers and the seekers for understanding, have not learned the way to wisdom, or given thought to her paths" (NRSV).

[60]The law is not contrary to the promises of God (3:21); it was given as a guardian until Christ (3:24).

[61]Stephen C. Carlson notes that a separate textual variant that appears in v. 25 (συστοιχεῖ δὲ is supplanted by συστοιχουσα) argues for the exclusion of the entire beginning clause of v. 25 (τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ) due to the participle being aligned with Ἀγάρ in v. 24.   Carlson states, "This textual variant is significant because it indicates that the first part of the clause . . . did not yet stand in the main text" (Stephen C. Carlson, *The Text of Galatians and Its History,* WUNT 2 Reihe [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 198). Carlson's conclusions are based off of an eclectic use of computer generated stemma and cladistic techniques to trace the flow of textual corruption (ibid., 44). His conclusions above are for the Western branch and prototype, which he takes as best identified with D, F, and G. It is hard to accept his conclusions, however, given that the "marginal gloss" was present in the admittedly earlier 𝔓[46].

While the "above" city will be its counterpart, the fact that Paul labels Jerusalem the present Jerusalem speaks to its current presence in the world, emphasized even more by the linking of the present Jerusalem with the physical Mt. Sinai, opposing both the physical and temporal dimensions of the heavenly city. Given the eschatological tenor of the letter to this point, it is not surprising that this adjective is pejorative. The fact that Jerusalem is νῦν links it with the "present evil age" from which Christ has redeemed his people (ἐξέληται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηρου Gal 1:4), and the world which is ruled by the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (cf. 4:3, 9; 5:1).

Paul's argument in chapter 4 is important in this respect. There he linked the time before faith came to both the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and (for Jews) the guardianship of the law. Here Paul avers life under the law is aligned with slavery (ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἤμεθα δεδουλωμένοι v. 3). Paul's "already/not yet" eschatology is here inverted. He is not looking forward, but backward: the present evil age is already/not yet surpassed. By linking slavery, Jerusalem, Sinai, Hagar through the present work of the flesh, Paul is continuing a large collection of similarities between his main antagonists.

While Paul's use of συστοιχέω implies something of a columnar table that lists the two compared world-views,[62] it is probably better to think of these concepts occurring in a web, with the center of the antagonists' web being παιδίσκη/δουλεία, and the protagonists' being ἐλευθερία.

Thinking of these concepts in a web fashion better represents the gravitational center of Paul's allegory as slavery, with the other aspects (flesh/present world/law, etc.) as entailments of the use of the flesh. It is true that the Pythagoreans used συστοιχέω in comparison tables, but Paul was not enslaved to such usage. The verb simply insists on

---

[62]So J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 6th ed. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1880), 178–79. Lightfoot also notes that the Fathers usually translated συστοιχεῖ as "borders upon," linking Sinai with Jerusalem, a clear stretch of the geography (ibid., 179).

the comparison of one set with another, and says little about the comparative weight of any of the particular members.

Figure 1. Web relationship of characteristics centered around παιδίσκη

The final phrase in 4:25 seals the symbolism of slavery – "for she (Jerusalem) is in slavery with her children." The Jerusalem of 25b is transparently the best candidate as the subject of the clause.[63] First, there is an obvious parallel with 4:26 and the ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ who is "our mother." Second, the γάρ grounds the connection between Hagar, Mt. Sinai, and the present Jerusalem. Third, the closest antecedent is that of Jerusalem in 25b.

Paul's grounding of the passage is therefore explained. He is arguing that Jerusalem is, like Hagar and Mt. Sinai, in bondage with her children. The grounding of this connection seems odd, given that the focus of the passage is on σάρξ. However, συστοιχέω typically compares groups by noting the distinctions between the collected characteristics of each.[64] This implies two things for this thesis. First, Paul is speaking more generally of characteristics that belong to each group than to specific links; thus,

---

[63]Contra Schreiner, *Galatians*, 302; Cosgrove, "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children," 228–29.

[64]BDAG, s.v. "συστοιχέω."

81

Paul is concerned to align Hagar, Sinai and present Jerusalem together through similar characteristics beyond slavery.[65] The use of συστοιχέω implies such a concern. Second, because the two columns seemed to be based on the outcomes of slavery/freedom, the emphasis of 4:23 would then throw light back onto the nature of the σάρξ/ἐπαγγελία distinction. If Paul, within the context of the allegory, is concerned with the outcomes of slavery/freedom, it is easy to detect that the causes are not far behind. Thus, given these two implications, Paul's use of συστοιχέω confirms that the use of σάρξ/ἐπαγγελία is meant to be inclusive of the other associations built by Paul over the course of the letter.

By mentioning Hagar Paul gives a concrete (fleshy?) demonstration of the use of the flesh, while the mother of the promised-child is left as a heavenly reality (cf. v. 26), separated from both the present-world and from the flesh, and thus from slavery. The geographical reference of 4:25 finds its import: Jerusalem, like Sinai, is necessarily linked to the present world. Jerusalem, the law, and Hagar all make use of the flesh and thus the material (and unredeemed) world, and thus they can only stand in slavery to these forces.

Promise and freedom (vv. 26-27). The unfulfilled parallelism between the νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ and the ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ is striking, and helps to further drive the distinction of flesh and promise. Many OT and apocryphal texts contain the picture of heavenly Jerusalem.[66] The most likely textual connection here, however, is from Isaiah.[67]

---

[65]De Boer, for instance, states, "Apparently [Paul] works from the assumption that being 'under the law' is a form of enslavement, a point he has repeatedly made, especially in 3:23-4:11. For this reason the covenant from Mount Sinai, now likened to a woman, 'is [even now] bearing children for slavery.' On the basis of this assumption, Paul makes the connection to Hagar 'the slave woman' and by implication to her son, Ishmael, who like his mother was also a slave. What binds the Sinai covenant to Hagar and makes them part of the same oppositional column is the notion of slavery" (De Boer, *Galatians*, 299). While De Boer is correct, he is also reductionistic. If slavery was all Paul needed to make the connection, the need for allegory, the geographical reference of v. 25 (something De Boer also agrees is present), and the temporal concepts embedded in the allegory would all be superfluous and only add confusion. What has bound Sinai and Hagar is not just slavery, but the working of the flesh to yield slavery.

[66]Schreiner notes that Isa 65:17 and 66:1-11 may play a role in Paul's thought here (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 303). See also Ezek 40-48; 2 Bar 4:2-6; 4 Ezra 10:25; 2 Esd 10:7. NT references to the same concept include Rev 21:2 and Heb 11:10.

In 65:17-25, Isaiah describes a land that will see only life and fruitfulness, and will be identified with Jerusalem. This Jerusalem is spoken of as a mother in Isaiah 66:7, bringing forth children in a miraculous manner.[68] The connection fits well with Paul's counterpoint to the fleshy, present-world Jerusalem: as Hagar bore Ishmael and the νῦν Jerusalem makes sons through the flesh, the ἄνω Jerusalem begets sons by miraculous means untainted by the flesh.

That 4:27 only grounds the positive portion of the allegory given in verse 26 is debated.[69] There are good reasons, however, why Paul is only concerned here with the grounding of the ἄνω Jerusalem. There is a conceptual connection to 4:26, as stated above, whereas no conceptual link with either Hagar or the law is implied. Paul is affirming the positive portion of his argument, and the negative side (flesh/slavery /present-world) has faded into the background. Yet, some scholars see the quotation from Isaiah 54:1[70] as grounding the entirety of the allegory,[71] and thus see both Sarah and Hagar as the representative mothers in Isaiah. There are several reasons to reject this reading.[72]

---

[67]Christl Maier makes a case for seeing Ps 87 in the forefront of Paul's mind, for Jerusalem in Gal 4:26 is not just the mother of the Jews, but of all people (Christl Maier, "Psalm 87 as a Reappraisal of the Zion Tradition and Its Reception in Galatians 4:26," *CBQ* 69, no. 3 [2007]: 473–86). While possible, this conclusion is unlikely. First, it is better to think that Paul has the general concept in his mind, and not a specific text. The concept of a heavenly Jerusalem that exists as a mother to Israel is well enough supported and Paul is certainly able to see her as a mother of all who believe, without specifically mentioning the Gentiles. Second, if Paul did have a specific text in mind, it is more likely to be found in Isaiah than in the Psalms. For instance, a connection probably exists between Paul's conception of the heavenly mother and Isa 66:7-11. See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 303.

[68]Smith states that "this event is unusual both with respect to the speed of the delivery and the total absence of any pain. This reports a phenomenon so unexpected that one suspects this must be a miraculous act" (Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, NAC 15B [B&H Academic, 2009], 739).

[69]See Martinus C. De Boer, "Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27," *NTS* 50, no. 3 (2004): 388.

[70]The quote of Isa 54:1 is an exact rendering of the LXX: εὐφράνθητι, στεῖρα ἡ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

[71]So Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, BZNW 168 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 173–85, esp. 177; Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *WTJ* 55, no. 2 (1993): 316–18; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 296–97, 303-04.

[72]See Karen Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 303, who clearly sees the quotation from Isaiah

First, 4:24-25 are not grounded here because Paul has already grounded his negative interpretation in the concepts of slavery and flesh, while the positive side has received no such treatment. Paul has grouped the flesh, present-world, law, Hagar, Sinai, and Jerusalem together through the work of the flesh and the presence of slavery; he must now ground the connection of those of the promise to the above Jerusalem. The quotation from Isaiah 54:1, then, is meant to fill that role.

Second, even while Hagar could technically be called a "wife" of Abraham, it is much easier and more natural to conceive of Sarah as fitting that role. Further, even granting the technicality, is Sarah to be thought of as the one without a husband? Certainly, this is stretching the imagery of Genesis to a breaking point.[73] Each human mother also had only one child, so the concluding proof of Isaiah 54:1 (more children) is applied metaphorically anyway, through the fecundity of the children. Thus, a closer look at Isaiah 54 is warranted to see how Sarah's identity is used in context.

Paul's choice to quote Isaiah 54:1 is illuminated when Isaiah 51:2 is taken into consideration.[74] Isaiah 51:2 is the only Scriptural text that explicitly mentions Sarah outside of Genesis in the OT. Isaiah mentions her to bolster the faith of those who "pursue righteousness" (51:1) that God will indeed fulfill his promises. Here, Isaiah specifically remembers God's unilateral acts of salvation, specifically the crossing of the

---

as central, and yet at a surface level as "rais[ing] more exegetical questions than it answers."

[73]The intention of marriage is present in the request of Sarah that Abraham conceive a child by Hagar. "Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband *as a wife; ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν Αβραμ τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς αὐτῷ γυναῖκα*" (Gen 16:3, ESV/LXX). Yet, to see Hagar as filling the role of the wife, instead of Sarah, is simply special pleading (contra Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 180).

[74]In Isa 52, the only time that Sarah is mentioned outside of Genesis, Isaiah writes that Sarah labored (τὴν ὠδίνουσαν). The same verb occurs in 54:1 (ὠδίνω) to specify that it is one who does *not* labor (ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα) who will have more children. While the reference almost certainly alludes to Sarah for comparison, it is not specific to Sarah. See Willitts, "Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah," 195–97; Martyn, *Galatians*, 442. While Willitts rightly sees both Jerusalem and Sarah as part of the imagery in Isa 54:1, he wrongly over-emphasizes the pre- and post-exilic imagery of Jerusalem present in the text. It is unlikely that the exile was part of Paul's concerns here, even if it held importance for Isaiah. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 118.

Red Sea (51:10). The implication is that the Lord's coming salvation will be in the same

manner: "So the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to

Zion" (Isa 54:11 NASB). The work of the Lord alone is highlighted by Isaiah here; given

the previous reference to the birth of the nation through barren Sarah, it is likely that the

implications for the forthcoming salvation are along the same lines.

Jerusalem's next mention in Isaiah occurs in 51:17, where a beaten and

defeated Jerusalem indeed has sons, but sons who are ensnared and therefore cannot help

her (vv. 17-20). Yet God will free her from her trap (52:2). God's gospel again is all

enveloping; he is both leading Jerusalem out of slavery and providing their protection

from behind (v. 12). The famous passage from 52:13-53:12 entails the picture of the

suffering servant; the means by which the great act of God will be carried out and

Jerusalem's bonds loosed. It is after this prophetic gospel that Isaiah 54:1 comes.

Isaiah 54:1 notes an important distinction from 51:2, however. Thematically,

the verses are similar, as Sarah was previously barren, and from the miraculous

conception of Isaac the nation was born. Here, however, the miracle is heightened, and

Sarah is eclipsed.

When Isaiah 54:1 is read there are several contrasts to Sarah that provide hints

as to the nature of the mother and the manner of the salvation entailed in 52-53. That

"mother" terminology is used, with a miraculous birth, indicates that the exhortation to

look back at Sarah is not completely abandoned.[75] While the miraculous birth is at the

forefront of the passage, the nature of the husband also provides important contextual

information. While the more-blessed "mother" in 54:1 lacks a husband, God himself

takes on the role of husband in 54:6.[76] Isaiah is not contradicting himself, rather the

---

[75]Bonnard writes, "Sa naissance ne fut pas un 'pur' miracle; mais si Dieu bénit en fin de compte l'union d'Abraham et de Sara, c'est qu'il voulait en faire l'instrument de son dessein de salut pour toutes les familles de la terre" (Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épitre de Saint Paul Aux Galates*, Commentaire Du Nouveau Testament 9 [Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1953], 96).

[76]Isaiah 54:5 in the MT and English translations mark God out as the missing husband

implication is that the husband is not of the "typical" variety, and the children not conceived through a union of the flesh, but rather through miraculous means. Like Isaac's conception, the work of God is primary, but unlike that conception, there is no place for the flesh. God built Israel miraculously through a dead womb; now God would father his people without any intervening flesh. Therefore, it is likely that Paul intends the two mothers of Isaiah 54:1 as Sarah and the eschatological Jerusalem above, not Hagar. Sarah's miracle, while still in mind, is therefore surpassed.

The barren and husbandless mother who bears sons is meant to highlight, in juxtaposition, the great difference between how typical prodigy and the sons of promise are born. Therefore, it is likely that for Paul the identification of this mother could take on various forms, and is not necessarily pinned down to one specific referent. The eschatological Jerusalem, the promise, and even the Spirit all fit the role nicely. The heart of the matter for Paul is not to specify the precise nature of the barren mother, but rather to boldly contrast this mother with the flesh.

There is good reason, then, why Sarah is not named as the flip side to Hagar in the allegory. Paul is playing on universal themes of flesh and promise and reading them (rightly) into the story of Sarah and Hagar. Therefore, at the very outset in 4:23, Paul forgoes naming Sarah. One is correct to suspect that more is at work here, for Hagar is named just 2 verses later, while Sarah is never mentioned. The absence and infrequent use of characters' names indicates to many scholars that the story is familiar to the Galatians, and that no further introduction to the characters are needed.[77] Certainly the story is familiar, but the question remains as to why Paul would mention Hagar, who

---

(כִּי בֹעֲלַיִךְ עֹשַׂיִךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ). The LXX, however, does not mention the notion of husband in this verse. It is implied in 54:6, however, as Israel is ὡς γυναῖκα to the Lord.

[77]The lack of certain names is a central point in the polemical interpretation provided by Barrett, "The Allegory." However, little more attention is paid to this interesting inclusion and exclusion of the names, outside of the above implication. Cf. De Boer, *Galatians*, 286; A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 484–85.

takes a central and explicit role in the negative side of the allegory, whereas Sarah is never mentioned at all. If the women were familiar, why only mention one by name?

Understanding 4:23 as the interpretive key of Paul's reading helps to solve the problem of Sarah's missing identification, and provide clarity to the exposition as a whole. Sarah is unnamed, not because she was an unimportant feature of the story, but because she is secondary to the promise/freedom association. By not mentioning Sarah Paul keeps the focus on the nature of the promise, and the intervention of God as the real instigator of freedom. Sarah is, in this sense, a fleshy vessel chosen by God to carry forth this purpose. But as Paul desires to downplay the role of the flesh in this association, he forgoes mentioning Sarah to keep the contrast of flesh and promise as sharp as possible. Abraham fathered Ishmael hoping he might bring about the fulfillment of God's promises; God freely gave Isaac to Sarah and Abraham to fulfill the promise as a gift.

Thus, the omission of Sarah's name is not an oversight on Paul's part, but a logical one.[78] Part of Paul's purpose in the allegory is to separate the fleshy, present-world from that of the promise. To meet this purpose, the person of Sarah is not immediately important, although she is part of the story. By not mentioning her, Paul strengthens the connection and instrumentality of the promise to both Isaac and the Galatians, and drives the division between flesh and promise. In a sense, Paul is stressing that Isaac was born by the promise, not by Sarah. This interpretation is corroborated by Paul's choice of Isaiah 54:1 and thematically affirmed by its textual context.

As Isaiah 54:1 is quoted in full in Galatians 4:27, the prophecy is not forward looking in the strict sense, so that one who had not labored *now* has more children, as though labor might occur between the realities of barrenness and children. Rather, the implication is that the one who is barren, the husbandless mother, has more children *even*

---

[78]Contra Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 301.

in her barren state. The births which happen are not physical, for there is no toiling or pain.[79] Rather, the births are miraculous and spiritual, enacted by God.

Barrenness is both a foil in the OT that allows for God to demonstrate his power to bring about his promises, while also acting as a picture of curse and humiliation.[80] Isaiah picks up on each of these seemingly divergent themes and merges them into a consistent one. Callaway writes: "The foreigner and the eunuch, symbols of outcasts in post-exilic Israel, become those who receive blessings greater than material prosperity and a fruitfulness better than physical fecundity."[81] While Israel had "inverted" the ethic of Deuteronomy, where the blessings and curses as the effects of obedience to God are seen rather as proof of righteousness, Isaiah sets it right again.[82] Thus, the cursed and barren woman in Isaiah 54 has now become more blessed than her counterpart, which re-sets the improper inversion of Deuteronomy. Thus, when Isaiah speaks of the barren one rejoicing he is reminding his people of the power that God worked through Sarah to bring about his own promises. Yet that it is not all; he is also blessing those who appear cursed and cut off, outside of the promises of blessings by virtue of their social standing.

Thus, for Isaiah, the mentioning of Sarah in 51:2 and the barren mother of 54:1 has a two-pronged effect. First, it reminds his audience of God's work in building the

---

[79]"'Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?' says the LORD; 'shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?' says your God. 'Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her'" (Isa 66:7-10 ESV).

[80]See also Gen 25:21; 30:1; 1 Sam 1:2, 6.

[81]Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash*, SBLDS 91 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 92. Cf. Isa 56:4-5.

[82]So ibid., 91–92. Callaway borrows the thought of Deuteronomistic inversion from J. A. Sanders, "The Ethic of Election in Luke's Great Banquet Parable," in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, ed. James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 258.

nation, and hints at a greater work forthcoming. This reminder, coupled with the language of Jerusalem's destruction in the latter portions of Isaiah and the "spiritual" nature of the children, implies a new type of nation altogether; one that has its beginnings in Sarah and Isaac while looking beyond them. Second, it re-inverts the notion of blessing and cursing common to Isaiah's day, notions that were not forgotten in the first century (cf. John 9:1ff.). It is the one who appears cursed who shouts for joy because of the miracle of God, not the one who achieves blessings through normal human process (ἡ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα). The Galatians, those who are ἔθνη ἁμαρτωλοί (cf. Gal 2:15), are natural inheritors of this promise. Appearing to be cut off, they have been born anew into God's family through the promise.

The quotation from Isaiah, then, appears to act as a renewed (and somewhat extended) promise to Israel made originally to Abraham. While instructing his readers to look back to Sarah (Isa 51:2) Isaiah also looks beyond her to a fulfillment whose miraculous nature eclipses the miracle of Isaac's birth. Thus, the promise enacts a rescue for Israel, freeing them from their current state through a miraculous intervention by God. The positive aspect of the premise (ὁ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας [γεγέννηται] δι' ἐπαγγελίας) is here both read and corroborated in Isaiah, confirming the nature of the free sons as those of the promise: both Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Conclusion (v. 28). The thought in verse 28 is continuative, completing the thought of the allegory and making concrete links back to the introduction in 4:21 and 23. Paul's use of ἀδελφοί and the indicative (ἐστέ) provides his resolution about where the Galatians stand.[83] Paul no longer addresses them as οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, but as

---

[83]Clearly, if Paul had been exhorting or stating a possibility, the imperative or the subjunctive would have been chosen. As it is, the indicative seems to indicate that this conclusion was firm in his mind.

ἀδελφοί, highlighted all the more by the fact that the Galatians are κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ and ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα.

Paul has thus drawn his two lines of identity, one associated with slavery by the flesh, and one with freedom through the promise. Paul has purposely connected those who follow the law with Ishmael, turning the flesh descendants into slave-usurpers of a Kingdom that will never be theirs. However, he finishes his exhortation to the Galatians positively, noting that because they have been born of the promise, they are like Isaac, and thus children of the promise. Again, Paul comes back to the original interpretive key of 4:23 – they are children like Isaac in that they are ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα.

Further Proof from Persecution (4:29-31)

Paul draws a further implication from the story of Isaac and Ishmael in 4:29. The ἀλλά in verse 29 provides clarification on the nature of the sons. Paul's treatment of the themes of persecution demonstrate the blurred lines of allegory and typology.[84] Notwithstanding Paul's more typological treatment of the themes herein, ἀλλά functions much in the same way here as in 4:23, providing a way to understand the OT events in a general sense, and applying an external (although not alien) reality and context to both the OT and to the Galatians. Thus, this further line of exposition by Paul helps to provide a corroboration of the thesis of this chapter, namely that 4:23 is acting for Paul as an interpretive lens through which the story of Abraham's sons and its relationship to the law is illuminated.

In 4:29 Paul makes an important shift. Having previously built his juxtaposition between the flesh and the promise (σάρξ/ἐπαγγελία), Paul switches references. While focus is still paid to the son born κατὰ σάρκα, the counterpart is no

---

[84]As noted above typology is closely associated with allegory, but distinguished by the role of time in interpretation by modern exegetes. Paul's comparative ὥσπερ τότε (just as then) and οὕτως καὶ νῦν (so even now) indicates that he is making a more typological argument here. So Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 256; Betz, *Galatians*, 249.

longer the son born δι’ ἐπαγγελίας, but κατὰ πνεῦμα. There are two items of note. First, the switch further indicates Paul intended the premise of 4:23 to be read inclusively. While other associations have been argued from context (see above on v. 25), here Paul makes an explicit switch from ἐπαγγελίας to πνεῦμα. Paul thus assumes that hearers will likewise switch from one attribute to another, and are free to use the other associations from both the allegory and the epistle to make sense of the argument.

Secondly, it further reaffirms the exegesis of verse 26. In 4:23 Paul switched prepositions between κατά and διά, demonstrating the instrumentality of the promise without ignoring the role of the flesh. Yet here Paul reaffirms the role of the Spirit with κατά. This birth, however, is distinct from Isaac’s. Whereas the birth of Isaac still used physical means, even if superintended by the promise, the births spoken of here are supernatural in their origin and production.

Here Paul does not quote Genesis 21:9 but certainly alludes to it. In the passage, Sarah sees Ishmael “playing” with Isaac during the celebration of Isaac’s weaning. However, the verb διώκω[85] is never applied in Genesis between Ishmael and Isaac. Thus, there are no obvious referents for ὁ κατὰ σάρκα and τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα. Instead, the verb παίζω is used in the LXX, which carries the meaning of laughing or playing.[86] How then is this typological persecution?

Paul’s appeal to Genesis 21:9 does fall in line with typical Rabbinic tradition.[87] However, it is impossible to know in what form these traditions might have come to Paul,

---

[85]While διώκω can have the meaning of “to hasten,” the more common usage is of persecution, “always in the sense of religious persecution implying guilt on the part of the persecutors” (Albrecht Oepke, “Διώκω,” in *TDNT* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967]).

[86]BDAG, s.v. “παίζω.” While BDAG limits the usage of παίζω to laughing or playing, others see the word as careening towards mocking. See Georg Bertram, “Παίζω,” in *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967). A fuller discussion of Genesis’ use of παίζω can be found in chap. 5 below.

[87]So Troy A. Miller, “Surrogate, Slave and Deviant? The Figure of Hagar in Jewish Tradition and Paul (Galatians 4.21-31),” in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality; Volume 2: Exegetical Studies*, ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 151.

since the Rabbinical writings are dated post-Pauline.[88] Even if Paul had access to these traditions, Paul is more than willing to bypass and even overturn such traditions. Further, and more importantly, these texts do little to help illuminate in what ways Paul saw this event as typological.

Günther Juncker provides a more convincing analysis. Junker sees Paul making a typological statement of the friction between those born κατὰ σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα. While the initial persecution was limited, for Paul it represents a larger picture of rebellion against God's chosen people.[89] Paul is then marshalling proof that the Agitators are in line with Ishmael, standing outside of the promise as persecutors. This analysis provides corroborating evidence for understanding 4:23 as the principle Paul used to understand the Sarah and Hagar story. Junker's analysis essentially sees 4:29 functioning in the same manner as 4:23 was above, both verses aided by the addition of ἀλλά.

Paul's response to the mention of the persecution is to ask τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; Here Paul quotes from the LXX of Genesis 21:10, with three changes. The LXX reads: ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην ταύτην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς οὐ γὰρ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης ταύτης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ισαακ. First, Paul amends out the demonstratives ταύτην and ταύτης, moving the object from a distinctive person (Hagar) to a qualitative entity, making the quote more general. Second, Paul adds μὴ to the original quotation, highlighting the force of the negation – they will *never* inherit. Third, Paul changes μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ισαακ to μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρας. This last change provides three distinct effects for Paul's rhetoric: (a) the change makes the imperative general and

---

[88]Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 181n12.

[89]"Ishmael's typological status as *persecutor* of God's people in Gal 4:29 is thus clearly not an isolated instance; it is part of a much larger pattern of Scripture interpretation and contemporary application" (Günther H. Juncker, "'Children of Promise': Spiritual Paternity and Patriarch Typology in Galatians and Romans," *BBR* 17, no. 1 [2007]: 141).

qualitative; (b) it provides Paul with conceptual and linguistic links back to the allegory; and (c) it again eliminates reference to Sarah in the passage.

While Genesis 21:10 is spoken by Sarah, the divine backing of the command in 21:12 allows Paul to speak of the command as from Scripture (also, it again allows for Paul to eliminate any reference to Sarah). However, an important question surrounds Paul's intent. Does Paul mean the quotation as a direct imperative for the Galatians, or are they simply overhearing the word spoken to Abraham?

Eastman provides strong evidence that Paul is not indicating this imperative for the Galatians, but that they are simply overhearing the command given to Abraham.[90] Eastman notices that the imperatives given by Paul are usually second person plurals, even rephrasing them when the OT quotations appear in the singular. The quotation functions to demonstrate a more fundamental reality – those who are κατὰ σάρκα will never inherit with those who are κατὰ πνεῦμα. If the command denotes the reality present and not an action to be taken, it reaffirms the nature of the allegory. It is not first and foremost an *ad-hominem*[91] argument against the Agitators, but a positive argument and exhortation for the Galatians.

Paul then returns to the same basic thought as 4:28, demonstrating that the main point of the argument is to be found here: the Galatians are sons of the free woman by promise, and therefore free themselves. Thus, he not only warns the Galatians about the consequences of turning to the law, but reminds them of the foolishness of the idea. Paul's final conclusion is quite similar to the interpretive key of 4:23, again

---

[90]Susan G. Eastman, "'Cast out the Slave Woman and Her Son': The Dynamics of Exclusion and Inclusion in Galatians 4.30," *JSNT* 28, no. 3 (2006): 320–24. Contra Richard B. Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 306; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 178; Rapa, "Galatians," 117; Jervis, *Galatians*, 123.

[91]So also Eadie, who states that such opinions are "rash" (Eadie, *Paul to the Galatians*, 360).

demonstrating its importance to the allegory. They are free sons, born by the Spirit and promise, and thus true inheritors. Those who work by the flesh, who are aligned with a surpassed age, the physical world, and the law, are slaves and persecutors, and will never gain the inheritance that is granted only through promise.

Again, it is the interpretive key introduced by ἀλλά that here provides a convincing basis for the interpretation Paul provides. In 4:28-30 it provides a thematic treatment of persecution throughout Scripture, which continues to the present day; likewise, it is the interpretive key of 4:23 that provides the ground for connecting Hagar to Sinai, and thus to the present Jerusalem. Further, while verse 28 built a connection back to 4:23 in light of ἐπαγγελία, here verse 31 builds the connection back to ἐλεύθερος. This connection is further confirmation that 4:23 stands as the gravitational center of the allegory.

Free Children Hold to their Freedom
(5:1)

Paul has finished his allegory and its theological implications. Galatians 5:1 is a transitional statement that bridges the gap between the allegory that Paul presented in 4:21-28 and the exhortations he will begin in 5:2.[92] Therefore, dogmatic insistence on the placement of 5:1 either as the conclusion of 4:21-30 or as the introduction to 5:2ff. is misguided. Paul here makes two basic assertions about the implications of his exegesis.

First, Christ has set the Galatians free. Thus, the slavery and dominion of the flesh no longer has any hold over those who are born from the promise. As freedom is a major theme not only in the letter, but also in the allegory, it makes sense that Paul would note it here as he begins his exhortations in 5:2ff. This point, with the above connection to the premise, again argues for the centrality of 4:23.

---

[92]Schreiner, *Galatians*, 307.

Second, Paul notes that they are not again (πάλιν) to submit themselves to a yoke. Given that the Galatians were not previously under νόμος, Paul here implies that the yoke of the law is not different in effect than τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4:3, 9). The effect of both the law and the elementary principles of the world is slavery, wrought by the flesh. Paul's generalized characteristics of antagonists and protagonists continue; the time before faith (πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν) is characterized by law, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, flesh, and slavery. Paul's allegory is meant to drive these points home for the Galatians. By reading the story allegorically through the lens of 4:23, Paul is able to summarize his previous arguments while extending them. Not only are the Galatians akin to Abraham by faith, but to Isaac through promise. Law is once again shown to be ineffective in gaining promise, inheritance, Spirit, or freedom; rather, through its association with the flesh, it is only able to bring slavery and to show the illegitimacy of any who use flesh to claim status as "sons."

Conclusion

Exegetes face a difficult task in Galatians 4:21-5:1, as it stands as one of the most perplexing and difficult sections in Scripture. The exegesis above was meant to ease some of this burden by demonstrating the importance of understanding 4:23 as the interpretive key around which Paul's allegorical treatment of the Sarah/Hagar story was made. This key was built through the connection of σάρξ with παιδίσκη/δουλεία and ἐπαγγελία with ἐλεύθερος. In order for the key to work in the allegory, however, Paul treated the terms inclusively, implying the other associations that had been built throughout his previous arguments. Three exegetical items point in this direction.

First, Paul's use of λέγετέ with the present ἀκούετε in 4:21 hints at a strong connection to the previous portions of Galatians. As λέγω was a chief indicator of

contextualization and explanation earlier in the letter,[93] Paul's use of λέγετέ here indicates that he desires the Galatians to demonstrate their understanding of his previous arguments. Both 4:19 and the present ἀκούετε help to reaffirm that Paul is not leaving his previous points wholesale.

Secondly, the nature of the interpretive key implies a clear connection between σάρξ and slavery. To mention one is to imply the presence of the other. Paul's primary goal was to set before the Galatians the disastrous outcome of attempting to gain adoption as children through the flesh. To this end, Paul continually keeps slavery before their eyes, while only implying the nature of the flesh.

Further, it was argued that Paul's allegory naturally incorporates other associations. While the initial interpretive key was limited to ἐπαγγελία/ἐλεύθερος, Paul extends these explicitly to Spirit (v. 29) and inheritance (v. 30), where they are contrasted with σάρξ and slavery, respectively. On the negative side, Paul extends the σάρξ/δουλεία motif to include the temporal arguments of 3:15-20 and 4:1-9 (νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ), which further implies a physical, earth-bound reality with σάρξ (ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, v. 25). These facts help to show that Paul is casting a net wider than just the specific terms of the premise.

Thirdly, the lexical nature of συστοιχέω implies that a list of comparable traits is being assumed. This is best understood to imply that Paul is contrasting the entire compilation of characteristics of those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, not just the mothers.

To further illustrate the effective nature of taking 4:23 as Paul's hermeneutical key, several difficulties within the allegory have been clarified. First, Paul's insistence that the νόμος was the focal point of the passage is clarified. Typically, given the quick

---

[93]See chap. 4.

shift to the story of Abraham's sons in Genesis, νόμος is taken in a more general sense that appears to be outside the scope of Paul's use in Galatians. The interpretive key of 4:23 tends to alleviate this difficulty. The story of Abraham's sons is an illustration that flesh yields slaves, which is likewise associated with the νόμος in its proper legal sense. The focal point of the passage is on the nature of the flesh and its use in the law; as such, the legal sense of νόμος is kept intact.

The problematic 4:25 has also been clarified. For many, the geographical reference is a non-starter; it has no apparent function in the allegory, and thus other explanations are sought out. These suffer from several problems, the most damaging being that the Galatians are unlikely to pick up on any particular word-associations between Hagar and Sinai. The lens of verse 23 again helps, as the flesh and the present-world belong in the same conceptual web. Thus, the geographical reference for Mt. Sinai, and its logical present-world connection to the present Jerusalem is explained.

Further, the omission of any reference to Sarah is better explained. This omission is not just happenstance, as though Paul just assumed that the connection to Sarah was implied and therefore unnecessary to state. Rather, seeing Sarah as implied is a misreading of the text altogether. Paul purposely forgoes mentioning Sarah to keep the focus on the instrumentality of the promise in enacting freedom, providing a stronger connection between the birth of Isaac and the Galatians.

Last, and most important, the interpretive key of 4:23 helps to build a meaningful ground for the connection between Hagar and Sinai that is central to Paul's overall argument. If this connection is not convincing, it is unlikely that Paul's argument will stand. Indeed, it is likely to be roundly rejected by the Galatians whose deteriorating relationship with Paul has already been established (cf. 4:8-20). Far from simply making the connection by allegorical fiat, Paul has bound the two together through 4:23.

One of the key points of this interpretation is that it relieves the Galatians of the high processing difficulty of other interpretations. This outcome, which is an extension of the deficiencies of other lines of interpretation analyzed in chapter 2, is highlighted in the fact that the Galatians need access to very little secondary knowledge. Either Paul did not truly care about being winsome and convincing, or he provided viable grounds on which his allegory was to proceed. If, as it was argued, Paul was indeed trying to win the Galatians, it is unlikely that Paul would have provided an argument that required detailed knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, the geography of the Middle East, or taking an "arduous" journey through Isaiah. The exegesis provided above requires little more than a basic knowledge of the Sarah/Hagar story (which is easily accounted for) and the general flow of Paul's previous arguments in Galatians. The facts of the case are set before the Galatians, and are easily accessible. Further to the point, it does not appear as though this reduced effort to understand the allegory has likewise clouded the purpose or point of the allegory. They are, as Betz succinctly stated, "easy to detect."[94] The difference, however, is these facts are now grounded in the interpretive key of 4:23 instead of assumed present through a general appeal to the nature of allegory.

While the story of Sarah and Hagar implies the reliability of the interpretive key of 4:23, it is still not clear how Paul has built the associations within the epistle used above. Answering this difficulty is the problem that chapter 4 will seek to address across the whole of Galatians.

---

[94]Betz, *Galatians*, 244.

CHAPTER 4

THE SCHEMATIC AND THEMATIC CONNECTIONS
BETWEEN THE EPISTLE AND THE ALLEGORY OF
4:21-5:1

Introduction

In his 1970 commentary on Galatians, John Bligh offers a unique, although ultimately unconvincing attempt to provide cohesive organization to the letter of Galatians.[1] Bligh argued that chiastic structures stand side-by-side in Galatians, one from 2:11-3:4, centered on 2:16d (καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν), and one from 4:11-30b, centered on the emotional appeals of 4:19 and 20.[2] Barrett's assessment is sufficient: "The great merit of Bligh's interpretation is that it gives to Ga. 4:21-31 a concrete setting and a very sharp point."[3] While Barrett, in the end, characterizes Bligh's construction as "unconvincing . . . clumsy, unbalanced," he nevertheless is correct that Bligh was more on point than others in trying to establish the setting and rhetorical function of the allegory in Paul's argument.[4]

---

[1]John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (London: St. Paul Publications, 1970), 37–42.

[2]The intervening passages are elucidations on the nature of the law for the Jews in Antioch, forming a larger explanation of the Antiochene speech, which runs all the way to 4:10. The rest is an address directly to the Galatians, ending with the allegorical treatment in 4:21ff., an allegory Paul needs to round off his argument.

[3]Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982], 158. See also Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 90–95.

[4]Barrett, "The Allegory," 157. Bligh's attempt is especially helpful when other efforts at structuring the epistle are inspected. For instance, Bernard H. Brinsmead, who argues along the lines of Greek rhetoric (à la Betz) for the structure of the letter, notes that the *probatio* section moves from chapters 3-4, yet fully leaves out the allegory from his discussion of the structure of the argument (Bernard H. Brinsmead, *Galatians - Dialogical Response to Opponents*, SBLDS 65 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 83).

It is hoped that this chapter will improve upon Bligh's efforts, illuminating the exegesis of Galatians 4:21ff. by carefully placing it within the argument of Galatians, specifically in light of the programmatic statement of 2:15-21. By doing so, 4:21ff. will be shown to be the summation and the pinnacle of Paul's argumentative efforts, and as such it not only assumes previously tread ground, but also serves to pointedly and starkly frame the issue for the Galatians.

Thus, this chapter will focus on setting the argument of 4:21ff. both schematically and thematically within the epistle. Schematically, it will be argued that the allegory fits well into Paul's overall argument throughout the epistle, providing further proof that the allegory is not simply re-stating previous arguments nor completely dissociated from them. Rather, Paul seeks to summarize his previous argument, reframing them in the allegory and highlighting the basic distinctions built throughout the letter.

This chapter will also seek to argue that the foundational thematic associations Paul wields within the allegory are built earlier in the letter. I will argue that the central text of 2:15-21 presents works of the law and faith as two exclusive entities. Therefore, the collection of negative characteristics concerning the works of the law (and the law in general) are built up throughout the letter, while continually being contrasted with the characteristics of faith in Christ.[5]

---

[5]Matthew S. Harmon is on the right track when he states, "Thus when Paul addresses those who want to be ὑπὸ νόμον in 4:21, it [is] this network of negative associations from 3:1-4:20 that Paul is drawing upon; he is in effect saying, 'If after all of these negative descriptions of being ὑπὸ νόμον you still want to pursue the Law, let me now advance my final argument against such lunacy.'" From Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, BZNW 168 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 198. Harmon, however, shows little interest of finding a connection between these negative descriptions of which Gal 3-4 are rife, and the central passage of Gal 2:15-21. Further, his central focus on Isa 51-54 as shaping the hermeneutical lens through which Paul reads Gen 16-21 is misplaced (ibid., 183). See above, pp. 83-89.

In order to accomplish these tasks, I begin with the assumption that the text of 2:15-21 is the center of gravity in the letter, the nexus from which all else flows. This assumption is not widely contested, and appears to be rather safe.[6]

Given that, however, how precisely does this section of text actually frame the rest of Paul's argument? At the very least, this text sets the agenda for the argument in Galatians.[7] It is an argument that takes on the place of ἔργα νόμου in terms of justification, union with Christ, the nature of the love of God and the central importance of the death of Christ. While true, I will argue that this central text goes further: it provides not only the thematic content for Paul's argument, but also its schematic form.[8] That is, the text from 2:15-21 forms the basis for Paul's arguments from 3:1-5:6, as he follows the same lines of argumentation there as he does in the quite condensed 2:15-21.

Because Paul is unpacking this tightly wound argument, there are several qualifications that must be made up front. First, Paul's confrontation with Peter in 2:14-21 was made from a Jew to a Jew.[9] The problems in Galatia are similar (if not identical)

[6]The summary by Schreiner is typical, as he calls 2:15-21 "perhaps the most significant text in Galatians," and argues that it "functions as a hermeneutical key for the remainder of the letter" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 151). See also Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 98; John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 76. Hans Dieter Betz claims that 2:15-21 stands as the propositio, the central and focal point of the passage. See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 113–4; see also Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 170.

[7]Barclay rightly states that 2:16-21 is "programmatic" for the rest of the epistle (Barclay, *Obeying the Truth,* 76n3).

[8]Gal 2:15-21 is typically classified as the *propositio* of the epistle. The *propositio* acts as a hinge in classical rhetoric, both summarizing the facts laid out, while providing the basic argument which is to come. So Cicero states that the *partitio* (the names of this section varied in classical rhetoric, some using *propositio*, some *partitio*, and some *divisio*, all with the same basic intention) "shows in what we agree with our opponents and what is left in dispute; as a result of this some definite problem is set for the auditor on which he ought to have his attention fixed" (Cicero, *De Inventione*, trans. Harry M. Hubbell, LCL 386 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006], 63).

[9]Whether vv. 15-21 form the continuation of Paul's upbraiding of Peter or a new section devoted to summary pointed directly at the Galatian situation is debated. The section is transitional, and the two contexts are certainly not exclusive. As A. Andrew Das states, "Even if vv. 15-16 signal a turn toward the Galatians situation itself, as is probably the case if the verses are transitional, they cannot be severed from vv. 1-14" (A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*, Library of Pauline Studies [Peabody, MA:

to those in Antioch; yet, the recipients of the letter are Gentiles. Due to these cultural

differences, Paul must re-contextualize his argument to fit the cultural background of the

recipients, something he will do more than once. Further, because the speech to Peter as

reported in Galatians is highly compact, elaboration on certain points will happen by

necessity.[10] Paul will not always stay precisely on track; he will broaden certain points,

and, perhaps, go on small rabbit chases. These excurses are to be expected.

However, this qualification does not deny the importance of the proposed

structure within the epistle. The purpose in seeing the structure of the letter through this

manner is not to hamstring Paul into a preformed package, nor to force monotony on his

arguments, but to provide a structure through which the argument in Galatians might be

seen to flow, which will hopefully better place the argument and purpose of 4:21ff.[11] By

viewing the text this way, 4:21ff. is seen not only as an effective and poignant pinnacle,

but also as the concise and memorable summation of his argument that justification is

only found through faith in Christ, and that any addition of ἔργα νόμου negates this core

center of the gospel.

Hendrickson Publishers, 2003], 31). Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 113–14; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 6th ed. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1880) 113–14; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians,* Black's New Testament Commentary 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 132; François Vouga, *An Die Galater*, Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 56–57. My contention that vv. 15-21 represents a continuation of the address to Peter while also being condensed and adjusted for the Galatians is based primarily on the insufficiency of v. 14 as the full report of Paul's open retort to Peter. It hardly works to have Peter stand condemned (v. 11) because of hypocrisy, without detailing the depth or the importance of that hypocrisy. All that v. 14 accomplishes is to point out the manner in which Peter has been hypocritical while not illuminating the importance that Paul clearly attached to it. This depth is precisely what vv. 15-21 add, and therefore should be seen as a continuation of Paul's Antioch speech. See D. J. Verseput, "Paul's Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community: A Study of the Narrative in Galatians 1 and 2," *NTS* 39, no. 1 (1993): 53–54.

[10]"The *propositio* is extremely concise and consists largely of dogmatic abbreviations" (Betz, *Galatians*, 114).

[11]Betz argued that the allegorical argument returned Paul to an earlier rhetorical portion of his argument (ibid., 240; see also Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT [Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988], 204). Dunn, likewise, states that "[the allegory] comes at the end of his main argument, as a kind of addendum to it, rather than as a principal part of his own argument; it was not intended as a plank in his own platform" (James G. D. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, New Testament Theology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 96).

As I argue exegetically throughout Galatians on these two fronts, the choice was made to treat both simultaneously. Therefore, when speaking of the comparison of 2:18 with 3:1-14, I will treat both the schematic and thematic issues, instead of arguing through 3:1-14 two distinct times. While this organization may invite some confusion, I have worked to avoid it, and it is hoped further that such a presentation will avoid unnecessary repetition.

Lastly, there are numerous contentious passages throughout the epistle, far too many with far too much dissention amongst scholars to deal with in one chapter. Where appropriately related to the thesis of this chapter, we will briefly enter into these contentions. However, many of these difficulties need not bother this particular thesis, and will only be mentioned and highlighted, but not engaged.

Structure and Theme in Galatians

Translators and scholars have long noticed the importance of the section starting in 2:15 and have typically used paragraph marking to set it aside from the text of verse 14.[12] The outline presented below serves to highlight how the text of 2:15-21 effectively outlines the central portions of the Galatian epistle.[13] This relationship of 2:15-21 with the majority of Galatians will be argued throughout the chapter in order to provide a clear and concrete setting for the allegory.

Thus, Paul's sketch of his argument with Peter is essentially replayed for the Galatians, only adapted and filled in considerably. The following, then, argues for the

---

[12]So Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 135; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 80; Matera, *Galatians*, 98; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 150; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 169. Also note the paragraph demarcation in the HCSB, ESV, NIV, USB[5]. Not all are in agreement, however. The NA[28], NLT, and NKJV all include v. 15 with the previous paragraph, either beginning with v. 11 or v. 14.

[13]The more detailed verse divisions (a-e) are based on the verse divisions provided by Schreiner, *Galatians*, 152.

validity of this relationship by detailing the links between 2:15-21 and its various

associated passages, and interprets the sections in light of their interaction with the

summary and argument of 4:21ff.

Table 1. Comparison of argumentative sections of Galatians to 2:15-21

Text	Basis	Description
2:1-10	2:15-16	Agreement Concerning the Core of the Gospel
2:11-14a	2:17	Paul's Interpretation of Peter's actions in Antioch
3:1-14	2:18	The Mutual Incompatibility of Works and Faith
3:15-18	--	Λέγω Excursus: Analogy from Common Law and Explanation
3:19-29	2:19-20b	The Purpose of the Law and Union with Christ
4:1-11	--	Λέγω Excursus: The Jewish Experience ὑπὸ νόμον as it Relates to the Gentiles' Experience ἀνόμως
4:12-20	2:20c-e	Heightened Emotional Appeal and Christ's Love
4:21-5:1	--	Λέγω Excursus: Final Appeal and Summary Argument
5:2-6	2:21	Setting Aside Grace and the Nullification of Christ's Death

Two of the sections (the analysis of 2:1-10 in light of 2:15-16 and 3:1-13 in

light of 2:18) will be considerably longer than the others, as these two sections are vital to

linking the allegory thematically to the rest of the epistle. If Paul's major argument is

primarily over the nature of justification, it would be quite different thematically from the

nature of the argument proposed for 4:21ff., which starkly avoids the theme of

justification. This thesis argues for the incompatibility of any concept of works of the

law with the already presupposed gospel core, not that Paul narrowly proposes

justification by faith alone against foreign misunderstandings. Paul is at pains to show

the incongruent nature of any proposed works mixing with the accepted doctrine of 2:16,

not whether this doctrine is correct. Thus, he proceeds with a comparison of

characteristics and attributes, demonstrating their incompatible nature.[14]

2:1-10 (cf. 2:15-16): Agreement
Concerning the Core of the Gospel

The section from 2:15-16 is the center and heart of Paul's argument; as such,

the nature and basis of this text will be thoroughly inspected for its content and meaning.

It has been argued that the allegory of 4:21ff. is based on the comparison of attributes of

two competing spheres of reality, typified by the flesh and promise in 4:23. If Paul's

argument in 2:15-21 turns primarily on the nature of justification, a theme which is

missing entirely from the allegory, then the allegory itself is displaced from the center of

the argument in Galatians. Therefore, a central strand of this thesis is that such

dissociation is indeed not the case. Paul's argument stands, both in 2:15-21 and in 4:21ff.

on the basic incompatibility of works of the law, enacted by the flesh, and the shared core

of justification through faith detailed in 2:16.

The universal acceptance of Galatians 2:16. Beginning in 2:15, Paul

separates out Jew from Gentile, along common lines, noting that the Gentiles are *de facto*

sinners (ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). The fact that Paul sets the comparison in this manner is

important, as this tension highlights even more what Paul is about to say in verse 16:

even though Paul and Peter are born into Jewish stock, and are people of the law (ἐξ

---

[14]That Paul attempts to demonstrate the inconsistency of the Agitators' view with the gospel does not mean that justification, and its theological/historical meanings, is not an important topic of study within Galatians, or that the epistle is not a critical source of information in that debate. As this debate largely circles around the broad New Perspective on Paul, good starting points would include James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005); Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*, WUNT 140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); N. T. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). The historical and theological background of justification and the law is thoroughly covered in D. A Carson, Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, ed., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); Charles Lee Irons, *The Righteousness of God: A Lexical Examination of the Covenant-Faithfulness Interpretation*, WUNT 386 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). I contend that the problem does not surround understanding justification *per se*, but rather the relationship of ἔργα νόμου and righteousness through faith in Christ.

ἔργων νόμου), they both confess that the works of the law do not justify. The καί is ascensive, indicating that *even* Jews thus need to believe in Christ so that they might be justified.

This confession is the paradigmatic statement to which Paul will seek to hold Peter, and the Galatians, accountable, the irreducible core of which any change will bring about the negation of the gospel. This point can hardly be overstated as the center of Paul's argument throughout Galatians. If the Galatian Agitators denied this tenet, the speech to Peter would not address the same questions as the Agitators put forward to the Galatians. At best, Paul would be woefully ignorant of the theological danger posed to the Galatians; at worst, he would be engaged in a weak straw-man argument which ignores the real theology of his antagonists.[15] It is therefore unlikely that these verses do not directly apply to the Galatian crisis, and that the opponents of Paul would not themselves cosign the particular statement of faith found in 2:16. It is unclear what Paul gains from the particular example of Peter in 2:11-14 in the eyes of the Galatians if that example does not apply equally to his opponents.[16]

Full affirmation of the contextualized gospel. Before delving further into 2:16, it is important to understand the nature of the gospel within Galatians, as it will help to set the context of the common confession of 2:16 and the general nature of the crisis facing the Galatians. Paul, bypassing his normal thanksgiving, claims that the Galatians

---

[15]Detailing the Agitators' theology is a very difficult task, if not impossible. It is not clear from mirror-reading Galatians, which is always a risky procedure, if it is possible to determine the Agitators' reasons for appealing to the law. While it was possible that the Agitators had a well thought through system of beliefs, it is also possible that their desire for Gentile circumcision was a visceral and emotional reaction to the shedding of an important and long-standing tradition which founded a good deal of their heritage and identity. The basis, then, for believing the Agitators would accept 2:16 wholeheartedly turns not on a proposed recreation of their theology, but rather conditions that make Paul's argument cogent. See the introduction to chap. 2.

[16]Assuming that 2:16 is an agreed upon confession does not mean that the Agitators are not contradicting it, which is part of Paul's emphasis in both 2:18 and 3:1-14, as shown below. Of course, the opponents could also simply be interpreting the doctrinal confession of 2:16 differently than Paul. However, such a position is unlikely. See n33 below.

have turned from the one who called them εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον in 1:6. Interpreters tend to read this clause in a manner that implies that the Agitators were in fact presenting a second gospel, which Paul then clarifies in 1:7 by stating that οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο.

As Jens Schröter points out, however, there are problems with this view.[17] The largest problem, it seems, is the insistence of most translations and commentators to see ἕτερος and ἄλλος as basically synonymous. Viewing the terms in this manner means that, while Paul affirms that the Agitators are presenting a different gospel in 1:6, he then simply clarifies that there is really only one gospel (ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο), and that which the Agitators preach does not align with it (οἱ ταράσσοντες θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ). The contrast provided by ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο is meant to be distancing from the valid gospel, stating that there is only one true gospel. Thus, the gospel presented by the Agitators is really no gospel at all.

The question, then, is whether ἕτερος and ἄλλος must be synonymous here. Schröter notes three distinct problems: (1) The use of ἄλλος becomes inherently superfluous, and thus: (2) Paul seemingly provides unnecessary confusion by calling the message from the Agitators εὐαγγέλιον, while offering a fairly ambiguous statement to clarify;[18] (3) scholars' proof that the two terms *may* be used synonymously does not prove that they do not retain some form of lexical and semantic distinction.[19] The first two difficulties rest as criticisms of the synonymous view on their own; the third, however, needs more proof. Schröter notes that the terms carry slight differences in meaning which can be blurred in certain contexts (i.e., 2 Cor 11:4). What Schröter settles

---

[17]Jens Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*, trans. Wayne Coppins, Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 138–39.

[18]Paul could have simply used ἕτερος in the place of ἄλλο to negate his previous sentence and clarify his overall meaning. That he chose not to do so is important.

[19]Schröter, *From Jesus to the NT*, 140–41.

on is understanding ἕτερος as a difference in form, with ἄλλος indicating a difference in kind.[20] Thus, the Agitators presented another *form* of the gospel, which is not really a different gospel, but they have distorted it (μεταστρέφω; 1:7) and made it into a false-gospel.

Thus, there are two contextualized forms of the gospel. One for the Jews, which allowed certain cultural rites from the law so long as those rites did not infringe on justification in Christ. It is likely then that circumcision, if it were understood by Jews to be a rite set aside from justification, was an acceptable practice within their cultural context. The other law-free contextualized form of the gospel was purposely focused on the Gentiles.[21] The problem in Galatia, then, is that these two contexts have been confused, and no longer are rites being simply allowed for Jews, but demanded from Gentiles.

A closer look at Galatians 2 might help to clarify this contextualized gospel position. While Paul gives several indications as to why he has now chosen to go to Jerusalem,[22] of interest is Paul's insistence that he ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. The relative clause is important, as it focuses the gospel here: it

---

[20]Schröter, *From Jesus to the NT*, 145. Coppins leaves the German cognate as-is (Form = form), and it is likely that what Schröter implies is in line with the concept of "contextualization" (see the original German version, Jens Schröter, *Von Jesus Zum Neuen Testament: Studien Zur Urchristlichen Theologiegeschichte Und Zur Entstehung Des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*, WUNT 204 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 160). "Therefore, the two forms of the gospel also do not differ with respect to substance but through the addressees to which they are directed, namely Jews and Gentiles" (Schröter, *From Jesus to the NT*, 151). Although Oepke agrees with this basic lexical distinction ("Wo unterschieden wird, hat ἕτερος (= *alter*) enumerativen, ἄλλος (= *alius*) qualitativen Sinn"), he comes to the conclusion that the gospel was singular and identical with Paul's ("Sofern die Judaisten Evangelium predigen, ist dies nichts anderes, als was Paulus gepredigt hat"). See Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*, Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 9 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 49.

[21]While the Jews could maintain ethnic and cultural connections to many of the boundary markers of the law, the Gentiles could not. These practices, if thrust upon the Gentiles, make mandatory an ethnic identity provided by the law. Paul's argument, filled out below, rests here: any establishment of the law naturally entails a foundational breakdown of justification only through faith in Christ.

[22]These reasons for travelling to Jerusalem include the initial impetus of a revelation, and Paul's concern over running in vain (cf. 2:2). It is likely that both of these reasons are linked to the issue of the contextualized gospels.

is not just the gospel in its core form, but the contextualized gospel that Paul preaches to the Gentiles.

Further, Paul alludes to two separate contextualized forms of the gospel continuously through the account. Not only is it the gospel which Paul puts forward ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, but the gospel is also τῆς ἀκροβυστίας, the nature of his mission is εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, and even God's work in him εἰς τὰ ἔθνη is contrasted with God's work in Peter εἰς τῆς περιτομῆς.[23]

The meeting itself draws the issue of contextualization into focus. Here, Paul clarifies why he has taken along Titus, whom Paul mentions almost as an aside in 2:1, but who becomes the central focus of 2:3. Paul desires to see whether Titus, who is Greek and a Gentile by birth, will be compelled to be circumcised by the pillars, especially in light of the false-brothers present at the meeting. Thus, before the Jerusalem apostles were placed both Paul's law-free form of the gospel, which commanded no circumcision and a freedom from the law for Gentiles, and the perverted ἕτερος gospel, which demands the rites of the law upon all. The extension to Paul of the right hand of fellowship (v. 9), especially in light of the proceedings concerning the false-brethren, indicates that all were aligned over the central doctrinal and theological concerns of the gospel.[24]

That unity, however, could easily be shattered. Paul quickly turns from the unity of 2:1-10 to the hypocrisy of Peter in 2:11ff.[25] Peter had formerly eaten with the

---

[23]It would be unlikely that the genitive constructions in 2:7 would be noting a locative idea (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας and τῆς περιτομῆς). Rather, it is more likely possessive: the gospel of the uncircumsized/circumcised.

[24]That the "false-brothers" were there at the behest of some of the Jerusalem pillars (so Vincent M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia: Paul's Response to Jewish-Christian Separation and the Threat of Galatian Apostasy* [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998], 79–82) is unlikely and quite beside the point. The fact the pillars eventually approved of the Pauline mission to the Gentiles is ascent enough. That the pillars affirmed Paul stands against Ernst Haenchen, "Petrus-Probleme," *NTS* 7 (1961): 187–97, who argues that it was the Antioch mission that was affirmed, not Paul's general mission to the Gentiles. The purpose clause ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη along with the fact that Titus remained uncircumscribed confirms that the pillars approved of Paul's mission, not just the Antioch church.

[25]Das's contention that the pillars, while accepting Paul's views on circumcision as highlighted in the Jerusalem meeting of Gal 2, did not accord the same status to Gentiles in respect to table fellowship

Gentiles, as made sense from the agreement above. However, certain men arrived, and Peter backed off. These men, known only by their alignment with James and a connection to Jewish believers, caused fear in Peter of some form, so that he removed himself from Gentile fellowship. Paul saw this act as a brutal betrayal, calling Peter and Barnabas hypocritical (v. 13), stating that Peter stood condemned (v. 11), and noting that Peter was now not walking in line with the truth of the gospel (v. 14). Therefore, Paul confronted him before everyone.

Paul's matter-of-fact nature in 2:16 simply assumes that the statement would be generally accepted by Peter.[26] Although Paul has already noted the apostolic acceptance of the core tenets of the gospel, he has withheld discussion of what precisely that core is until now.

Ἐξ ἔργων νόμου as an identity marker in 2:16. The manner in which ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is typically read in 2:16a is overwhelmingly adverbial. This reading clearly sets the action of justification *through* ἔργων νόμου front and center, and positions Paul's argument around justification, and not the comparison between spheres of reality characteristic of 4:21ff. Yet, it is unlikely that Paul meant for the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου[27]

---

is brought into doubt by Paul's charge of hypocrisy (Das, *Paul and the Jews*, 30–1). Perhaps Das is correct historically, but it is clear that Paul did not see things that way. The term ὑπόκρισις was a theater term, and indicates that Peter was likely only putting on a good face for the circumcision party. On the background of ὑπόκρισις, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 588. However, the word certainly does not exclude Peter's knowledge that he was in the wrong, and Paul certainly thinks this was the case. Given Paul's strong response, it is unlikely he saw Peter's actions as simple inconsistency (contra Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 77).

[26]The sentiment that Peter would have accepted the theological doctrine in 2:16 wholesale stands against many of the 2- and 3-group theories of previous generations. I therefore agree with Robert Jewitt who argues that the 2-front theories fail to explain the unity within the Galatian communities (Robert Jewitt, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17, no. 2 [1971]: 198–99). It is unclear, however, if Jewett himself avoided this trap (see Brinsmead, *Dialogical Response*, 29).

[27]Michael Bachmann argues that the term ἔργα νόμου and the bare term νόμος refer to the identical reality, namely the regulations of the law, and not the "doing" of the law itself (Michael Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology*, trans. Robert L. Brawley [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008], 1–18). I doubt the validity of his conclusions. Paul textually separates the two realities, dealing with ἔργα νόμου in 3:1-10 as a product of human exertion, and concerning the νόμος (as a bare term and a system of regulations) in

to be understood as adverbial phrase connected to δικαιοῦται in 16a. It is more likely that he meant it as an adjectival phrase, for several reasons.[28]

First, ἄνθρωπος occurs between the verb and ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, making it more likely (even if only slightly) that the phrase was associated with the noun rather than the verb. Second, the nature of 2:15 lends ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to be thought of in this manner. Paul's summation in 2:15 leans on identity (ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). The designation of Jews here as those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is a helpful designation that specifies that it is not ethnic Jews in general with which Paul is concerned, but specifically the law and the Jewish relationship to it. It is likely that the original construction, which pins ethnic Jews against ethnic Gentiles is then redirected. Thus, it is not *just* an ethnic problem, but an ethnic problem manifested and centered in the law. Along the same lines, the use of ἐκ here parallels the typically untranslated ἐκ in 2:15, which stands as a marker of identity for the Gentiles (ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). That Paul here juxtaposes Jew and Gentile is further supported by the ascensive καὶ later in the verse. Here, Paul has moved from the doctrinal tenet presented in the beginning of verse 16 to the personal actions taken by Peter and others, including himself: "We, even us who are from the law and by nature Jews, have believed."

Third, Paul's use of ἐὰν μὴ suggests an adjectival use. The most typical interpretation of the phrase in Paul, outside of 2:16, is one of exclusion, indicating that

---

3:11-29. He does not mix the use of the two terms here in Galatians, as one would suspect if Bachmann were correct. See below on 3:11ff.

[28]In 3:10 (ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν), Paul appears to use the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to identify persons, not actions. This designation does not negate the idea that τὰ ἔργα νόμου emphasize obedience and not just identity. They do both, so that even when identity is stressed the noun retains its verbal quality. Mark Seifrid states that ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is an adjectival modifier in 2:16, although he "cannot here take time to defend the reading" ("Paul, Luther, and Justification in Gal 2:15-21," *WTJ* 65, no. 2 (2003): 217; see also A. B. Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul's Theology in Galatians," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009], 193–37). While Schreiner is grammatically correct in stating that the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου never modifies a noun, even in 3:10 where it technically modifies εἰσίν, it is likewise clear that the pragmatic effect of the modification of εἰσίν is to describe and limit the ὅσοι, which makes its function adjectival even if it is grammatically adverbial (see Schreiner, *Galatians*, 163n46).

what follows is the missing and needed notion. To this end, it is typically glossed with

the phrases *if not*, *unless*, *except*, or *without*.[29] This typical gloss is problematic in verse

16, and has traditionally led interpreters down an apparent false path. For those who see

ἔργα νόμου as mutually exclusive to faith in Christ, the typical interpretation and

translation of ἐὰν μὴ will hardly do, so long as ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is seen as adverbial.

Therefore, many have tried to justify an odd use of the phrase by Paul, noting that

theological context must demand full exclusivity.[30] This reading is contextually

defendable, but is ultimately unlikely. Excluding the difficult use of the phrase in 2:16,

which is under debate, Paul's use of ἐὰν μὴ is never adversative.[31]

On the other hand, Dunn is slightly mistaken when he claims that ἐὰν μὴ

indicates that "'works of the law' and 'faith in Jesus Christ' are not necessarily being

posed here as mutually exclusive antitheses."[32] Overall, Dunn's analysis is helpful, as he

affirms that "faith in Jesus Christ" and the use of the law was an "intra-Jewish

possibility." His interpretation is limited, however, because he misunderstands the issues

surrounding the nature of the contextualized gospel.[33]

---

[29]BDAG s.v. "ἐάν," 1.c.β.

[30]So Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 138; Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), 120–21; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 84; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 162.

[31]The uses of the construction ἐὰν μὴ are varied, but in no other situation is it likely to be construed as an adversative. See the uses in Rom 10:15; 11:23; 1 Cor 8:8; 9:16; 14:6, 9; 15:36; 2 Thess 2:3; 2 Tim 2:5. Further, the related form εἰ μὴ is likewise never used in an adversative manner (cf. Rom 7:7 (2x); 9:29; 11:15; 13:1, 8; 14:14; 1 Cor 1:14; 2:2; 2:11; 7:17; 8:4; 10:13; 12:3; 14:5; 15:2; 2 Cor 2:2; 12:5, 13; Gal 1:7, 19; 6:14; Eph 4:9; 4:15; 1 Tim 5:19). The one possible exception to this rule, Gal 1:7, is able to capture the normal meaning of "except" based on the interpretation provided above.

[32]Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 137.

[33]Das's conjecture is close to Dunn's (see Dunn, *Paul and the Jews*, 31-2). Das argues that v. 16 is a formulaic statement, agreed upon by all parties; yet that statement is vague. The Jewish-Christians have interpreted that statement to indicate that, while faith is necessary it is not sufficient, and (ἐὰν μὴ) works of the law must be present. Das concludes that this misunderstanding is what the (apparent) repetition later in v. 16 clarifies. Paul is countering those claims, marking out faith as both necessary *and* sufficient for justification. In order to clarify this confusion, however, Paul needs *both* to reaffirm the importance of faith, *and* to further demonstrate that the ἔργα νόμου are *not* necessary. However, nothing approaching this happens. At best, Paul is affirming that the ἔργα νόμου are not sufficient *by themselves* (hence, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σάρξ, 16d), but this is no different than the statement in 16a.

112

What Paul is claiming in 2:16 is that even for those who are already found inside or connected to the ἔργα νόμου, justification is still only through faith in Christ. In one sense, then, Dunn's view concerning ἐὰν μὴ not implying full mutual incompatibility is correct. For Jews inside of the law, who are circumcised and follow norms and customs long since passed down, Paul does not see all "works of the law" and "faith in Christ" as mutually exclusive. Jews may retain *some* of these (notably circumcision) so long as they do not impinge on the theological assertion that it is only faith in Christ that provides justification.[34]

But what is permissible for Jews is not the question at hand. What Paul desires to show is not what might be the case for the *Jews*, which deals with a separate contextualization of the gospel and is therefore a separate issue. Rather, he wants to show that any appropriation of the law is indeed mutually exclusive with being ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ for *Gentiles*. Paul's general argument here is moving from the lesser to the greater: if even we Jews need to rely on faith in Christ and not the works of the law, how much more the Gentiles!

This reading of 2:16 gives teeth to Paul's contention in 2:14, where Paul argues that Peter does not live like a Jew (οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῇς) but rather as a Gentile (ἐθνικῶς). It is noteworthy that Paul does not claim that Peter has *lived* (past tense) as a *Gentile*. Rather, he claims that Peter is *presently* not living as a *Jew*. "Paul suggests that Peter's new conduct in fact contradicts the inner logic of the step once taken."[35] Paul's

---

[34]While Jewish circumcision can be thought of as a cultural accommodation that the gospel can afford, it is clear that Jewish table regulations are not in the same category. So long as the rite of circumcision was understood not as a theological necessity, but rather a nod to cultural considerations, Paul seems to be indifferent to it (cf. Paul's attitude concerning circumcision in Gal 6:15 - οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, Gal 5:6, and the circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16:3). It is likely that, at the point when circumcision is seen as a cultural and not religious phenomenon, it fails to fall into the notion of ἔργα νόμου that counteract justification by faith in Christ. Perhaps a better designation for such cultural practices would be παράδοσις γενῶν. Such cultural allowances are, however, limited. This limitation is clearly seen in table fellowship, as the exclusion of Gentiles from the table makes them, out of necessity, outsiders on a separate plane of existence from the Jews, and thus impossible to separate from religious connotations.

[35]Heikki Räisänen, "Galatians 2:16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *NTS* 31, no. 4 (1985): 545.

statement, then, is not directed at Peter's former actions in Antioch, but refer rather to his present life *even after* pulling back from table-fellowship. His Christian confession puts him out of step with Judaism in general, and has separated him from his former way of life.[36] If Peter, who is naturally a Jew, cannot continue to live in that manner, how can the Gentiles do so? So much more for 2:16, where Paul has generalized and doctrinalized the statement from 2:14. If Jews, with all the benefits that the law has provided, still cannot be justified by it, then it has no place in the Gentiles' faith.

Fourth, connecting ἐξ ἔργων νόμου with ἄνθρωπος provides a helpful juxtaposition with the Scriptural citation/allusion in 16d. Here, Paul seems to quote, or allude, to Psalm 143:2 (142:2 LXX). If 16a was focused on specifying the identity of the Jews with ἔργα νόμου, 16d then begins to explain why: all flesh is unable to be justified by ἔργα νόμου.[37] The reason why the Jews, and even more so the Gentiles, cannot be justified by works of the law is because *no flesh* is able to be justified, no matter the method applied, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστου. Verse 16 may then be summarized:

---

[36]Dunn's view that Christianity (although not monolithic), stands in continuity with Judaism yields his odd formulation that the statement εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς was actually a summary by the James group, with Paul's own statement and assessment made in the ending question πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαΐζειν; Paul thus seems to be indicting Peter for not choosing sides: he is neither appealing to the James group (not living as a Jew) nor to the Gentiles (how can you force them to live as Jews?). It is difficult to figure out what Paul would mean, given this reading. Further, there is no textual warrant for assuming the first statement comes as a quotation of the James group; it stands as nothing but special pleading that allows a place for Dunn's assumption of continuity. Furthermore, he argues that Peter's "not living like a Jew" was simply in reference to his table-fellowship, and not a wholesale abandonment of Jewish life (contra Betz, *Galatians*, 112). While true, Dunn misses the fact that Paul's indictment was still a *present reality even after pulling back from fellowship*. This view only makes sense if "not living like a Jew" casts a wider net than simply arguments over boundaries such as table-fellowship. See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 127–29. Given Paul's later argument in 3:28, it is quite possible that Paul sees the Christian reality as one distinct and separated from that of the Jew. For a similar argument that Paul's religious conversion had a serious impact on his ethnic standing as a Jew, see Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*, Library of New Testament Studies 410 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 157-64. See also the argument in Räisänen, "Galatians 2:16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," 547–48.

[37]The negation with a universal (πᾶσα) is difficult to render in English, as "all flesh will not be justified" sounds confused. It is typically better to make either the negation stand in line with flesh (no flesh will be justified) or to keep the negation with the verb, and make the verbal idea of justification infinitive (all flesh is unable to be justified). I have opted for the later, as it keeps the stress both on the universal and on the inability of the flesh, which is Paul's point.

(a) Knowing that even those marked out by the law cannot be justified except through faith in Jesus Christ, (b) we also believed in Christ Jesus, (c) so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not the law, (d) because all flesh is unable to be justified by works of the law.

Thus, the logic of verse 16 avoids repetition. While (a) marks common knowledge shared by all parties, (b) indicates the relevant logical action taken, (c) the purpose of that action, and thus (d) the ground of all the above: knowledge, action, and purpose. Regardless of cultural identity, the use of the flesh, even in the law, makes any human action unsuitable for justification before God. Therefore, it is only through faith in Christ, whether one is a Jew under the law or a Greek outside of it, that justifies.

Conclusion. The Galatians' problem surrounds the improper application of the contextualized gospel, forcing the allowed concessions of Judaism upon the Gentiles. This action nullifies the core doctrine that justification is only through faith in Christ Jesus; the core doctrine shared by Peter and Paul alike as demonstrated by 2:1-10. Thus, the argument that Paul embarks on is to show the incongruity of placing the ἔργα νόμου on the Galatians with this core doctrine of justification διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, not simply to clarify justification itself. When viewed in this light, Paul's argument throughout Galatians is aligned with the argument of the allegory in both theme and emphasis.

2:11-14a (cf. 2:17): Paul's Interpretation of Peter's Actions in Antioch

Paul rhetorically asks if Christ being a servant of sin is an apparent entailment for those who have sought to be justified by Christ (ἆρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος;). To this question, Paul adds his characteristic emphatic negation: μὴ γένοιτο. Several points can help see this text as linked to the incident reported in 2:11-14a at Antioch. First, the formulation ἁμαρτίας διάκονος is unusual for Paul. Paul typically reserves διάκονος for positive uses, although the word is clearly amendable to both.[38] Further, "serving" sin is

---

[38]The only negative usage of it in Paul comes in 2 Cor 11:15, where Paul makes the point that Satan's servants often disguise themselves as servants of light. Paul uses the term a total of 23 times, 21 of

used elsewhere in Paul, albeit with a different metaphor. In Romans 6, where the implications of the gospel in terms of "serving" sin is apparent, Paul's metaphor is one of slavery (δοῦλος/δουλόω), a prominent theme in the book of Galatians as well. Yet, here in 2:17, and here alone, does Paul use διάκονος in Galatians. It is tentatively suggested that this phrasing is linked to the problem in Antioch which dealt with table-fellowship. While the use of both δοῦλος and δουλόω are not terms associated with serving tables, διάκονος is.[39] The fear that Peter felt is poignantly made by Paul: does table-fellowship with Gentiles indicate that you were not just served food, but even sin by Christ?

Second, this question appears to be linked to Peter's fear. The fear that Peter felt must have been associated with the perception of having table-fellowship with the Gentiles; from here it is easy enough to make the connection to sin (cf. ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί of v. 15). It is likely, then, that his table-fellowship had led to others (notably οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς, v. 12) seeing Peter as a Gentile and thus a sinner.[40]

---

which are positive in nature (the other two uses being here in 2:17 and 2 Cor 11:15).

[39]J. N. Collins argues that the word is not simply limited to serving tables, but rather implies mission and agency, and only in specific contexts implies "table-service" (J. N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Resources* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990]). In this sense, the comparison is much like the English words "serve" and "slave." The former is not necessarily limited to or originating in the serving of tables; however, it aligns with the concept of serving tables in a way that "slave" would not have. Further, while Collins is likely correct, the context of serving tables is present here, and the play on words would help explain Paul's somewhat unlikely lexical choice.

[40]John Chrysostom argued that Peter's fear here was focused, not on his fear *of* the circumcision group, but *for* the circumcision group, thinking that his table-fellowship with Gentiles would cause apostasy (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 13 [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956], 18). Such a contention is made more likely when noting a similar construction in Gal 4:11. There the direct object of φοβέω is the accusative ὑμᾶς, the context clearly indicates that Paul is in fear for them, not of them, and such fear concerns their apostasy (μή πως εἰκῇ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς). However, whether the fear was noble or not (and I am inclined to think not), it was still a fear of being seen as a sinner, like the Gentiles by nature, which would certainly turn off the Jewish believers to the faith. Much more unlikely is Chrysostom's contention that the entire scene was a theatrical ruse put on by Peter to help move the circumcision group to a right understanding of circumcision and a breaking with the law. "But when some came from Jerusalem who had heard the doctrine he delivered there, he no longer did so fearing to perplex them, but he changed his course, with two objects secretly in view, both to avoid offending those Jews, and to give Paul a reasonable pretext for rebuking him" (Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians*, 19). For a similar interpretation, see Jerome, "Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli Ad Galatas," in *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Opera Omnia*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina (Paris: Migne, 1845), 26:342.

Third, the use of the passive indicates an awareness outside the self. While Paul will make use of one's self-understanding as a sinner, the use of the aorist passive, instead of either the aorist middle or the present middle/passive, indicates that the problem stated by Paul in 2:17 deals with *others* discovering you as a sinner.[41] This is likely Peter's fear, as stated above.

Fourth, the ascensive use of καί also helps this thematic link. It is, again, likely that ἁμαρτωλοί is a reference to "Gentile sinners," not just to sin in general. This again concords well with the nature of the incident in Antioch.

Paul's question circles around the nature of the appellation ἔθνη ἁμαρτωλοί he has already used. Paul has interpreted Peter's actions in Antioch as a fear of being found in like company, and in like class, as the Gentiles.[42] The gospel has set aside the dividing line of the law between Jews and Gentiles; something that Paul makes much of in Galatians, and somewhat more importantly, something that Peter has already agreed upon in the meeting with Paul in 2:1-10. Peter's fear is being seen outside the law, as a Gentile, even though he has agreed that the law has no ability to justify on its own. Thus, the only assumption left is that the gospel itself has made one outside of the law, and applying Jewish logic, a sinner. Therefore, there are good grounds to assume that 2:17 stands as Paul's interpretation of Peter's actions in Antioch, as relayed in 2:11-14, further affirming the schematic structure provided above. Peter's actions stand in stark contrast to the message of the gospel, mark him as a hypocrite, and demonstrate that he is reaffirming the usefulness of the law in justification. It is to this last idea that Paul then turns.

---

[41]Contra Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 141, who oddly translates the passive as an active: "We find that we too are sinners."

[42]It is likely that Paul does not mean "sinner" here in an ethical sense of one who falls short of the requirements of God, but rather one who stands outside of the national and social realm of Israel. Again, this understanding comports well with v. 14 – Peter no longer lives as a "Jew" anyway. See Brinsmead, *Dialogical Response*, 71.

3:1-14 (cf. 2:18): The Mutual
Incompatibility of Works and Faith

In 2:18, Paul uses a fairly enigmatic metaphor for Peter's actions to prove that, rather than those seeking justification in Christ, it is instead those who turn back to the law who transgress.[43] It is likely that what is "torn down" is not the law *per se*, but its role in the ultimate justification of sinners.[44] Peter has signed on to the theological necessity of jettisoning the role of the law in the justification of sinners, explicitly in 2:1-10 and implicitly in 2:15-16. His pulling back from table-fellowship with the Gentiles indicates that the legal regulations were back in play, effectively rebuilding the distinction that Peter already had signed onto, thus making himself a transgressor.[45]

Galatians 3 is contentious in numerous ways, especially 3:10-14. Here, it carries important weight, for the manner in which Paul's argument proceeds directly impacts its thematic connections to 4:21ff. For this reason, a more thorough inspection of the themes and arguments of 3:1-14 is warranted.[46] Paul mounts a three-pronged

---

[43]It is clear that Peter is still in view, even as an eye is turned to the Galatians and Paul uses the first person. Paul may be extrapolating from Peter to himself, as he uses the first person consistently throughout the address. It is possible that Paul does so to demonstrate that his intentions are wider than just condemning Peter; Paul understands that these warnings apply to him as well. Therefore, little should be made of the first-person address (even the singular) in vv. 18-21. Cf. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 102n28.

[44]On the use of καταλύω, cf. Matt 5:17. So also ibid., 102.

[45]Bachmann argues that παραβάτης signifies a break of God's will in salvation, not specifically a breach of the law (παραβάτης indicates "ein grundsätzlicher und strafwürdiger Verstoß gegen Gottes Willen und schwerlich gegen das Gesetz oder seine Vorschriften gemeint sein"). Michael Bachmann, *Sünder Oder Übertreter: Studien Zur Argumentation in Gal 2,15ff.*, WUNT 59 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 77. Thus, what Peter has done in re-establishing the law is break his fundamental confession of the gospel and God's declared will as reported in v. 16.

[46]The argument up to this point comes into greatest focus in 3:1ff. It is unclear that this section of text circles around the nature of justification. Certain scholars point to the Qumran texts that differentiate between being justified freely by God and establishing a righteousness by the law (see Brinsmead, *Dialogical Response*, 250n118, who mentions E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patters of Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 312; J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 85; 1 QS 1:21-2:4, 10:23, 11:17, 1 QH 1:26, 4:29-31, 11:31, 7). "Paul and the opponents can agree about the initiation of the Christian life, but disagree about the covenant laws under which the Christian is then bound" (Brinsmead, *Dialogical Response*, 250n118). While a discussion of the nature of righteousness in both Second Temple Judaism and the sectarian writings is outside of the scope of the present work, even if Sanders et al. are correct in their understandings concerning "covenantal nomism," it does not appear that Paul sees things on the same level. Even if the Agitators in Galatia did not view the issue circumcision as a matter of initial justification, but rather as the pursuit of holiness post-justification, it still appears that Paul holds all righteousness and justification accountable to the doctrinal assessment of 2:16. Vouga's analysis at this point is not spot-on,

argument in 3:1-12, focused on both proving that works of the law and faith are mutually

exclusive and that, based on the confession in 2:16, that rebuilding ἔργα νόμου necessarily

establishes one as a sinner.

Experience of the Spirit is not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Paul asks three rhetorical

questions in 3:1-5, pointed at forcing the Galatians to admit no involvement of the law

aided their reception and use of the Spirit.[47] The third question revolves around the use

of the flesh as a viable way of being "completed." As the Galatians had not, at that point,

surrendered fully to the law, and certainly not previously when they had received the

Spirit, the answer was an obvious "no." Paul's rhetorical questions then seek to

demonstrate the inept nature of the ἔργα νόμου, which are unable either to aid in the

possession of the Spirit or in the progression of holiness.

It is possible that Paul here is contrasting σάρξ and πνεῦμα to drive home a

point that will be furthered later, especially in 4:21ff. Here, Paul connects the ἔργα νόμου

clearly to the σάρξ. It is likely that the dative Paul employs (σαρχὶ) is instrumental. The

ἔργα νόμου, by nature, uses the σάρξ to accomplish its ends. As the Spirit will be the

central focus of the promise to Abraham (3:14), the signpost of adoption and inheritance

(4:6), it is likely that the σάρξ/πνεῦμα distinction becomes eschatological. The use of the

---

but he is correct that "Das *novum* der paulinischen Formulierung ist nicht nur, daß die Problematick der Gerechtigkeit von der Gabe und den Forderungen des Gesetzes dissoziiert wird . . . sondern vor allem die Aufnahme des Begriffes der ἔργα νόμου, der die Aufgabe der Erfüllung des Getteswillens als sinngebenden Rahmen der Existenz gibt." (Vouga, *An Die Galater*, 57–58). Thus, even if the problem is not just concerning the punctiliar moment of justification, and regards a further process, Paul appears to critique them, not primarily on their erroneous understanding of justification, but on their erroneous understanding of faith and works of the law. The insistence on the law, regardless if viewed it in terms of righteousness (δικαιοω/δικαιοσύνη) or completion (ἐπιτελέω), runs askew of the confession of v. 16, established in 2:1-10, and places one squarely in line with the anathema in 1:8-9.

[47]A debate has centered around the meaning of ἀκοή in 3:2, 4. While ἀκοή likely takes on the meaning of "message" in other contexts (i.e., Romans 10:16-17) the overriding context here supports the idea of action on the Galatians part, as it forms a more conceivable antithesis to ἔργα νόμου. Contra Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 128–31; Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism?*, 14. Further, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 22–23; S. K. Williams, "The Hearing of Faith: AKOĒ PISTEŌS in Galatians 3," *NTS* 35, no. 1 (1989): 82–93.

flesh belongs to the old order, the Spirit to the promised age to come.[48] Here, notably, σάρξ is seen as an instrument through which one acts and strives (unsuccessfully) toward completion, aligning it with the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in 4:1-7 and seen as ethical enemies with the Spirit in 5:16-26.

Paul furthers the distinction between works and faith through the connection with Abraham. The καθώς of 3:6 demonstrates that the experience of the Galatians is an experience of a like manner to that of Abraham, who believing, was reckoned as justified. While it is possible to take this verse as a defense of the concept of justification by faith, it is more likely a demonstration of the nature of faith against that of works. Abraham was not justified by works, but rather by faith, and by this the experience of the Galatians is aligned with him. This contention is backed up in Paul's logical inference (ἄρα) of 3:7, which focuses not on the justification but rather the faith of Abraham.

As Paul will end this section of text with an appeal to the universal blessing of God as promised to Abraham, it is likely the blessing of God, the provision of the Spirit, the working of miracles, and the justification of persons are all in one accord, united by faith, which link the experiences of both the Galatians and Abraham, and thus seals their place as Abraham's "sons." Thus, the provision of the Spirit and the working of miracles *by faith* is comparable to justification of Abraham *by faith*.[49] This interpretation makes contextual sense of καθώς, and does so without an appeal to any use of Genesis 15:6

---

[48]Silva writes, "Their [the Galatians'] movement away from the gospel of freedom signifies a return to the old aeon, that is, the present evil age (1:4), the age of the flesh" (Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 176). Cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1971), 26.

[49]While justification may be limited to simply a forensic declaration (so Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 353–62; cf. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 156), it is clear that this declaration opens up other soteriological vistas. Here, Seifrid is correct that "it is entirely correct and important to stress . . . that God's justifying work in Christ brings with it the entrance of the new creation into the fallen world, in the form of the gift of the Spirit," even though that gift is linked to justification because it "proceeds" from the verdict, not necessarily because it is part of the act of justification in and of itself (Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*, NSBT 9 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 172).

outside of Paul's implied interpretation. The import of the quotation of Genesis 12:3 then

is in the link of πίστις in both the experience of Abraham and the Galatians.

Scripture unites Abraham and the Gentiles by faith. In 3:8-9 Paul moves

on to another use of Scripture to support the conclusion that Abraham and the Galatians

are united by faith.**[50]** While 3:8 argues Scripture foresaw the justification of the Gentiles,

Paul moves on to give both the logical inference of 3:8, (the experiences of the Galatians

are analogous to the experiences of Abraham) as well as an explanation of Genesis 12:3.

The text of 12:3 contains the vague ἐν σοὶ, which may be taken as a statement of familial

inheritance, and thus linked with Isaac through physical descendants. Paul, instead,

interprets the LXX's ἐν with σύν, implying that it is not physical descendancy but the

experience of πίστις which aligns the Galatians with Abraham. Paul's repetition further

drives home the point: it is those ἐκ πίστεως who are blessed σὺν πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ. Faith is

front and center.

Paul's first two points are therefore gathered together: the Galatians'

experience of the Spirit through faith is like Abraham's experience of justification

through faith. Both have, in their experiences, felt and entered the blessing of God, a

union which was foretold by Scripture. Faith, as the center of Paul's thought, thus links

together justification, Spirit, blessing, and powerful works.[51] The law, as it has no place

in these characteristics, is therefore torn down as a means of attaining justification.

---

[50]It is likely that Paul begins a new thought or step in his argument in 3:8. While he had previously used logical connectors to pull premises and conclusions together (οὖν v. 5; καθώς v. 6; ἄρα v. 7), 3:8 uses the postpositive δέ, which here shows progression of thought.

[51]While many of these terms/concepts appear to be synonymous in 3:1-14, they do not all have to be. I am simply claiming that for Paul they sit on one side of two diametrically opposed ways of life post-Christ: the way of faith and the way of the law. On synonymous meanings within the passage, see S. K. Williams, "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," *JSNT* 29 (1987): 91–100; Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, WUNT 241 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 140.

Scripture establishes οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου **as transgressors.** While Paul has

made the argument, through logical and analogous connections to Abraham, that οἱ ἐκ

πίστεως are justified freely outside of the law and counted as Abraham's sons, he has not

mentioned the reasons for excluding οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου according to his reading of the

OT.[52] This task is taken up in 3:10-12. Γάρ marks, then, not a grounding of what has

come before, but rather a ground for what has *not* been explained but assumed, namely

the exclusion of οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Paul clearly states, in 3:10a, that ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου

are under a curse (ὑπὸ κατάραν). To ground this premise, Paul turns to Deuteronomy

27:26.[53] Thus the curse stands, not just as condemnation, but more to the point, as the

antithesis of blessing, noted in both 3:9, 14, a blessing which Burton thinks is equivalent

to being "sons of Abraham."[54]

Paul will seize upon two different portions of the quotation from Deuteronomy

27:26. The fact that one must maintain *all* of the law (πᾶσιν) is highlighted by Paul in his

conclusion in 5:3 (if you are circumcised: ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσα). The

point of nearer importance is the *doing* of the law, which as seen above also makes an

appearance in 5:3. To see how Paul highlights this important fact, we must push on to

3:11, and clarify a syntactical problem.

---

[52]Paul's use of οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου does not mean that Jews are *de facto* excluded, although the point is still on identity. Important is the fact that identity here is solely ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, lacking any reference to διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ that ἐὰν μὴ specified in 2:16.

[53]There is, of course, much discussion circulating around another presumed "hidden premise" of 3:10. Das helpfully summarizes and critiques the three general options (Das, *Paul and the Jews*, 37ff.). These basic options are: having 3:10 set in an exilic context (see Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 147); having the law understood in an ethnical sense, and referring to an inappropriate "attitude" (see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998], 334–89, especially 359–62); and the traditional opinion, that Paul presumed that no one perfectly obeys the law. Given the insistence herein that 2:16 was the binding core of the gospel, and the interpretation of that verse offered above, it seems clear that such a "hidden" premise would indeed be held by all parties within the Galatians controversy, and therefore the traditional interpretation is favored.

[54]Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 162.

The way that 3:11 is presented in the USB[5] and NA[28] is as follows: ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Read in this manner, δῆλον is interpreted with the first clause, with the second clause (a quotation from Hab 2:4) providing the grounding proof text. In this reconstruction, Paul is using Habakkuk 2:4 to prove that no one is justified by the law. This translation/interpretation is shared by the majority of scholars and translations (i.e., HCSB: "Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous will live by faith").

What this translation/interpretation fails to do, however, is honor the central importance of 2:16 in the epistle. If the Agitators' argument denied this central tenet of the faith, Paul's job would have been much easier. He could have simply reaffirmed the nature of the agreement in 2:1-10, shown that the Agitators were out of step not only with himself, but also with the Jerusalem pillars, and most likely have ended the argument. It is unlikely, however, that the Agitators stood against this central doctrine of the early church for reasons illuminated above. Therefore, Paul is not trying to prove that the law cannot justify, as this fact is the accepted center of all Christian theology.[55]

Rather, what Paul has been engaged in is the comparison of faith and works, a comparison that continues here. Δῆλον, then, should be read with the second clause, and written out thusly: ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, δῆλον ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. This small move of the comma flips the functions of the two uses of ὅτι: the first is now causal, and the second is explanatory. An acceptable translation would

---

[55]Hays argues, "Paul is explicitly making an entirely different point in the passage [than insisting on the impossibility of keeping the law]. . . . The Messiah defines the 'pattern' for justification and life; consequently, since *he* lived and died and was raised ἐκ πίστεως, justification through keeping the commandments must be in principle (not merely de facto) impossible" (Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 178, emphasis original). Hays' focus here, on the Messiah as a pattern, while applicable in wider theology, is misplaced in 3:1-12. It is not the Messiah but rather Abraham who is the main comparison for the Galatians (cf. καθὼς, 3:6).

thus be: "Because no one is justified in the law before God, it is clear that 'the righteous shall live by faith.'"[56]

While the righteous live by faith, Paul provides further evidence that the law stands against faith in 3:12. It is important to note that Paul has dropped ἔργον as the head noun, and is now dealing with νόμος alone. It is not just the "working" of the law that is anti-faith, but the nature of the law.[57] Here, again, the comparison is between faith and law, but the focus has shifted slightly. The law claims, at least according to Paul, that it is the one doing the law that will live.

This contention further supports Paul's use of Deuteronomy 27:26 and gives insight into the nature of Leviticus 18:5 in Paul's thinking. Paul is not primarily concerned whether humans need to fulfill the whole law (although that contention has not completely faded from view), but whether the law was in any way compatible with justifying faith. Paul contends that those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are excluded because they are all under a curse from failing to keep the law, in line with the known confession in 2:16. Peter, and the Galatians, have found eschatological life in Christ, not the law. Because they did not find life in the law, they, *ipso facto*, do not keep the law.[58] Further,

---

[56]Although most translations and Greek texts read the comma after δῆλον, numerous scholars argue in line with the syntactical structure presented here. See Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 134; Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 129; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 149n42; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 347–48; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 127–28. Other considerations recommend this reading alongside the noted contextual concerns stemming from 2:16. The construction δῆλον ὅτι appears three times in the combined corpus of the NT and LXX, twice in Paul (once here and in 1 Cor 15:27) and once in 4 Macc 2:7. In each of these cases, ὅτι is post δῆλον and takes on an explanatory function. Thus, Gal 3:11 is not an argument from Paul for justification by faith, but rather for the mutual exclusion of faith and law. For a fuller discussion, see Andrew H. Wakefield, *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul's Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 162–67.

[57]Although not the law in-and-of itself, but the law's necessary use of the flesh. See the discussion on 3:19-25 and 4:1-7 below.

[58]"Life" and "live" are not to be understood as simply the manner in which one lives, somewhat equivalent to the idiom of "walk" (contra Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 152). Rather, it is directly tied to justification and salvation. "Paul understands Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 to be two different ways to gain eschatological life; thus, they are two mutually exclusive *soteriological* statements. . . . To 'live by them' (3:12b) is to be 'justified by law" (3:11a)" (Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 138–9, italics original).

the same verse (Deut 27:26) that hints at the confessed reality of human inability to keep the law, also hints that the nature of the law is in doing, production, and work, not of faith.[59] Faith and the law are thus mutually exclusive. To return to the law places one under the need to perform, and thus to enter the curse of the law.

Peter's (and the Galatians') return to the law then leaves him with two unfortunate possibilities. First, he can repudiate the gospel of 2:16, and find "life" through the law. Paul, as of yet, does not seem to be thinking along these lines (but cf. 2:21 and 5:2-6). Secondly, Peter can maintain both the confession and the law. But as the confession seems to mandate that the law itself can only bring curse (cf. 3:10), Peter only establishes himself as a sinner.[60] Because doing "works of the law" has been torn down as a way of justification, there is then no way that Peter, the Agitators, or the Galatians can rebuild it and not fall under sin.

Paul has marshalled in 3:1-14 a considerable comparison of things associated with justification in Christ and the law. Those who live, being justified by faith, receive blessing and the Spirit promised to Abraham through Christ. Those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are cursed, and thus cut off from all of the promises and blessings of Abraham. Galatians 3:13-14 then combine and summarize the threads from 3:1-12 above; namely that in Christ the curse is lifted for Jews, the blessing of Abraham is provided to the Gentiles, and all receive the promised Spirit, not by works, but through faith.[61]

---

[59]That the law required doing and action is supported further by Paul's quotation of Lev 18:5. See Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 138.

[60]This formulation has much in common with the "dogmatic approach" of Sanders (cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 483ff.; Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 143). The difference, however, is why Paul feels no need to further assert the missing premise of 3:10. Contrary to Sanders' program, Paul and his opponents all assumed the premise true.

[61]On the "promised Spirit" and the possible connections to Abrahamic promises, see Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 181–83.

3:15-18 (Λέγω Excursus): Analogy from
Common Law and Explanation

Each of Paul's main deviations from the pattern of 2:15-21 finds a use of λέγω, including 3:15, 17, 4:1 and 4:21 (although slightly amended in the latter). These interjections, as unnecessary as they are (who else would be speaking?) point toward Paul clarifying and supplementing his argument to meet present contextual demands.

Paul introduces an analogy from the law, which has sparked some debate concerning the nature of the law he might have been referencing. Much of this debate focuses on the historical details of the analogy, including whether the laws in view are based in Greek, Roman, or Jewish inheritance documents or practices. However, Paul simply insists that once a covenant is made between two sides, it is unamendable.[62]

Paul quickly turns the analogy to the promises given to Abraham, which were fully promised to his seed. Paul's allegorical use of the singular concept τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ has, like the above, provoked much discussion. Here, as it does not affect greatly the thesis at hand, two brief observations should be made. First, given the central importance of the Abrahamic story, it is likely well known that Abraham had more than one son, and yet only one was considered "heir." Secondly, even though Isaac was the heir, it is clear that he did not inherit the reality of the promise, only the "promise" of the promise (cf. Heb 11:13). Paul's point here simply combines those two facts: the promise was initially limited to one, and the one that has inherited the fullness of the promises is Christ.[63] Paul's main concern here is to demonstrate that the promises, once made, were

---

[62]So also Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013], 227-28. The use of the passive κεκυρωμένην likely indicates a unilateral action here. See Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 244; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 127. For a good discussion on the exegetical difficulties of 3:15-18, see Schreiner, *Galatians*, 226–34 and the accompanying footnotes.

[63]Bruce rightly points out that such a conclusion is probably not limited to Paul: "These late texts [Jub 16:17ff.; Ps.-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 8:3] seem to envisage one pre-eminent descendant of Abraham through whom the promise made regarding his 'seed' would be fulfilled" (*Epistle to the Galatians*, 173). Cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 184–85. For a more thorough discussion of σπέρμα and the Genesis text, see chap. 5 below.

not amendable, and that the fulfillment of the promise was made to a singular son, Christ.[64]

A clarification, typified again by λέγω, comes in the next verse. As Paul will return to the concept of "one" in relation to the seed in verse 19, he seems to be resuming the argument from analogy he started in verse 15. Here, Paul makes the obvious temporal argument for the priority of the promise, expanding on his earlier analogy. Paul then draws the inference: if it was a promise, then not only can the law not amend it, but the inheritance, the sum of the promise, cannot be attained by the law.

Paul appears to be trying to lay the foundation for the understanding of the law that he will unpack in the coming verses. He attempts to show both that the law has an important function in the overarching plan of God, with demands that are real and placed over the Jews and met in Christ (3:13-14) but that cannot ultimately cancel the promise made to Abraham some 430 years prior. Such an argument is supplemental in that it provides the necessary background (the "oneness" of the promise and the initial temporal limitation of the law) for the forthcoming argument for the nature of the law in 3:19-29.

3:19-29 (cf. 2:19-20b): The Purpose of the Law and Union with Christ

In Paul's comments to Peter, he shifts off the impossibility of rebuilding the law, and turns to the nature of the law itself. It is likely that διά here indicates a causal implication of the law. Paul has died in the law because of the law.[65] Paul's quizzical statement ἐγὼ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον is often treated by scholars as a shorthand for the

---

[64]"For 'seed' is in fact an ambiguous word, referring initially to the individual Isaac, as well as beyond, so that a rhetorical play on the ambiguity is invited" (Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 184).

[65]Many scholars state that 2:19 should be understood through the manner of a paradigm (so Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épitre de Saint Paul Aux Galates*, Commentaire Du Nouveau Testament 9 [Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1953], 55; Betz, *Galatians*, 122; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 170–71; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 189). This conclusion fits well with the idea that Paul is expanding his retort to Peter to the Galatians as well.

participation in Christ's death to which Paul refers at the end of 2:19.[66] Yet, given the

terseness of the *propositio*, it is unlikely that Paul would have added διὰ νόμου simply to

expand the statement with a reference to Christ's death later in the same verse. Rather,

the statement stands on its own as a reference to the nature of the law, and as such is

more appropriately linked with 3:19-29 than with 3:13-14 or 4:4-5.[67] Furthermore, the

oft-remarked conceptual link with Romans 7:4 makes an awkward connection between

death through law (διὰ νόμου, Gal 2:19) and through the body of Christ (διὰ τοῦ σώματος

τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Rom 7:4).[68] It is unlikely, given the context of Galatians, that Paul would

make the body of Christ parallel to the law as an instrument of life. Rather, Paul pictures

the law almost as an anti-gravitational force, repelling Paul from itself.

The participation language that follows these enigmatic statements helps to fill

out Paul's thought – he lives only through his crucifixion with Christ. It is the very

nature of the law that propels Paul to faith, and participation, in Christ. And, although the

law yields only death, its purpose was to push Paul away from itself, that he might live to

God (ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω, 2:19b). This life he finds only through participating in Christ's death.

Again, strong notes of contrast and irony between faith in Christ and the law

are made. Living in the law brings only death, while dying in Christ brings life. Paul

picked the specific separation language of death that he did precisely to drive home his

connection with the crucified Christ. This participation provides the power that all

people, through the law, were unable to utilize.

---

[66]"It was Christ himself, taking on the curse of the Law who died to the Law for all, through the execution of the Law's curse on him" (Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 189).

[67]Contra Schreiner, *Galatians*, 171; Vouga, *An Die Galater*, 61. Longenecker states, "Paul simply says that it was the intention of the Mosaic law (διὰ νόμου) to bring us to a place of being no longer dependent on its jurisdiction for the living of our lives" (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91; see also Moo, *Galatians*, 169; Betz, *Galatians*, 122).

[68]Schreiner, *Galatians*, 170-71, explicitly supports a connection to Rom 7:4; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 143; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91-92, both likewise support the connection, albeit with less explicit affirmation. Excluding a connection with Rom 7:4 here does not exclude the necessity of death under the law, a major theme in Rom 7 which finds a role in Gal 3:19ff. as well.

The theme of 2:19-20b is life with God through union with Christ in his death, rather than death through living in the law. The text of 3:19-29 fills in the same thematic melody, centering on the relation of life and law, and how the law gives way to faith in Christ.

The Law is for many. Paul appears to make three distinct arguments concerning the nature of the law in 3:19-29, leading to the necessity of participation in Christ. First, Paul argues for the singularity of the seed in relation to both the promise and the giving of the law (vv. 15, 19-20). Here, Paul is resuming his argument started in 3:16 concerning the use of the singular σπέρματι. This singular is juxtaposed with a plurality in the giving of the law. While there is a large debate about Paul's use of the singular, not to mention the enigmatic manner in which Paul argues for the plurality implied by a mediator, the thought appears to be that the giving of the law and the giving of the promise are distinct because they cannot have the same number of recipients; the promise has one while the law had many.[69] Thus, the law and the promise, while intertwined in the outworking of God's purposes, are distinct in their implied recipients (one vs. many).[70]

The law's purpose is not life-giving. Paul's second point is an elaboration on the distinct goals of both the law and the promise. The law cannot make anyone alive.[71]

___

[69]Wright argues that the "oneness" of the promise was related to the concept of "nations;" God had promised a singularity, but the law was bifurcating Christians into two separate kingdoms (N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, vol. 4 [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013], 869; see also Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 258). Wright's contention is true, as far as it goes. But Wright inverts the inclusion of God's people in Christ with the concept of nation. The focus is on the singularity of Christ, in which the nation is found, not vice-versa. See the helpful discussion in Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism?*, 60–84.

[70]See the very helpful diagrams in Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism?*, 79.

[71]It is likely that the purpose of τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη (v. 19) was to indicate an increase in transgression in line with Rom 5:20 (see the four-fold reasoning of Schreiner, *Galatians*, 239-40). The natural outworking of the giving of the law, then, would be the manifestation of the curses and eschatological death, as seen in Paul's OT quotations from 3:10-12.

While it may be argued that Paul's point is that the law is ontologically incapable of providing life, this is slightly off, even if correct. Paul focuses on God's providence in providing the law. Paul thus clarifies the purpose of the law, and further the purpose of the promise: the law does not contravene the promise because, unlike the promise, it was not meant to give life.

Scripture, which has already been theomorphized in 3:8, shuts everything up under the power of sin.[72] Γραφή, which revealed that God would justify by faith (3:8) likewise confined all things under sin so that the promise might be by faith, not law. Because γραφή saw faith as the key to justification, it worked to prevent any other means by which that justification could be enacted; thus, it ensured no life-providing law was given by enclosing all things under sin. The strong comparison of promise and faith with sin and law continues.

The law has definite temporal boundaries. Thirdly, Paul expands his discussion concerning the temporal restriction of the law (vv. 22-24). The law supervised the Jews, shutting them up (as sin shut all people up) until the time when the law was fulfilled, the promise given, and faith was presented in Jesus Christ. Paul calls the law a παιδαγωγός, referring to a supervisor.[73] The term primarily refers to a supervisor over youth, whose role was ended when maturity was attained. In Paul's analogy, that time was the coming of Christ and τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι. Thus, the law's purpose is fully explicated in 3:24; the law supervised those under the law until Christ, so that they might be justified by faith.[74]

---

[72]It is clear that through Galatians the use of ὑπὸ indicates being under the power of the attached accusative.

[73]The παιδαγωγὸς was seen as a neutral figure, neither undoubtedly good nor bad (so Longenecker, *Galatians*, 148).

[74]In this sense, while the law is not κατὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν (v. 21) from the perspective of divine purpose and *Heilsgeschichte*, it is still correct to affirm that it is mutually exclusive with the promise and faith. Throughout Galatians, Paul highlights two erroneous ways in which the Agitators have made the law

The promise is made for one, while the law is not; the promise makes alive, the law cannot; therefore the law is limited to the time prior to the coming of Christ, the fulfillment of the promise. It is necessary for Paul, then, to explain how a promise meant solely for Christ can likewise be apportioned to those who believe. Thus, Paul's explanation of the place of the law as temporal guardian gives way to the participation language of baptism and the "putting on" of Christ.[75]

While the promise was meant for one, all can become heirs of that promise through union with Christ. Because the nature of the law itself points to this reality, there is no need to enter it. Further, the nature of the law, outlined in 3:19-24, pushes one toward union, and death, in Christ. Therefore, the great ethnic, social, and gender leveling of 3:28 is present, for all enter into the promise through union with Christ, and the law is no longer needed. The nature and temporal limitation of the law has pushed Paul toward Christ, thus he dies with Christ, because only through union with Christ can he be made alive to God. Thus, there is considerable contextual closeness between Galatians 3:19-29 and 2:19-20a.

Not only does the inclusion with Christ make one alive to God, but it qualifies one as an heir. Paul is relating life, inheritance, adoption as children, faith, promise, and the new eschatological age together. While the law does not stand against these, neither does it provide them. The law only leads one back to trespass and being imprisoned in an

---

inclusive with faith. First, they have misappropriated its purpose, which overlaps with, secondly, its temporal function. By confusing these two things, they have made the law into something that it was not intended to be; thus, their understanding and application of the law is mutually exclusive with the promise and faith, even while a right understanding of the law submits naturally to both.

[75]Rather than having an ethical focus (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 156), ἐνεδύω clearly focuses on "putting on" identity, and thus subject those who participate to all of Christ's tribulations (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι, 2:19) and blessings (ζῇ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός 2:20; υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ 3:26). Thus, it is probably better to think of our needs and blessings being found in our union ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ/εἰς Χριστὸν instead of imputed to us. See Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 171–86, esp. 174-75.

aeon when the power of sin reigns. The juxtaposition with the constellation of concepts

concerning faith and promise continues.[76]

4:1-11 (Λέγω Excursus): The Jewish Experience ὑπὸ νόμον as it Relates to the Gentiles' Experience ἀνόμως

Although he has been contextualizing his argument at the end of Galatians 3

(specifically vv. 26ff.), Paul now turns his attention fully to the Gentile Galatian

audience. Λέγω δέ was noted above as a way to introduce supplemental points to the

argument. Here, Paul uses it to note a large clarification to his argument above.[77] Does

not the law somehow undo the leveling of 3:28 (οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην)? Is there

not a distinct advantage, as Paul has noted, in having a παιδαγωγός?

Paul moves to explain the nature of the Jews before faith with a striking

analogy of being a slave.[78] Even though they are the rightful heirs and lords of all (4:1),

before the sending of Christ the Jewish people were no more than slaves, and slaves ὑπὸ

τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. The nature of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου is debated. Here, the

discussion is restricted to several brief points. First, the compound phrase στοιχεῖα τοῦ

---

[76]Many scholars note, especially in this portion of the epistle, that Paul is using multiple terms synonymously, such as ζωοποιέω, δικαιοσύνη, ἐν Χριστῷ, and Spirit language. See Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 180; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 144; Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 503.

[77]The contextualization of Paul's arguments allows the structure of Galatians argued for in this chapter to incorporate other parallel statements in the epistle (3:13-14 cf. 4:4-6; so Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 216).

[78]Longenecker speaks of 4:1-7 as an illustration of "the diverse situations of God's people living 'under the law' (3:23-25) but now living 'in Christ' (3:26-29)" (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 161). See also Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 210. While possible, it is more likely a contextualizing illustration, given the connection of both Jews and Gentiles in the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Furthermore, it should be noted that the use of ἐπίτροπος and οἰκονόμος are linked to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου not νόμος in 4:1-3. While this timeframe certainly refers to when the Jews were under the law, the picture is not related directly to the law, (see Clinton E. Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of Powers: STOICHEIA as Evil Spirits in Gal 4:3,9," *NovT* 38, no. 1 [1996]: 60; contra Ronald Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 181, 190), but rather to the common forces which stood over both Jew and Gentile alike. The law was pictured as a παιδαγωγός in 3:24; here Paul changes his tone slightly. Both ἐπίτροπος and οἰκονόμος imply general management of both persons and things, but lack the great sense of personal care and concern that Paul probably intended with παιδαγωγός. Cf. Georg Bertram, "Παιδαγωγός," and Otto Michel, "Οἰκονόμος," trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967).

κόσμου always refers to the basic elements of the world.[79] Second, Paul mentions these

elements again in what is clearly a negative connotation in 4:3, 9. In both locations, Paul

links the elements with slavery, and in 4:9 states that στοιχεῖα were weak (ἀσθενῆ) and

worthless (πτωχὰ). Third, Paul links the elements with other powers using ὑπό

language.[80] Fourth, this dominion is related to a time before faith, whether under law or

not. Paul emphatically notes that this dominion was the state of the Jews before Christ,

not just the Gentiles, by providing both an emphatic use of the plural pronoun (ἡμεῖς)

with the imperfect ἤμεθα, and an ascensive καί. Thus, the main thrust of argument is that,

even with the law, the Jews and Gentiles were both under some primal and foundational

force. The law provided no escape from this dominion.[81]

Paul has already noted that the law cannot give life; it has no power on its own.

Therefore, both Jew and Gentile must be provided freedom from this slavery by another

power, i.e., an act of God. The statement in 4:4 is highly apocalyptic, and speaks of

Christ coming under these same powers.[82] That Paul references Christ's birth ἐκ γυναικός

is slightly odd and seemingly out of place, but it gives a hint concerning the nature of this

Christ. He came to a mother of flesh, in the normal manner of birth, and shared our

human nature.[83] He also was ὑπὸ νόμον. Given the intervening statement concerning

both law and adoption, it is likely that 4:4-5 is in a chiastic pattern:

---

[79]See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 267.

[80]Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 284, rightly connects the στοιχεῖα with the other ὑπό terms throughout Galatians (3:23, 24-25; 4:1-2).

[81]Whatever Paul might mean by τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, it is a power that exerts itself over the human nature outside of Christ, and thus it effects Jew and Gentile alike pre-Christ. Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of Powers," interestingly links the power to demonic forces. Regardless, it is a power that humans are unequipped to overthrow. Given that Paul emphasizes Christ's natural birth (γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός), it is likely that the flesh, or fallen human nature, is emphasized as limiting human ability to throw off these elemental forces.

[82]Although not necessarily Exodus related, there are considerable reasons to see herein a comparison to the Exodus event. See James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Υἱοθεσία in the Pauline Corpus*, WUNT 48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 140ff.; so Schreiner, *Galatians*, 266; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 4:656–57.

[83]That Paul uses γίνομαι instead of the more expected γεννάω likely has incarnational and

133

a. γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός

b. γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον

b'. ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ

a'. ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν

It is Christ's overcoming of the weakness of the flesh that enables him both to fulfill the law and provide the adoption of Jew and Gentile alike in himself.[84] The στοιχεῖα, aligned with the weakness of the flesh, kept the law from being fulfilled. Therefore, Paul highlights Christ's overcoming of both of the power of the στοιχεῖα and the curse of the law. This weakness of human flesh is further affirmed in the experience of the Galatians with the Spirit (4:6-7). The above structure, the implication of his birth ἐκ γυναικός, as well as the former comparison between flesh and Spirit in 3:3, implies that the concept of flesh is close at hand, even if the word itself is missing.[85] Thus, Paul implies that slavery and flesh were both characteristic of all people during the time before faith in Christ. Standing against these are the blessings of inheritance, Spirit, freedom from the law, and adoption as children, provisions given through the power of Christ.

Paul's wording in verses 8-11 appears to be purposely vague. While it is clear that the Jews had special days of observance, no doubt the pagans did as well.[86] That Paul leaves these vague is appealing, given his attempt to link the former Jewish practices

---

missional implications that are missed with the normal translations of "born." I am thankful for Christopher Wherle for his insight here.

[84]Delling states that στοιχεῖα refers "to the 'basic materials' of which everything in the cosmos, including man, is composed" (Gerhard Delling, "Στοιχεῖον," trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *TDNT* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971]). This meaning comports well with Paul's emphasis on the flesh, highlighted in the allegory.

[85]So Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of Powers," 60. Paul often compares the Spirit and the flesh, cf. 5:16-23. Further, the importance of the mentioning of the Spirit here is underscored by the fact that the Spirit has not been mentioned since 3:14, where Paul linked the reception of the Spirit to Abraham, faith, and promise; the major themes of 3:1-12. These themes stand against the works of the law by the flesh (cf. 3:2-3).

[86]Which typified the time τότε οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν. See Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 298–99.

to the wider range of στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.[87] Here Paul temporally links the pre-faith

Jews with slavery and the powers of the world. That Jews were under these powers

aligns them with Gentiles, and demonstrates the equal condemnation of all, law or not.

4:12-20 (cf. 2:20c-e): Heightened Emotional Appeal and Christ's Love

After linking his life before God with his own participation in Christ's death,

Paul makes a very personal and emotional statement concerning Christ's love for him.

Within this statement, Paul claims the life he now lives ἐν σαρκί, he lives by faith. By

σάρξ, Paul might be indicating the weakness and frailty of life,[88] but it is more likely that

he is pointing at the disposition of the flesh to sin.[89] Given that his flesh is so prone to

sin, Paul marks that his life is lived ἐν πίστει.[90]

The highly personal statement in 2:20d-e is unique to Paul. Nowhere else does

Paul speak about Christ's love specifically for him.[91] The participles (ἀγαπήσαντός and

παραδόντος) take on an almost causal role: the reason and impetus for Paul's life

controlled by faith is the fact that Christ has loved him so.[92] The heightened emotional

appeal of 2:20c-e was focused on the love of Christ impelling Paul's central focus on the

---

[87]"Turning back" (ἐπιστρέφω) may be a picture of the just-redeemed Israelites desire to backtrack to Egypt, fitting nicely with the Exodus framework argued by Scott (see n81). See Todd A. Wilson, "Wilderness Apostasy and Paul's Portrayal of the Crisis in Galatians," *NTS* 50, no. 4 (2004): 550–71. Thus, turning back to the "elementary forces," even in the law, is akin to returning to pagan Egypt.

[88]So Betz, *Galatians*, 125; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93.

[89]Schreiner, while not ignoring the physical implications of ἐν σαρκί, nevertheless states, "Life in the body signals the continuing weakness that marks the old age" (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 173).

[90]While noting that "living by faith" is seen as tantamount to "living by the Spirit," Bruce's categorization of σάρξ as simply the mortal life falls flat (Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 145), especially given the strong antithesis of both in Gal 5 (especially v. 17). The old aeon is not yet over, and Paul must still deal with his flesh. Certainly, some aspect of the "sinful" flesh is still in mind, which is why Paul emphasizes the counter: he lives ἐν πίστει.

[91]While similar statements can be found (cf. Rom 8:37; Eph 5:2, 25; 2 Thess 2:16), each of these statements refer to the church-collective. Here, however, the statement is "radically" personal (Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 147; cf. Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 192; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 172).

[92]"Love, in this sense, is the fuel of faith" (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 173).

gospel. Yet, when readers come to 4:12-20, it is the Galatians' love for Paul that takes center stage. How are the two related?

First, the two are linked by their strong emotive appeal. As was noted above, the personal nature of Christ's love for Paul is unknown to other letters. So far in the epistle, Paul has made strong appeals to the Galatians on logical and personal grounds. He has appealed to their lack of wisdom. Paul has not, however, made an emotional appeal concerning his relationship with the Galatians yet in the letter.[93]

It is the Galatians' love for Paul that is highlighted in 4:12-20, just as Christ's love is highlighted in 2:20. The Galatians took in Paul at great personal cost to themselves, and made evident their love for Paul in their actions. While Paul mentions his own sufferings in the passage (v. 13), it is done only to highlight the love of the Galatians for him (v. 15). Paul will appeal not only to their real love through actions but their hypothetical love as well (v. 15).

Just as they have received him as Christ (ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν), they demonstrated the love of Christ for him *by* receiving him.[94] At the first, Christ was all in all; received and demonstrated in the gracious act of the Galatians. Yet, as they have turned from this love, Paul openly states that they need birth again, the formation of Christ within them (πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, v. 19). While they demonstrated the love of Christ for Paul, the dwindling of that love indicates that they are in need of the Christ-likeness they once had.

Further, the reference to Paul's weakness of flesh unites the passages by highlighting of the love of both Christ and the Galatians. It is Paul's continued weakness

---

[93]Given the schematic position taken up in this chapter, it is unlikely coincidental that both appeals appear where they do.

[94]The use of μακαρισμός, further indicates that Paul is highlighting the gracious reception of the Galatians toward him. In receiving him, they have pronounced their blessing over him. See Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 294; Moo, *Galatians*, 286. The NIV translates the beginning of 4:15: "Where, then, is your blessing of me now?" Again, such actions align them strongly with Christ.

of the flesh that provokes his life of faith in Christ, faith that focuses on Christ's great sacrificial love. Likewise, in 4:13 it was Paul's weakness in flesh that occasioned the expression of love by the Galatians.

The Galatians further pictured Christ in their giving. While Christ loved Paul and gave himself up (παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ), so the Galatians were willing to give even their eyes to him (εἰ δυνατὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι).[95]

The highly emotional appeal of 4:12-20 is not, then, out of place, but argues that the appeal to the law has, from Paul's personal perspective, tainted the Christlikeness of the Galatians. Paul's response to Christ's love is to walk in faith, not in the law. The Galatians, in becoming less like Christ, have become less like Paul (cf. 4:8). Thus, the high emotive appeal, the picturing of Christ in their reception and provision for Paul, links 4:12-20 with 2:20c-e.

4:21-5:1 (Λέγω Excursus): Final Appeal and Summary Argument

Paul's use of λέγετέ to open up the allegory in verse 21 indicates that he is providing a contextual argument somewhat aside from the outline of 2:15-21. This argument, which is of course outlined in detail in chapter 3, serves to summarize the extended argument Paul has made up to this point, furthering the depiction of the two competing spheres of reality; one described by faith, promise, Spirit, inheritance, freedom, and eschatological fulfillment; the other described by works, law, flesh, slavery, and tied to a world that has been surpassed by the new eschatological age. These themes

---

[95]While the reference to the Galatians' eyes could be a more literal description of Paul's needs (so Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 236; Moo, *Galatians*, 286; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an Die Galater*, 6th ed. Meyers Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Das Neue Testament [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989], 211), as what Paul suffered from is possibly a malady of the eye, it is also very likely that it symbolizes great sacrificial love. See Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 199; Martyn, *Galatians*, 421. Again, such symbolism aligns the Galatians' reception with that of Christ.

are writ large within the allegory, which ties all of these elements together through the foundational story of Abraham and his sons.

5:2-6 (cf. 2:21): Setting Aside Grace and the Nullification of Christ's Death

Paul's conclusion to the thesis of 2:15-21 is to remark on the nullification of grace (οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ), concluding that if justification is through the law, then Christ has died for nothing. In light of the previous argument of 2:16-21, Paul clearly links grace not only to the death of Christ, but to the absence of work and law. The implication, again, is that any re-establishment of the law cancels the benefits of the death of Christ.[96] Here Paul drives home the distinction and exclusivity of grace and works, and provides his hearers with an unattractive result: if you want the law, the death and blessings of Christ are rendered ineffectual.[97]

The beginning of the concluding portion of Paul's argument, in 5:2, again begins with a λέγω statement, only with a more solemn and serious note: Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν.[98] Paul emphasizes two distinct realities, which are the very realities of 2:21. First, that those who accept circumcision, and thus the law, are needing to keep the whole law (v. 3) and are seeking to be justified by the law (v. 4). These two facts therefore have

---

[96]Dunn states, "Any retreat back into a Judaism, or Jewish Christianity, which insisted that Jew and Gentile should eat separately, was to render invalid the whole gospel" (Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 149).

[97]Oakes misreads the purpose of Paul's arguments throughout Galatians, a misreading which becomes prominent in 5:2-6. Oakes states, "The fact that Paul's rhetoric so far in the letter has covered Jewish law in general rather than circumcision in particular would make us think that obedience to the law as a whole was in view among the Galatians. However, now Paul rather surprisingly points out that this would be required (5:3), as though these Galatians had been planning only to be circumcised" (Peter Oakes, *Galatians*, ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ - Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015], 160). This reading misses Paul's overarching argument, that the taking on of circumcision *necessitates* the keeping of the law, precisely because the law is antithetical to faith in Christ in the new aeon. The Galatians were indeed not going to accept the whole law, but Paul points out that they would need to, and in doing so they would accept the curses of the law (cf. 3:10).

[98]Paul is contextualizing the conclusion, drawing straight and forceful applications of his argument for the Galatians.

the effect of nullifying Christ's benefits for the Galatians (v. 2), separating them from Christ (v. 4), and making them fall from grace (v. 4).

These two passages, 2:21 and 5:2-6 (especially v. 4), fit well thematically, and serve as fitting conclusions to the entire argument in Galatians up to this point. Justification (δικαιοσύνη, δικαιόω) and its relationship to the law envelopes this section from 2:16 to 5:6, and is a reminder of the core focus of the gospel: justification in Christ alone. Likewise, grace (χάρις) also bookends 2:21 and 5:2-6, and is conspicuously missing from the intervening passages. Any establishment of the law as necessary is an establishment of justification by the law, as it naturally excludes the grace of justification by faith in Christ. Peter thus stands as a hypocrite; while upholding justification through Christ alone, his actions in reaffirming the Jew/Greek distinctions renege on that good confession. His actions set aside the grace of God, and nullify the death of Christ. Likewise, if the Galatians will walk the same path they are set to accept the whole law, and will erase the benefits of Christ for them, falling away from grace.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to set both the thematic and schematic center of Galatians in 2:15-21, and to further illustrate how the allegory of 4:21ff. fit into that core. Viewing 2:15-21 as the structural core of Paul's thesis allows the allegory to take its logical place as both the pinnacle and summary of Paul's preceding arguments. The allegory is not an afterthought from Paul, unfortunately squeezed into place after Paul had already started the parenetic portion of his letter. Rather, it fits well into the scheme Paul seems to have been applying; unpacking and extending the condensed argument to Peter for the Galatians.

Further, and more importantly, the structure above lends itself to the thematic connections between the larger argument of the letter and the allegory. The allegory is not just an *ad-hominem* argument, made largely as a polemical counter to a theology that

undercuts Paul's gospel; a last gasp effort that, while breathtakingly brash, is hermeneutically inept. Rather, the allegory stands as Paul's own ingenious insight into the narrative of Abraham's sons, a living picture of the exclusivity between the promise and the flesh. The allegory plays off the very same arguments Paul has been hammering home throughout the epistle: it is an act of God, through promise, that always produced Abraham's children, never the work of the flesh. Indeed, the flesh, like the law, belongs to the old aeon, entrapped in sin, incapable of justification and therefore adoption. In short, the allegory is not just *an* argument in Galatians, it is *the* argument of Galatians.

CHAPTER 5

ΣΠΕΡΜΑ, ISHMAEL, AND THE LITERAL READING
OF GENESIS

Introduction and Thesis

Of the many issues are raised by Galatians 4:21ff., some of the most lasting

have been the hermeneutical implications for current exegetes. Is allegorical

interpretation a valid form of hermeneutic, given that Paul performed it?[1] Has not the

Reformation led us to understand that a historical-grammatical hermeneutic is the best for

keeping the text, and not personal whims, a priority?[2]

This chapter seeks to explore some limited implications of Galatians 4:23 as

Paul's hermeneutical key for the allegorical reading of Genesis. At the center of the

difficulty of Paul's allegory of Sarah and Hagar is the relationship between allegorical

and literal readings of that OT story. This chapter seeks to explore this relationship. As

noted above in chapter 2, I agree with many of the objections to allegorical interpretation,

including the necessity of maintaining the physical reality that the text implies as well as

providing boundaries around interpretations to help them maintain status as "faithful" to

---

[1]See Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)*,* and the updated essay "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?," in *Studies in Hermeneutics, Christology and Discipleship*, New Testament Monographs 2 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004), 34–71. His answer to his titular question is both yes and no. Longenecker gives an emphatic "no" to allegory and "atomistic" interpretations where Paul, among others, are arguing polemically and circumstantially against opponents, specifically in Gal 3:16 and 4:21-31 (ibid., 68–9).

[2]J. Gerhard, one of the earliest to distinctly divide typology from allegory, states, "A type consists in the collation of facts. An allegory is concerned not so much with facts as with the conceptions themselves" (as translated in John David *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 254–55). Even in this early attempt at distinction, one can already see that "facts" may be put aside by allegorical interpretation; the focus on "conceptions" could, therefore, take on various forms desired by the interpreter.

the text. Both of these concerns are somewhat nebulous and ill-defined, and hard and fast

lines of demarcation are impossible. This chapter, however, seeks to focus on the latter

of these two concerns, specifically arguing that Paul's allegorical interpretation of

Genesis 17-21 was not only free from contradiction against literal[3] readings of the

narrative, but that *all* interpretations of the Sarah/Hagar story must bring assumptions to

the text, and thus be, in some sense, non-literal.

The Relationship between Allegory and Literal Readings

For many, the problem inherent with allegorical interpretation is its fantastical

nature.[4]   Such interpretations, as they are widely conceived, seek meanings which are

"deeper" than the literal meaning implied by the words on the page. While there has

been in recent decades a movement back to a hermeneutic that allows and upholds

allegorical interpretations,[5] there is still a reticence to accept such interpretation whole

cloth. Again, one returns to the conclusion in Barrett's influential essay: "[Paul's] *so-*

called allegorical treatment of Abraham and the two women was evoked not by a

---

[3]There are many problems attached to the use of the term "literal." My use of it here is meant in a popular way, the way that many use the term without stricter philosophical reflection on its exact meaning. While I reject many of these meanings as unhelpful, I have decided not to provide any special markings for the word, such as italics or quotation marks, because such marks became intrusive in the text. For a more thorough statement on the use of the term literal, see below.

[4]Proponents of grounded allegory argue the opposite, however, stating that instead of allowing fantastic exegesis, allegory reigns in wayward interpretations. See p. 144, below.

[5]The push toward accepting allegory as a legitimate hermeneutical method is typically made off of the work of the church fathers instead of working within the NT text and practice itself, although undoubtedly the Fathers saw themselves as a continuation of the NT practice. A good example of this practice is John J. O'Keefe's and R. R. Reno's work on allegory in *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Here, while they initially appeal to Paul's allegory in Gal 4:21ff. as setting the tone and justification for Patristic practice (p. 90), they spend the vast majority of their time defending the Patristic practice, not Paul's (see ibid., 89–113). Cf. Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 44–55; Ephraim Radner, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016); Stephen E. Fowl, *Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

personal love of *fantastic exegesis*, but by a reasoned case which it was necessary that he should answer."[6]

Barrett therefore seeks to protect Paul from the fantasia produced either by ignoring or simply contradicting the meaning of the text itself. Such fantastic exegesis does not have to be part and parcel of allegorical interpretation, but it is certainly featured in some of it. For instance, while Origen's representational treatment of the Sarah and Hagar incident does not ignore the words of the text, his reading is certainly separated from the narrative those words are embedded in, as he exchanges the realities of the physical women for abstract categories of virtue and basic knowledge.[7] Origen's reading is clearly not literal in any sense, but it is also so distinct from the narrative itself that it does not appear to contradict the more straightforward sense of the passage.[8] While, depending on your view of such interpretations, it flies either above or below the text, it certainly does not impact a literal reading of the text. A reader may hold to both the more literal reading and to Origen's allegorical reading without the threat of contradiction.[9]

Not all allegorical interpretation needs to be so distinct from its narrative foundation, however. The relationship between allegory and literal readings is important when it comes to understanding how allegorical interpretation was understood in the

---

[6]Charles K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982], 165, emphasis mine.

[7]See Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, *The Fathers of the Church* 71 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 134-5, for his description of Hagar as literal interpretation in comparison to Sarah as spiritual.

[8]See, for instance, the fine discussion of Origen's hermeneutic as it relates to the abstract vs. the concrete, the allegorical vs. the literal in John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 50–64, especially 54.

[9]Origen would likely not disagree, although he would wonder openly why one would hang on to the literal interpretation, as he believes such readings belong to a Jewish style of interpretation. According to Origen, one who reads this way "ought to gather with the Jews rather than with the Christians" (Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, 121).

medieval age. While the four-fold manner of interpretation was not universal, it was

popular to exegetes of the time, and held great hermeneutical sway. Peter Leithart writes,

> Though later derided as justification for a hermeneutical free-for-all, the quadriga
> was proposed as a speed bump to slow fantastic traffic on the interpretive highway.
> It tied interpretation to the dogmatic tradition of the church, *partly by anchoring*
> *allegory in the literal sense.* While the relation of literal and spiritual senses was
> formulated in different ways, *medieval Bible teachers all believed the literal sense*
> *was the foundation for all the other senses.*[10]

While Paul is clearly linking his interpretation back to the text, what is most

jarring about his interpretation of the Sarah and Hagar narrative is, unlike Origen, it *does*

not run on a separate plane of existence from the literal sense. Indeed, Paul's allegory is,

in one sense, more egregious than much of Origen for precisely this reason: it does not

just ignore or pass by the literal sense, in many ways it appears to flatly contradict it.

Again, Barrett speaks for many today when he avers that the Agitators applied a literal

reading to the narrative.[11] As Paul quite obviously comes to the opposite conclusion of

the Agitators, contradicting their interpretation both in particulars and in the outcome, it

is hard not to come to the conclusion that Paul's allegory is more than just allegorical, but

it is anti-literal; not just in that it pays scant to no attention to the literal interpretation

(which might qualify it as non-literal), but that it stands in direct opposition to it.

Therefore, many who desire to have some sense of boundary built into

hermeneutical methodologies have somewhat balked at Paul's interpretation. If Paul can

flout the literal interpretation in favor of his own allegory, there is an opening in the

hermeneutical boundary that many interpreters will bound through. Or, on the other

hand, Paul may use a hermeneutical technique to derive his own theology that is outside

---

[10]Peter J. Leithart, "The Quadriga or Something Like It: A Biblical and Pastoral Defense," in *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future,* ed. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008], 115, emphasis mine. See also Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, trans. Mark Sebanc, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). The quadriga's ability to reign in various interpretations is also highlighted in Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation*, 53, against "one interpretation, many applications" views.

[11]Barrett, "The Allegory," 163.

the bounds of best practice, and thus to be avoided. Heikki Räisänan follows the latter, stating, "As everyone except for the extreme conservative admits, Paul's actual reinterpretations of the Old Testament are rather ingenious; no one will today seriously suggest that we should follow Paul in his exegesis."[12]

This chapter, then, seeks to more accurately ascertain whether Paul's interpretation of the Genesis narrative in Galatians 4:21ff. was in contradiction to the literal meaning of the text. The nature of a literal reading of the Genesis narrative must be examined that it might serve as a comparison the Pauline interpretation. This comparison will be accomplished through the application of pragmatic linguistic categories of implication/explication and the "truth-conditional content" of the Genesis narrative. Through this process, this chapter will argue that all readings of the Genesis narrative, which are focused on the relationship of the law and the promise, must in some sense use assumptions that provide their readings; that is, no reading is literal. Therefore, Paul is cleared from any possible accusation of flat contradiction. Other readings of the Sarah/Hagar story that treat the same issues work off assumptions outside of the text, which are neither confirmed nor denied by the narrative itself. Therefore, there should be questions raised over how literally the narrative *can* be read, and thus how far separated from the literal reading Paul's allegory is found.

Thus, while we are unable to determine the hard and fast lines of interpretations that determine textual "faithfulness," we will strive to show that Paul is not egregiously unfaithful to it, contradicting it neither in its particulars nor in its general implications.

---

[12]Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, WUNT 29 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983), 72.

Pragmatic Communication and Explicatures

One of the questions that confronted Paul in the Galatian controversy was how the law was related to God's promise to Abraham. Although this relationship is highlighted in Galatians 3:15-22, where Paul writes concerning both the temporal and telic nature of the law, it finds its most thorough treatment in the allegory of 4:21-5:1. A straightforward reading of the Pentateuch seems to connect the law to Abraham's σπέρμα,[13] a reading made more sure by the typical understanding of σπέρμα as Abraham's physical descendants. In essence, those who inherit the promises would be identical with those who have the law placed upon them. It would therefore become difficult to see how Paul's allegorical connection of Ishmael, and especially Hagar, with the law does not run against the plain meaning of the text. Not only does Paul bind those clearly categorized as non-σπέρμα to the law (Hagar), but he strongly emphasizes the separation of the inheritor σπέρμα from the necessity of the law. Paul's reading, connecting the non-σπέρμα to the law while separating the inheritor σπέρμα from it, appears to run counter to the conventional and normative reading of the narrative. Thus, if this reading of the Pentateuch is correct, it is easy to see how Paul opens to the accusations of eisegesis and a bankrupt mishandling of Scripture.[14]

While it is assumed that these two factors (first, that God's promise is for Abraham's σπέρμα and, second, that God provided the law to Abraham's physical children) are readily ascertained to be explicitly stated by the pentateuchal story, it is unclear if these factors are likewise explicitly linked together by the narrative. That is,

---

[13]The use of the Hebrew term זרע is consistent with the use of σπέρμα throughout Genesis 17-21. The two terms cover almost identical semantic ranges. Here, simply for practical reasons, the Greek term σπέρμα will be highlighted.

[14]It is worth noting, again, that such accusations are both implied and common in scholarship on Gal 4:21ff. See A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 485; Ian J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem, and the Judaisers*, WUNT 258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 137; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 172; Pheme Perkins, *Abraham's Divided Children: Galatians and the Politics of Faith*, The New Testament in Context (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 88–90.

are the patriarchal children, who receive the law, *necessarily* the promised inheritor σπέρμα? One of the major problems in determining the literal meaning is that the use of literal carries much baggage, especially in a genre like narrative, where very little is stated literally and much is gained through pragmatic meaning.[15] Therefore, the following analysis plays on the difference in pragmatic theories of communication between explicatures and implicatures, which are in many ways more helpful depictions of communication than the over-used term literal.

Sperber and Wilson have argued that all communicated utterances have an undergirding logical form.[16] Such forms serve as the deductive basis of explicatures, which are therefore certain to entail from an utterance, while implicatures are not. As is likely guessed, implicatures are those thoughts and ideas pulled from communication which are implied by the communication, but not spelled out explicitly. Therefore, explicatures are related to the truth-conditional content of the utterance, and subject to tests of logic, while implicatures are not. Therefore, a counterfactual which denies the truth content of an utterance can be denied with an implicature, but not with an explicature.[17]

For instance, take the example culled from Sperber and Wilson:

1. ALAN JONES: Do you want to join us for supper?

2. LISA: No, thanks. I've eaten.

3. LISA: No, thanks. I've already eaten supper.

4. LISA: No, thanks. I've already eaten tonight.

---

[15]For instance, the narrative never "literally" states "the 12 tribes of Israel are the promised σπέρμα of Abraham." But this type of statement is not typically what scholars mean when they speak of the literal meaning of the text. In this case, the vagueness of the term makes close inspection difficult. The new terminology of the Pragmatists, especially incased in Relevance Theory, eases this burden.

[16]Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "Relevance Theory," in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 71–75.

[17]For further clarity on the issues of explicatures, see Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

5.   LISA: No, thanks. I've already eaten supper tonight.[18]

Here, Sperber and Wilson state that the logical content of each of Lisa's answers from (2) – (5) is that she has eaten supper *on the night of question*. But, as is clear from utterance (2), such a time-specific reference is not given. However, Sperber and Wilson argue that believing in (2) Lisa simply claims to have eaten at a previous point in her life, and that she is only *implying* to have eaten that night, is not true. Reversing the claim (counterfactual) would mean that she was claiming to have *never* eaten by stating "I haven't eaten" which is extremely unlikely. While the amount of explicitness increases with each utterance (2) – (5), the fact that Lisa is referring to the night in question is explicit in all of them.

Note that Lisa has not *literally* said "tonight" in (2). At the same time, denying that such a timestamp was intended and explicated would sever any relationship between the question posed by Alan and the answer given by Lisa. Therefore, as Relevance Theory assumes that communication is always done with an eye toward relevant statements, she intended it to be understood as such.[19] Believing that she meant "tonight," then, is not an implication of what has been said, but rather is explicated, tied to the logic of her answer in context. In this manner, explicatures have greater explanatory power and more accurately describe the function of language than attempting to parse statements for their literal content.[20] Even so, the main point here is that explicit interpretations, while not synonymous with literal, are those interpretations which can

---

[18]Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12ff.

[19]Simplistically, Lisa addressing whether or not she has ever eaten is in no way relevant to the question posed to her by Alan. Therefore, it is not a legitimate, or typical, way to interpret her answer.

[20]In much of pragmatics, the use of literal has dropped out of use, as there are very few times when interpretations are not "driven by pragmatic rather than semantic considerations" (Wilson and Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 10). Sperber and Wilson go on to say "the notions of explicature and degrees of explicitness have clear advantages over the traditional notions of literal meaning and what is said" (ibid., 13).

only be denied through flat contradiction. This is precisely the question this chapter
seeks to answer concerning Paul's allegorical interpretation.

Σπέρμα and the Text of Genesis

As was hinted at above, the most important factor in deciding the question of
Paul's contradiction of the narrative is determining whether Abraham's σπέρμα and his
physical offspring are explicitly linked together by the text. The most obvious reference
for σπέρμα in the text would be to natural, physical offspring. The previous references to
σπέρμα, when not used in connection with seed plants, is pointed at physical descendants.
An important verse in this sense is Genesis 9:9, as it proceeds the most important texts in
consideration, and it couches σπέρμα language alongside covenant language. In Genesis
9:9, "τῷ σπέρματι ὑμῶν" was used to indicate the entire population of the earth – all of
Noah's descendants. Therefore, the typical understanding of σπέρμα holds, and it does
not appear to have a specialized meaning so far within the text of Genesis. Further, the
statement is also contextually close to Genesis 17:7, as it is used in a covenantal setting,
providing an important precedent.

Therefore, readers are quite right to assume that when the same language
returns, in another covenantal context, that the promise given is likewise for the physical
descendants of Abraham. This reading would provide the necessary connection between
the σπέρμα and the Patriarchal children that many would dub the literal interpretation of
the Sarah/Hagar story.

But is such a reading, which focuses on the genealogical resemblance of those
who received the law and Isaac, really an explicature of the story? The strong
implication of these words is that the genealogical offspring of Isaac are to be the ones
incorporated into this blessing, as this is the most apparent reading of "τοῦ σπέρματός
σου." But implicatures, even strong ones, are not explicatures. What remains to be seen
is whether Genesis itself supports such a reading as an explicature.

149

Σπέρμα and the Problem of Ishmael

The two incidents that would make us question whether such a connection is truly *explicated* from the use of σπέρμα are the rejections of Ishmael and Esau. Genesis 17:7 continues the promise of 15:5, 18, and 16:10, reiterating that the σπέρμα of Abraham would be numerous and would receive the fullness of the promises given to Abraham. While Abraham's initial response to this surprise is wonder, 17:18 hints that Abraham picks up on an implication of this great act of God: Ishmael will not be the one to inherit the promise. While the promise that came to Abraham seemed universal in its application to all of Abraham's seed, it was only fully given to Isaac.

The Lord not only denies Abraham's pleas for Ishmael, seemingly contradicting the same promise made only 10 verses earlier, but reaffirms the same promise, now made only through Isaac in 17:19. The similarities in the promises are striking:

Table 2. Comparison of the LXX on Genesis 9:9, 17:7, and 17:19

Genesis 9:9	Genesis 17:7	Genesis 17:19
ἐγὼ ἰδοὺ ἀνίστημι τὴν διαθήκην μου ὑμῖν καὶ τῷ σπέρματι ὑμῶν μεθ᾽ ὑμᾶς	στήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον σοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου μετὰ σὲ εἰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν εἰς διαθήκην αἰώνιον εἶναί σου θεὸς καὶ τοῦ σπέρματός σου μετὰ σέ	στήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου πρὸς αὐτὸν [Ισαακ] εἰς διαθήκην αἰώνιον καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ μετ᾽ αὐτόν

For an undisclosed reason, the promise of Genesis 17:19 limited the promise to the offspring of Isaac. There seem to be three possibilities. First, God has simply broken and remade the promise given to Abraham around the newly promised child Isaac. This conclusion is unthinkable for readers who have read the rest of the Pentateuch, the OT, or the NT. While possibly making sense out of this admittedly difficult change, the solution is more disruptive to the text than clarifying. The second option is to keep the typical

meaning of σπέρμα, but to provide a reason to exclude Ishmael (and, later, Esau). The third option, seemingly adopted by Paul, was to adopt a new meaning for σπέρμα within the promise.

Σπέρμα and the Traditional Solution

In the second option above, the meaning of σπέρμα as physical offspring is kept in place, but there were additional requirements on the offspring that qualified them for the promise. Therefore, Ishmael was not to be counted as σπέρμα, but the basic meaning of σπέρμα is retained. While we have no explicit affirmation of this interpretation in Jewish thought, the fact that Jewish exegetes often sought to explain why Ishmael was rejected hints that this was their proposed, if unstated, solution.

Numerous Jewish writings point toward the wickedness of Ishmael. The Babylonian Talmud includes numerous references to both Ishmael and, importantly, Esau in this manner. *b. Pesḥim* 56a contains an explanation for a specific recitation of the *shema*, when Jacob prophesized to his sons their fate, wondering if one of his sons might be "unfit" like Ishmael and Esau, who alone are mentioned.[21] *b. Pesḥim* 119b assumes that Abraham cannot say grace because "Ishmael issued from me."[22]

---

[21]The reticence of Jacob to pronounce the blessing, referenced here in *b. Pesḥim*, is clarified by *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 35:22 ("While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it" [ESV]). *Tg. Ps.-J.* states, "And it was while Israel dwelt in this land that Reuben went and confounded the bed of Bilhah the concubine of his father, which had been ordained along with the bed of Leah his mother; and this is reputed with regard to him, as if he had lain with her. And Israel heard it, and it afflicted him, and he said, Alas, that one should have come forth from me so profane, even as Ishmael came forth from Abraham, and Esau from my father! The Spirit of Holiness answered and thus spake to him: fear not, for all are righteous and none of them is profane!" (J. W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch: with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum,* Genesis and Exodus [London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862], 281). The same incident is recorded again in *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 49, where Israel is concerned that one of his sons might be involved in "worship before strange idols" like the "profane" Ishmael and Esau (ibid., 334-35).

[22]Longenecker overstates his case when he implies that Ishmael and Esau are "wicked anomalies in an otherwise righteous line" in reference to *b. Pesḥim* 119b (Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 202). The context of the prayer indicates that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua cannot say grace as some fault found in each. David alone is capable of saying grace. It is important, however, that both Ishmael and Esau were so wicked that they were counted as unfit for inclusion in the feast; and, further, their wickedness was enough to erase the ability for both Abraham and Isaac to provide the blessing.

Medieval Jewish writings were no less forceful in their interpretations. The midrashic *Num Rab.* states,

> It would seem strange that, although God told Abraham, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed', yet we do not find Abraham blessing his own sons. But in his pure and simple faith Abraham left this to God himself, arguing that one son of his (Ishmael) might perhaps be unworthy of God's blessings.[23]

While Abraham is noted as being righteous, indeed, even keeping the whole Torah,[24] it is only Ishmael that is suspected of being "unworthy" of God's blessings, not Isaac.[25] Likewise, in *Exo Rab.* Ishmael is accused of idolatry, "evil propensities," and "evil ways."[26] The Targums likewise speak of Ishmael as doing "evil works" and practicing "strange worship."[27]

Further, the same limitation is present in Esau's stolen blessing. The blessing that Jacob receives is similar in striking ways to the promise originally given to Abraham – a clear sign that Isaac saw this blessing as the extension of the promise given to Abraham, a blessing that he cannot provide to Esau, even though he clearly wanted to.

Table 3. Comparison of the LXX on Genesis 12:3 and 27:29

Genesis 12:3	Genesis 27:29
εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε καὶ τοὺς καταρωμένους σε καταράσομαι	ὁ καταρώμενός σε ἐπικατάρατος ὁ δὲ εὐλογῶν σε εὐλογημένος

---

[23]W. Wynn Westcott et al., trans., *Medieval Hebrew: The Midrash, The Kabbalah*, The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East 4 (New York: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917), 115.

[24]See *b. Yoma*, 28b.

[25]*Tg. Ps.-J.*, on Gen 25 avers that neither Isaac nor Ishmael were blessed because Abraham did not want the blessing of Isaac to alienate Ishmael, and drive a wedge between them. Thus, it was not simple ignorance, but Abraham knew that Isaac deserved the blessing, but kept himself from speaking it for other reasons.

[26]Westcott et al., *Medieval Hebrew*, 71. Counted alongside him is, again, Esau, although *Gen. Rab.* also includes Absalom, David's wicked son.

[27]See *Tg. Ps.-J, Tg. Onq.,* both of which accuse Ishmael of "strange worship" in Gen 21.

Given that these are the first two generations, the first two attempts to see the extension of the promise to the σπέρμα, it is of vast importance that the extension of God's promise was *limited* in both. Many of these same passages from Jewish literature lump both Ishmael and Esau together. Both are presumed, under the common meaning of σπέρμα, to be inheritors with their brothers, and both are excluded, being identified with wickedness. Thus, the anomalies of relating σπέρμα to the exclusion of both Ishmael and Esau can be explained. While the promise was true for all of Abraham's (and thus also Isaac's) descendants, both Ishmael and Esau were excluded on account of their wickedness, which declared them in some manner unfit for the promise of God.

This fitting solution is made more likely by the provision of the law and its conditional nature. Just as Abraham is to have kept the entire Torah, so the legal requirements were applied *ex post facto* to Ishmael and Esau as a way of explaining their exclusion from what appears to be a unilateral promise of God. This interpretation both affirms the universal importance of the law over the promise and allows for the normative meaning of σπέρμα to be kept in place.

**The Traditional Solution and the
Counter-Factual Test**

The question that is faced here, however, is whether such an interpretation is to be thought of as literal, or in the nomenclature set out above, as an explicature of the text of Genesis. For these general lines of interpretation to be seen as explicatures of the text, the invalidation of Ishmael as a member of σπέρμα must be deduced, as much as it can be, from the narrative itself, as a logical conclusion of the text. The case can be summarized as follows:

1. Genesis' use of σπέρμα indicates that all physical descendants of Abraham are considered inheritors of the promise.

2. Ishmael was a physical descendant of Abraham.

3. Therefore, Ishmael was considered σπέρμα.

153

Using 3. as a premise, we can advance the argument further:

4.   Ishmael is not an inheritor of the promise.

5.   Therefore, Ishmael invalidated himself as σπέρμα.

Two of these points, (2) and (4), seem easy to assess as explicatures from the text. To say that Ishmael was not a physical descendant of Abraham, or to claim that he did inherit the promise made to Abraham, invalidates the clear meaning of passages such as Genesis 16:4, 15-16; and 17:18-21.

Perhaps the easiest of the three remaining points to assess, then, is (5). If the text does not *necessarily* invalidate Ishmael from being considered as σπέρμα, whether through wickedness or some other factor, then our logical conclusion is invalid.[28] (5) then, would not be an explicature of the text, but rather an implication teased from it. Again, because logical deduction is used, this step would indicate that a premise must be faulty; as (4) has already been established as a logically sound premise, the problem must lie in the result of (3). In the same manner, as (2) has been established as a logically sound premise, the only possible point of error would be (1). Thus, if there is nothing in the text that demands seeing Ishmael as somehow invalidating himself as σπέρμα, we have reason to suspect that our narrative understanding of σπέρμα has been faulty. It is precisely this mis-understanding that Paul's allegorical argument picks up on in Galatians 4:21ff.

The accusations of Ishmael's wickedness in Jewish writing springs from very sparse information, centered on Genesis 21:9. In fact, Ishmael, son of Abraham, is mentioned only twenty times by name in the OT, slightly more if you count Genesis 21:9,

---

[28]Of course, being an invalid step in deductive logic does not necessarily deem it untrue. It simply means that the deductive manner of producing the conclusion is faulty, whereas inductive logic might provide the correct means of arriving at that specific result. For our consideration, we are not concerned with implications, which are inductive, but explicatures, which are deductive.

14-17 where he is simply referred to as the son of Hagar.[29] Little to no action is given to

him, other than he fathered children, buried Abraham, and laughed.

The "laughing" of Ishmael in 21:9 is the only action taken by Ishmael that may

truly be considered "evil" or "wicked." The MT's צחק was used to indicate simple

jocular laughter (likely the meaning as applied to Isaac's name, when in Gen 17:17,

18:12-15 Sarah and Abraham are said to laugh at the prospect of Isaac's birth), but could

also be used to indicate something more sinister, such as mocking, perhaps even having

sexual overtones (Gen 26:8; 39:14-17, Exo 32:6).[30] Interestingly, צחק is translated with

two separate Greek word groups, divided evenly between what appear to be incidents of

mere laughter and playful jesting (γελάω/γελοιάζω/γέλως; Gen 17:17; 18:12-15; 19:14;

21:6) and other contexts where mockery or laughing in derision is implied

(παίζω/ἐμπαίζω; Gen 21:9; 39:14, 17; Judg 16:25).[31] These separations are done along

changing stems for צחק in Hebrew. The qal stem, used for simple laughter, is used

primarily in passages where the γελάω/γελοιάζω/γέλως word group is used. Its piel

counterpart, as it generally intensifies the qal, is primarily translated by παίζω/ἐμπαίζω.

It is interesting that the MT uses צחק for both Sarah's prophecy and Ishmael's

actions in 21:6-9, where the LXX abruptly changes word groups, moving from γέλως to

---

[29]1 Chr 1:28-31 is the only passage outside of Genesis that names Ishmael, and it provides no further information about him than a genealogy. However, it may not be a coincidence that Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah was the main perpetrator in the assassination of Gedaliah and the Jews who were with him at Mizpah (see 2 Kgs 25:23-25; Jer 40-41).

[30]In Gen 26:8, Abimelech notices Isaac "playing" with Rebekah, and concludes that the two are not truly brother and sister, but married. More must have been happening between the two than simple laughter for such a conclusion to be reached, or implied by the laughter than would be recognized by modern readers. It is likely, then, that צחק is being used as a euphemism for a display of intimacy. Likewise, the accusation that Joseph was mocking the household of Potiphar comes amidst charges of rape; the cup that Judah will drink, and be mocked in, is due to her playing the whore in Ezek 23:30-35. It is important, however, that in each of these, save possibly Gen 26:8, it is the context that implies sexual overtones, and not just the word itself. This situation that does not appear to be the case in Gen 21:9.

[31]This last list excludes the likely euphemistic use in Gen 26:8, as well as Exod 32:6, where the euphemism might also be in play, although it is less clear there. Each of these uses of צחק is translated with the παίζω/ἐμπαίζω word group, however. Ezek 23:32 uses צחק in the MT, the LXX, however, does not translate the verb.

συγχαίρω and finally παίζω in 21:9. It is likely this change indicates that the translator for the LXX here saw a difference in nuance for the three uses of צחק in these two verses, as he uses three separate Greek words to translate the one Hebrew word.[32]

The translator of the LXX differentiates the jocular laughing that both proceeds and results from Isaac's birth and the laughing that instigated the removal of both Ishmael and Hagar. However, even if this supposition makes good sense in context, and the MT was implying the mocking of Isaac, it is quite difficult to move from mocking to bringing "strange worship" and charges of wickedness.

Table 4. Comparison of MT, LXX, and ESV on Genesis 21:6 and 21:9

Genesis 21:6 (MT)	Genesis 21:6 (LXX)	Genesis 21:6 (ESV)
וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרָה צְחֹק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל־הַשֹּׁמֵעַ יִצְחַק־לִי׃	εἶπεν δὲ Σαρρα γέλωτά μοι ἐποίησεν κύριος ὃς γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσῃ συγχαρεῖταί μοι	And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me."
Genesis 21:9 (MT)	Genesis 21:9 (LXX)	Genesis 21:9 (ESV)
וַתֵּרֶא שָׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מְצַחֵק׃	ἰδοῦσα δὲ Σαρρα τὸν υἱὸν Αγαρ τῆς Αἰγυπτίας ὃς ἐγένετο τῷ Αβρααμ παίζοντα μετὰ Ισαακ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς	But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing.

Neither the MT's use of צחק, nor the LXX use of παίζω indicates lexically or contextually that Ishmael's laughter/mocking was anything along the lines of "wicked" or, more importantly, that it invalidated him from the promises given to Abraham. While a case can be made that the verb changes in the LXX are there to support the idea of mockery, as Sarah's laughter in 21:6 (γέλωτά) is possibly manipulated into some kind of

---

[32]The translation is odd, especially because the second use of צחק in 21:9 is the only time that any word outside of the γελάω/γελοιάζω/γέλως or παίζω/ἐμπαίζω word groups is used in the LXX.

course jesting by Ishmael in 21:9 (παίζοντα), these changes at best fall far short of the wickedness implied in the Jewish literature, and do not of themselves invalidate Ishmael's status as σπέρμα.

As to this last point, the narrative may indicate Ishmael's invalidation outside of the nature of צחק alone. Narratival meaning does not always proceed directly from the semantic meaning of words, and perhaps the subsequent declaration of Sarah in Genesis 21:10, that Ishmael will not inherit Abraham's blessings, and the further affirmation of Sarah's words by God, indicate that this event was more vile and contemptable than צחק alone lets on.

But the narrative resists this reading of the events. Already in Genesis 17:19, 21 God has eliminated Ishmael from any consideration of inheritance. The substance of those verses is re-affirmed in Genesis 21:12, as God avers the reason Abraham should listen to Sarah's difficult words is "because [כִּי, ὅτι] your offspring will be named through Isaac." Thus, Sarah's forceful exclusion is affirmed by God not because of the mocking of Ishmael, but rather based on God's previous declaration to Abraham.

Therefore, nothing within the narrative of Genesis itself indicates the meaning of σπέρμα in the text is, *out of necessity*, linked to the patriarchal offspring. Again, this analysis does not mean that this interpretation is wrong out of hand. It does mean that the typical Jewish understanding is an implication, not an explication, of the text. It hangs on other assumptions that the text leaves unstated.

Thus, the ill-named literal reading of the promise in 12:3 and 17:19 must be tempered somewhat by the narrative that surrounds and fills in that promise. The narrative, it seems, carves out a space for other possible understandings of σπέρμα – it is how one fills this space that determines how the extension of the promise is seen in Genesis. While it is possible that Ishmael has, through some sort of wickedness, eliminated himself from the privilege of the promise, this is only one way to reconcile the

157

ambiguity of the text. But it is not mandated by the text, allowing other possibilities to flourish. Therefore, this "filling in" of the text may be done in many ways, but the process by which any interpretation is arrived at is not based on explicatures, and on that basis, not literal.

Being built on implications, however, is not to say that the typical Jewish interpretation is built on air, unfounded in the text or in God's providence in history. Certainly, without intervening revelation, it is the most apparent solution to the problem of Ishmael and Esau. However, intervening revelation is precisely upon which Paul builds his counter-reading.

Revelation and the Pauline Solution

Paul's "ingenious" solution to the problem of Ishmael, as Räisänen put it, is built around the gospel revealed to him, for the Gentiles, outside the law, and confirmed through the provision of the Spirit. Paul takes the further revelation of the mystery of the gospel in Jesus Christ and reads its assumptions back into the story of Sarah and Hagar.

It is striking how closely Paul's methodology may be rebuilt to model the pathway laid out above for the traditional Jewish interpretation. Paul likewise seeks to fill in the narratival space, and explain why a promise, made to all of Abraham's seed, is thereafter limited only to some. For Paul, the difference is not inherent righteousness or wickedness in the individuals who otherwise meet requirements for being considered inheritors, but rather the nature of the promise and the flesh.

Jewish interpretations likely read the nature of the law back into the narrative to explain the exclusion of Ishmael, a presumption affirmed by the many references in Jewish thought decrying Ishmael as wicked. After this presumption, the remainder of the Jewish thought flows naturally, even if it is circular. The provision of the law helps to explain Ishmael's exclusion, both further affirming Abraham's progeny as σπέρμα and the connection of the σπέρμα to the law.

158

Paul's interpretation of the narrative severs the tie between the inheriting

σπέρμα and the law by viewing the narrative through the lens of promise and flesh. This

lens, highlighted in Galatians 4:23, is Paul's own extension of the nature of the gospel

centered in the core confession of Galatians 2:16 and further elaborated throughout the

remainder of the epistle. Herein is the center of this dissertation. Paul's interpretation is

neither polemically forced upon him, nor without proper argumentation and reasoning.

Rather, the incongruity of the use of the flesh by the law with faith and promise finds its

home both throughout the epistle and in the heart of the allegorical interpretation of the

Sarah/Hagar narrative. Thus, this bifurcating lens found in the hermeneutical key of

Galatians 4:23 drives Paul's understanding for the two main centers of life. One,

centered on the use of the flesh and material world, holds all in slavery. The other,

centered on the promise, activated through faith in Jesus Christ, produces children for

God in freedom.

For Paul, then, those who were considered σπέρμα were those chosen by

promise, not primarily by physical or genealogical relationship.[33] After this, the

remainder of Paul's thought flows naturally. If Ishmael was rejected because he was a

product of the flesh and not the promise, then all those who use the flesh, even through

the law, to become inheritors are likewise excluded.[34]

---

[33]Paul, in Galatians, could be read as though adapting the understanding of σπέρμα from physical descendants, to chosen people, all the way down to chosen *one*, Jesus Christ. This reading is perhaps the purpose of Paul's (in)famous references to σπέρμα in 3:16 and 19. But this is likely an oversimplification of Paul's purpose. It is doubtful that Paul wished to read σπέρμα as only referring to Christ, but more to the point is that it refers ultimately to Christ, the final and full recipient of the promise. Of course, Paul might argue, others may be considered fully within the σπέρμα. As the Gentiles might be considered Abraham's σπέρμα (τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, Gal 3:29) because of their locational reference εἰς Χριστὸν, ἐν Χριστῷ, or as Paul states in 3:29, Χριστοῦ, so also the chosen children of Abraham might be τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα in a precursory fashion.

[34]That God later extends the blessing to all of Jacob's children is no problem. That, too, is God's gracious choice. Further, as argued in chap. 3, such a choice does not need to run counter to the flesh, but rather God's promise uses the flesh to his own ends, while not being controlled by it. Paul's interpretation, then, does not fly in the face of the text of Genesis, or stand in contradiction to it. Rather he uses the same methodology as the so-called literal interpretation. An assumption must be made to understand the dismissal of Ishmael; Paul provides an assumption (promise vs. flesh) that upholds the gospel that he preaches, does not contravene the core Christian confession provided in Gal 2:16, and makes sense of the Pentateuchal narrative.

The promise, and the unilateral action of God, stands as the basis for one's inclusion among God's people. As such, Paul's understanding of the promise stands supra-historical, fording the river of time even through the epoch of the law.[35] That God's unilateral promise holds is no less true for those God placed under the law in former times than for those Gentiles who receive the Spirit post-Christ, although Paul is not intent on discussing the former. But as promise and faith are keys to the inclusion of people into the covenant, the primacy of the promise can be accomplished in line with the law. God's promise works through physical means, while still being primary.

Conclusion

The firmest conclusion from this chapter is the affirmation that Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:21-5:1 does not run counter to any perceived literal sense of the text in Genesis. The promise of God, given to Abraham and his σπέρμα, does not necessarily coextend to Abraham's own progeny. As no literal conclusion is an explicature of the Sarah/Hagar account in Genesis, it was argued that any reading of Genesis (and, further, the Pentateuch) which desired to identify the recipients of the promise needed to make assumptions of the text. Such assumptions may be better or worse, based in historical accounts of the Pentateuch itself or in a revelation received directly from God, but they were no less assumptions of the text.

This conclusion, however, as an extension of the overall thesis of this work, does have hermeneutical ramifications beyond the scope of the immediate interpretation of Galatians 4:21ff. Although such ramifications are far too broad to cover in detail,

---

[35]This understanding of God's promise and word stands, to some extent, in line with Radner's recent proposal in *Time and the Word*. Radner's main apologetic for figural reading is based the nature of Scripture as God's revelation in time vis-à-vis God's pre-ordained providence over history. Radner implies that Scripture itself is the time-embedded working out of God's speech even before time; therefore, it itself not only discloses history but forms it as well.

especially given the large and difficult world of hermeneutics, a few passing observations are in order.

First, the use of literal is quite nebulous and, especially in this context, a useless barometer of faithfulness to the text. Paul does not seem to be trying to dig a "deeper" meaning out of the text, but to cull the true meaning out of it. While the allegory is indeed a re-reading of a well-known portion of the OT, it is wrong to suppose that Paul's interpretation stands in some external relation to a separate, literal meaning. What Paul appears to be doing, therefore, is to simply read the text in light of assumptions that must be true in the gospel. It is not, then, a deeper reading of the text, but a Christian reading.

For Paul, the allegory in Galatians 4:21ff. neither violated nor avoided the literal sense of the Genesis passage. It did, however, provide an interpretation of the passage that would not have been available to the original readers of that text, as they lacked the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. This fact does not mean that Paul simply "spiritualized" the passage; rather, given the right understanding of God's work in Christ, Paul has interpreted the Genesis passage to provide the *true* understanding of the *physical* events that took place according to the actual words written.

The problem, then, with appealing to historical-grammatical forms of exegesis for this passage is that such exegesis does not easily conform to Paul's actual interpretation. It is fine to claim that historical-grammatical interpretation is what Christians should generally engage in, and to interpret Galatians and Genesis through that lens, especially when room is made in the historical-grammatical scheme for the divine author.[36] But Paul does not appear to give an historical-grammatical reading, even given

---

[36]A good, and recent, example of the use of the divine author is found in the work of Vern S. Poythress, "Dispensing with Merely Human Meaning: Gains and Losses from Focusing on the Human Author, Illustrated by Zephaniah 1:2-3," *JETS* 57, no. 3 (2014): 481–500.

the allowance of a divine author for Genesis. As was claimed earlier, Paul is reading the key of Galatians 4:23 back into the events of Genesis, not pulling them out of it. There is little grammatically that informs his interpretation of the Sarah and Hagar narrative. Historically, his interpretation is informed as much by the necessary entailments of the gospel as it is the events of Genesis. Although Paul does not break with history or with grammar, that does not mean that these two lenses were the focus of his quite novel interpretation. Therefore, even with Poythress' desire to open up possible vistas through the appeal to a divine author, historical-grammatical methodologies do not adequately describe Paul's interpretation.[37] Paul is, at the very least, reading things back into the text, not simply to determine possible implications for his current situation, but to provide a truthful interpretation of the text as it stands. Given the above, such a reading is necessary to fill in the narrative space, but has little to do with a supposed literal or historical-grammatical readings of Scripture.

Second, given that Paul's interpretation does not stand either above or below any literal interpretation, we need to begin to question the usefulness of theories that divide sharply the literal and figurative meaning. An excellent example of this division is found from Daniel Boyarin, who remarks,

> Paul describes historical Israel's existence as carnal, physical, material, and literal, and therefore it follows that the hermeneutical practices by which that historical Israel constitutes itself are also carnal; the Jews read only according to the flesh. They do not see beyond the fleshly literal meaning to the spirit behind the language. This brings us to the question of supersession. . . . If there has been no rejection of Israel, there has indeed been a supersession of the historical Israel's hermeneutic of self-understanding as a community constituted by physical genealogy and observances and the covenantal exclusiveness that such a self-understanding entails.[38]

---

[37]The appeal to divine authorship in this manner is a similar problem in A. B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)," *SBJT* 14, no. 3 (2010): 50-78.

[38]Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 31–32. While I think that his point about supersession is valid, I would weaken it some. Boyarin's full statement would only be true if Paul demanded the same cultural realities for all, both Jew and Gentile. But as chap. 4 was at pains to show, the nature of the gospel allows for these cultural

Boyarin's understanding of Paul's conception of promise and the literal reading of Genesis is quite at odds with the thesis of this dissertation. The promise works through the flesh, and certainly extends to all of Jacob's children. The problem, of course, returns to Ishmael, and the understanding of the Israel nation as "constituted by physical genealogy." Genesis does not sustain this reading "literally." Boyarin simply assumes the literal reading, buttressed by tradition, and infers that Paul must therefore not only reject this reading, but a host of other cultural identifiers attached to it.

While certainly the difficult passage in 2 Corinthians 3 plays a role in Paul's thought, Boyarin finds his main text for understanding Paul from the Sarah/Hagar allegory. He avers,

> For Paul's theology to work he must reverse the terms of that constitutive biblical text [the narrative of Sarah/Hagar] and uproot the genealogical significance of the Promise. He must contrast, indeed, the Promise to the genealogy. Allegory is the perfect hermeneutic vehicle for this transformation, because it figures both the status of language and the status of the body. Just as the language of the text is translated by an allegorical reading into a spiritual meaning, so the body of the believer is translated out of its ethnic status and into a spiritual body. . . . This 'promise' corresponds to the promise that was made to Abraham that 'his seed will inherit' and that through him all of the peoples will be blessed, as well as to the promise to Sarah that she would bear a son. On the other hand, Ishmael, the child born to Hagar, was born by natural means. Isaac, accordingly, signifies 'the spirit,' and Ishmael, 'the flesh.' 'The spirit' can thus be replaced here by 'the promise,' and 'according to the promise' becomes a hermeneutical term, a way of understanding Scripture.[39]

Putting aside for a minute the issue raised in this chapter concerning the "genealogical significance" of the promise, even in a passage where Boyarin himself

---

realities to still be present, especially among the Jews, and that this allowance was the source of the Galatian problem. The fact that the Jews maintained certain cultural rites, including circumcision, was the fountain-head for the confusion that reigned in Galatia. Paul is not out to promote cultural egalitarianism, but salvific egalitarianism. Therefore, Paul is able to say that both circumcision and non-circumcision mean nothing, but a new creation (Gal 6:15; cf. 5:6). This statement can be read to affirm the cultural practice (Paul does not claim it evil and announce its necessary eradication) while denouncing it as having any theological import. Ironically, Paul was, according to this reading, at home with cultural differences that the Jewish believers were not. Yet, clearly, there is a sense in which Christ supersedes all other cultural identifiers, both for the Jew and the Greek.

[39]Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 32–33. Boyarin thinks Paul attempts to recreate Philo's androgynous man (without implying any reliance upon Philo), the focus of the first, and more perfect, creation in Gen 1.

notes the rejection of the genealogically related Ishmael, what is to be made of Boyarin's use of "signifies" and "replaced"? Again, this is the wrong way to read Paul's allegory. The promise, even in the allegory, stands as a force working through the flesh, not over or against it. Isaac is not transformed by Paul into some quasi-spiritual entity; neither does he simply symbolize the promise while Ishmael symbolizes the flesh. Isaac is a product, a real, living, physical, circumcised product of the promise, a God-induced miracle that takes up a corporeal body and lives on the earth. Likewise, the mothers are not somehow eliminated from Pauline history, vaporized into Paul's ephemeral spiritualized reality. They do not become the covenants themselves, but rather are demonstrations of how each covenant works: one by faith, promise, Spirit; the other by works, genealogy, and flesh. Paul does not want to spiritualize these physical realities, rather, he desires to point toward the spiritual reality that surrounds, and is built into, the physical.

To more fully explain this way of reading Paul, perhaps a metaphor borrowed from Boyarin himself will be helpful. Boyarin believes that Philo provides a good background for his reading of Paul, especially Philo's reading of Genesis 1 and 2. Here, Philo places a great deal of meaning in the two apparent narratives of the creation of people as man and woman, and posits Adam as the mind and meaning, Eve as the senses and physical representation. Boyarin comments, "The idea of meaning as pure unity and language as difference is what makes possible the interpretation of Adam as meaning and Eve as language. The nexus of allegoresis and contempt for the senses is tight."[40] For Pauline hermeneutics, however, Philo's reading is incomplete, for Paul allows Genesis 2:24 to flourish historically, ontologically, epistemologically, and hermeneutically: the two have become one flesh.[41]

---

[40] Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 20.

[41] There is much at stake in this view of hermeneutics quite beyond the interpretation of the

Third, Paul's allegory is not properly called Christo-centric. While Paul finishes his allegory with a clear call for understanding the work of Christ in Galatians 5:1, and entailments of Christ's work supply the necessary presuppositions needed to rightly understand the narrative in Genesis, it is not Christ through which the apostle looks to make his case. Christ is not the lens, but rather the final vision. Paul is not reading the OT *in* light of Christ, so much as he is interpreting it *for* the light of Christ.

Paul's hermeneutic, in this sense, might be likened to an eye exam. The doctor provides a picture or a text which is meant to be clear to the patient; the word "cat" perhaps. The text is fuzzy at first, and until the right lens is found, the patient may have a hard time making out the text as "cat." But when the right lens is found, the right outcome is established. Jesus' atonement and justifying work was not the lens that Paul used to interpret the outcome, but rather the outcome itself.[42] The right lens brings that outcome into sharp focus.

In their very helpful book, *Sanctified Vision*, O'Keefe and Reno argue that allegory is essentially using the text of Scripture as a map: "The ordered reality of the text exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of guiding our thoughts onto the topography

---

OT. This wrongful bifurcation of physical and spiritual is a common sentiment in Christianity, adequately summed up in the statement "You do not have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body," often misattributed to C. S. Lewis, versions of which appear much earlier (see the monthly journal *The British Friend*, no. 7, [1892], 157, where a similar quote is attributed to George Macdonald). Hermeneutical principles often go beyond the text, and run into our everyday lives. This course of action is not just a Christian hermeneutic applied rigorously to other social conventions, but has roots in foundational linguistic study. Concerning the arbitrariness of signs, Ferdinand Saussure wrote: "In this sense linguistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology although language is only one particular semiological system" (Ferdinand Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin [New York: Philosophical Library, 1959], 68).

[42]In some sense, then, I believe that E. P. Sanders' insight that Paul worked from the revelation of the gospel back to the OT is correct, but must be supplemented to keep Paul from appearing to simply force his round solution into an otherwise square hole. See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patters of Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 442–43. Here, James D. G. Dunn's insight is helpful: "Paul theologized in the light of the fundamental 'revelation of Jesus Christ' given to him on the Damascus road. It does not mean, however, that in order to rationalize his solution he had to invent a plight" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998], 181).

of something else, something more real and more important."[43] This metaphor is then applied to the allegory of Galatians 4, where they argue Paul maps the story of Ishmael and Isaac onto the reality of the Galatians' experience and the controversy that confronts them.

This reading is only partially right. For Paul the map, the structuring and organizing principle, is being placed over Scripture and the Galatian controversy alike. The principles of Galatians 4:23, not the Genesis story, are the organizing principle that Paul uses, and are by extension how all reality is to be understood. Paul is not arguing *from* the text, but rather *to* the text. He is not showing how Genesis 15-21 can be mapped onto the Galatians' experience, but rather that the experience of the Galatians was part and parcel of the experience of Isaac and Ishmael and of the entirety of the law as a whole. Each was a particular manifestation of the undergirding principle "flesh bears slaves" and "promise bears freedom."

The use of hypothesis in Irenaeus is closely linked by O'Keefe and Reno to the summing up of all things in Christ; it indicates that the person and work of Jesus Christ is the focal point and fulcrum of the entirety of Scripture. Christ makes Scripture work. Thus, Jesus himself becomes the interpretive key to all of Scripture. Taking Galatians 4:23 as premise here does not necessarily contradict that thought, although it amends it slightly. Understanding Christ as the hypothesis of all Scripture cannot be taken as a simple concept, as the Christological heresies of the third and fourth centuries made clear. Even the summation of Irenaeus' hypothesis by O'Keefe and Reno needs premises:

> How are the promises to Abraham to be fulfilled? To whom and for how long to the laws delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai apply? Did the prophets foretell a worldly or a heavenly kingdom? Will God deliver his people from worldly oppression or the dominion of the devil? Is salvation for the Jews or for all the nations? . . . The

---

[43]O'Keefe and Reno, *Sanctified Vision*, 89–90.

promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ. Christ brings to an end the ritual laws of Israel. The kingdom he establishes is spiritual. He triumphs over sin and death rather than worldly powers. Salvation is for both Jew and Gentile, and so forth. In each instance, the meaning of the prior sequence of divine events is made clear.[44]

Take, for instance, the proposition that salvation is for both Jew and Gentile. What is it about Christ, his atoning work and reality in general, that makes this proposition true? Proposing Christ as the hypothesis is not wrong, but in its simplest form is quite incomplete. The hypothesis cannot be a simple one, but supported and affirmed by other (and in a very real sense, more foundational) premises. Many of these premises are built into the nature of the gospel provided by divine revelation to Paul. Paul does not make the allegorical connections because of rabbinical training, nor by necessity or by means of apostolic authority, but rather on the common confession of the gospel as the justification of sinners. Again, the allegory of Sarah and Hagar bears this out; Paul does not make Christ the central principle of interpretation nor does he find Christ lingering in the center of the passage. Rather, he sees Christ as the rightful culmination of the passage, and the reality that his work has revealed then stands as the lens through which to view such narratives. In Galatians 4:23 Paul presents one of those particular foundational premises that makes the idea of Christ as a meta-hypothesis work.

Lastly, given the above conclusions, it is perhaps time to stop focusing on the nature of "allegory" and generally turn toward more fundamental questions. Matthew Bates rightly comments,

> I will argue that Origen, the Antiochenes, and most modern interpreters who following their interpretative wake have come at this passage with the wrong question in mind. The appropriate question is not: Does Paul use an allegorical or a 'typological' method in his exegesis of Genesis 16-21?–which presumes that these are generative methods for Paul in Galatians 4:21-31. Rather, a better question is: how did Paul use the scriptures to obtain the end to which he is arguing in Galatians 4:21-31 in the first place? And furthermore, how does his interaction with Genesis 16-21 get to this end?[45]

---

[44] O'Keefe and Reno, *Sanctified Vision*, 38.

[45]Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 149–50.

These latter questions are the precise questions that this dissertation has attempted to answer. Although I disagree with Bates' assessment of the passage on many accounts, I believe that he is correct to put forward allegory more of a method of presentation than a process by which interpretations are produced.[46] Allegory is not a set method of interpretation that followed strict guidelines. Dawson, for instance, is able to trace the differentiation of typology and allegory to the Reformation, a distinction that now seems fully set in stone.[47] The Greeks, likewise, seemed to allow much greater freedom to tropes labelled allegorical. For instance, Ps.-Demetrius states:

> Allegory is also impressive, particularly in threats, for example that of Dionysius, 'their cicadas will sing from the ground.' If he had said openly that he would ravage the land of Locris, he would have shown more anger but less dignity. As it is he has shrouded his words, as it were, in allegory . . . in fact allegory is not unlike darkness and light.[48]

It is unapparent how Dionysius' statement differs to any great extent from metaphor, yet Ps.-Demetrius clearly labels it as ἀλληγορία. Paul's allegory works, not by shrouding ideas in darkness, but by clarifying a difficult passage through the use of an interpretive lens that stands outside the text itself. In this sense, Paul is interpreting the passage allegorically, but this statement tells us very little about that interpretation itself. Therefore, discussion over the nature of allegory, and whether it is a useful method of interpretation, is somewhat of a false first step.

Paul's famous allegory was not meant to bring confusion, but clarity. It was meant to demonstrate fully to the Galatians the importance of shedding the law as a means of gaining acceptance into God's people. The legacy of Galatians 4:21-5:1 should

---

[46]Bates, for instance, affirms the polemical sketch laid out by Barrett, of which much of this dissertation disagrees (see Bates, *The Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 152n125). Furthermore, his step-by-step reconstruction falls quite out of line with the interpretation of the passage outlined in chap. 3 above (ibid., 151–55).

[47]See Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 16.

[48]Demetrius, *De elocutione*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, LCL 199 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 408-11.

not be simply a *crux interpretum* for hermeneutical studies, but rather as Paul intended it: a text that emboldens Christians to stand firm in God's work, hold fast to Christ, and reject any hold that the flesh may have on their lives.

APPENDIX 1

ARGUMENT TRACING FOR GALATIANS 4:21-5:1

This appendix contains the argument tracing of Galatians 4:21-5:1 that the
exegesis of chapter 3 was based upon. The manner of tracing presented here is taken
from Schreiner's helpful work *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*.[1] While certain
abbreviations are explained in the legend below, the reader is encouraged to refer to
Schreiner's work for a full explanation of the meaning of each term.

---

[1]Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 97–125.

Q — Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε;

Idea / Action — γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἀβραὰμ δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχεν,

Result / S — ἕνα ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης καὶ
ἕνα ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

Clarification / S — ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται,
ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι’ ἐπαγγελίας.

Explanation — ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα·

Ground / Idea — αὗται γάρ εἰσιν δύο διαθῆκαι,

S — μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα,
ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἁγάρ.

Situation — τὸ δὲ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ·

Result — συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ,

Ground — δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς.

S — ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν,
ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν·

Ground / Action / S — γέγραπται γάρ· εὐφράνθητι, στεῖρα ἡ οὐ τίκτουσα,
ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα·

Purpose / Cf. — ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον
ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

Idea — Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ.

Clarification / Situation / Cf. — ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα,
οὕτως καὶ νῦν.

Response / Q — ἀλλὰ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή;

A / Action — ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς·

Purpose — οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ
τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

− — διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα

+ — ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

∴ / Action — Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν·

Result / + — στήκετε οὖν καὶ
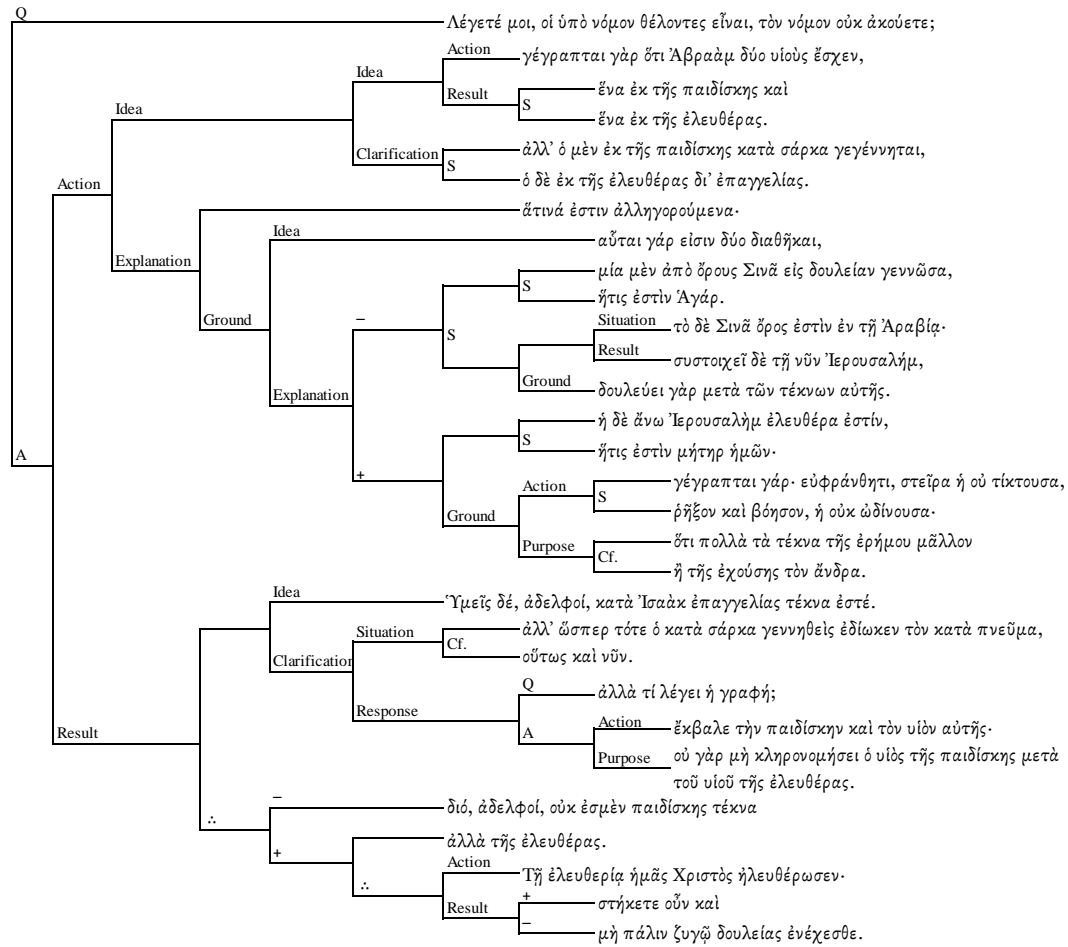
− — μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.

Figure A1. Argument tracing for Galatians 4:21-5:1

Legend: Q = question; A = answer; + = positive restatement; − = negative restatement; S = series; ∴ = therefore

171

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aland, Kurt, and Barbara Aland. *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.

Andrews, Edgar H. *Free in Christ: The Message of Galatians*. Welwyn Commentary Series. Faverdale North, England: Evangelical Press, 1996.

Aristotle. *Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by J. H. Freese. Loeb Classical Library 193. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.

————. *On Interpretation*. Translated by H. P. Cooke and Hugh Tredennick. Loeb Classical Library 325. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Arnold, Clinton E. "Returning to the Domain of Powers: STOICHEIA as Evil Spirits in Gal 4:3,9." *Novum Testamentum* 38, no. 1 (1996): 55–76.

Augustine. *City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. London: Penguin Books, 1984.

Bachmann, Michael. *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology*. Translated by Robert L. Brawley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.

————. *Sünder Oder Übertreter: Studien Zur Argumentation in Gal 2,15ff*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 59. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992.

Barclay, John M. G. *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.

Barker, Patrick G. "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1994): 193–209.

Barrett, Charles K. "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians." In *Rechtfertigung (FS E. Käsemann)*, edited by Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pohlmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher, 1–16. Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1976.

————. "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians." In *Essays on Paul*, 154–70. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982.

————. *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985.

172

Bates, Matthew W. *The Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012.

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Danker F. W., Arndt W. F., and Gingrich F. W. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Bertram, Georg. "Παιδαγωγός." Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

—————. "Παίζω." Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Bligh, John. *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle*. London: St. Paul Publications, 1970.

Boice, James Montgomery. *Galatians*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Everett F. Harrison, Donald A. Hagner, and Robert K. Rapa, vol. 10. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.

Bonnard, Pierre. *L'Épitre de Saint Paul Aux Galates*. Commentaire Du Nouveau Testament 9. Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1953.

Boyarin, Daniel. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Brinsmead, Bernard Hungerford. *Galatians - Dialogical Response to Opponents*. SBL Dissertation Series 65. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982.

Bruce, Frederick F. *Epistle to the Galatians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 1982.

Buell, Denise Kimber. *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Burton, Ernest De Witt. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948.

Callaway, Mary. *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 91. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. Translated by William Pringle. Calvin's Commentaries 21. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996.

Campbell, J. L. "An Applied Relevance Theory of the Making and Understanding of Rhetorical Arguments." *Language & Communication* 12, no. 2 (1992): 145–55.

Caneday, A. B. "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14, no. 3 (2010): 50–78.

————. "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul's Theology in Galatians." In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, edited by Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, 185–208. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

Carlson, Stephen C. *The Text of Galatians and Its History*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Carson, D. A, Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds. *Justification and Variegated Nomism*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Carston, Robyn. *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Chrysostom, John. *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Edited by Philip Schaff. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 13. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956.

Cicero. *De Inventione*. Translated by Harry M. Hubbell. Loeb Classical Library 386. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

————. *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*. Translated by Harry Caplan. Loeb Classical Library 403. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954.

Clark, Billy. *Relevance Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Collins, J. N. *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Resources*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Cosgrove, Charles H. "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21-30)." *Novum Testamentum* 29, no. 3 (1987): 221–35.

Das, A. Andrew. *Galatians*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014.

————. *Paul and the Jews*. Library of Pauline Studies. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.

Daube, David. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2. London: Athlone Press, 1956.

Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison, Jr. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Vol. 1. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.

Davis, Anne. "Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14, no. 2 (2004): 161–74.

Dawson, John David. *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

—————. *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

De Boer, Martinus C. *Galatians*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

—————. "Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27." *New Testament Studies* 50, no. 3 (2004): 370–89.

Delling, Gerhard. "Στοιχεῖον." Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971.

Demetrius. *De elocutione*. Translated by W. Rhys Roberts. Loeb Classical Library 199. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Di Mattei, Steven. "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics." *New Testament Studies* 52, no. 1 (2006): 102–22.

Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. Black's New Testament Commentary 9. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

—————. *The New Perspective on Paul*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.

—————. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

—————. *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Eadie, John. *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*. Minneapolis: James and Klock Christian Publishing Co., 1977.

Eastman, Susan G. "'Cast out the Slave Woman and Her Son': The Dynamics of Exclusion and Inclusion in Galatians 4.30." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 3 (2006): 309–36.

Elliott, J. K. "Can We Recover the Original New Testament?" *Theology* 77, no. 649 (1974): 338–53.

Elmer, Ian J. *Paul, Jerusalem, and the Judaisers*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 258. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

Emerson, Matthew Y. "Arbitrary Allegory, Typical Typology, or Intertextual Interpretation? Paul's Use of the Pentateuch in Galatians 4:21–31." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (2013): 14–22.

Epp, Eldon Jay. "Traditional 'Canons' of New Testament Textual Criticism: Their Value, Validity, and Viability – or Lack Thereof." In *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research*, edited by Klaus Wachtel and Michael W. Holmes, 79–128. Text-Critical Studies. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

Etheridge, J. W. *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch: with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum, Genesis and Exodus.* London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle*. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.

Fowl, Stephen E. *Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.

—————. "Who Can Read Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 55 (1994): 77–95.

Fung, Ronald Y. K. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.

George, Timothy. *Galatians*. New American Commentary 30. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994.

Grice, H. P. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Haenchen, Ernst. "Petrus-Probleme." *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961): 187–97.

Hanson, R. P. C. *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture*. London: SCM Press, 1959.

Harmon, Matthew S. *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 168. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010.

Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

—————. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.

—————. *The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*. In vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck, 183-384. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Hodge, Caroline Johnson. *If Sons Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hong, In-Gyu. *The Law in Galatians*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 81. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993.

Irons, Charles Lee. *The Righteousness of God: A Lexical Examination of the Covenant-Faithfulness Interpretation*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 386. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Jerome. "Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli Ad Galatas." In *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Opera Omnia,* edited by Jacques Paul Migne. Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina. Paris: Migne, 1845.

Jervis, L. Ann. *Galatians*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

Jewett, Robert. "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation." *New Testament Studies* 17, no. 2 (1971): 198–212.

Jobes, Karen. "Jerusalem, Our Mother : Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31." *Westminster Theological Journal* 55, no. 2 (1993): 299–320.

Juncker, Günther H. "'Children of Promise': Spiritual Paternity and Patriarch Typology in Galatians and Romans." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17, no. 1 (2007): 131–60.

Käsemann, Ernst. *Perspectives on Paul*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1971.

Kepple, Robert J. "An Analysis of Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26." *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (1977): 239–49.

Kern, Philip H. *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 101. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 140. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

Konstan, David, ed. *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*. Translated by Donald A. Russell. SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 14. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer. *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016.

Lampe, G., and K. J. Woollcombe. *Essays on Typology*. Studies in Biblical Theology 22. Naperville, IL: A.R. Allenson, 1957.

Lategan, Bernard C. "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians?" *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 411–30.

Lausberg, Heinrich. *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*. Edited by David E Orton and R. Dean Anderson. Boston: Brill, 1998.

Leithart, Peter J. "The Quadriga or Something Like It: A Biblical and Pastoral Defense." In *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future*, edited by Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman, 110–25. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.

Levinsohn, Stephen H. *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*. 2nd ed. Dallas: SIL International, 2000.

Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement*. Edited by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Lightfoot, J. B. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. 6th ed. London: MacMillan and Co., 1880.

Longenecker, Richard N. *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

—————. "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" In *Studies in Hermeneutics, Christology and Discipleship*, 34–71. New Testament Monographs 2. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004.

—————. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary 41. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.

—————. "Graphic Illustrations of a Believer's New Life in Christ: Galatians 4:21-31." *Review and Expositor* 91, no. 2 (1994): 183–99.

Luther, Martin. *Lectures on Galatians*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. *Luther's Works*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955.

Maier, Christl. "Psalm 87 as a Reappraisal of the Zion Tradition and Its Reception in Galatians 4:26." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2007): 473–86.

Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Matera, Frank J. *Galatians*. Edited by Harrington Daniel J. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007.

McClane, Curtis D. "The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegorical Method in Galatians 4:21-31." *Restoration Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1998): 125–35.

McGaughy, Lane C. *Toward a Descriptive Analysis of Εἶναι as a Linking Verb in New Testament Greek*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 6. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972.

McNamara, Martin. "'To de (Hagar) Sina Oros Estin En Tê Arabia' (Gal 4:25a): Paul and Petra." *Milltown Studies* 2 (1978): 24–41.

Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellchaft, 2002.

Michel, Otto. "Οἰκονόμος." Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

Millay, Thomas J. "Septuagint Figura: Assessing the Contribution of Richard B. Hays." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, no. 1 (2017): 93–104.

Miller, Troy A. "Surrogate, Slave and Deviant? The Figure of Hagar in Jewish Tradition and Paul (Galatians 4.21-31)." In *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality; Volume 2: Exegetical Studies*, edited by Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias. London: T&T Clark, 2009.

Moo, Douglas J. *Galatians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Nanos, Mark D. *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

Oakes, Peter. *Galatians*. ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ - Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

Oepke, Albrecht. *Der Brief Des Paulus an Die Galater*. Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 9. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973.

————. "Διώκω." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

O'Keefe, John J., and R. R. Reno. *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Origen. *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*. Translated by Ronald E. Heine. *The Fathers of the Church* 71. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982.

Perkins, Pheme. *Abraham's Divided Children: Galatians and the Politics of Faith*. The New Testament in Context. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001.

Perriman, Andrew C. "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1." *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 27–42.

Pilkington, Adrian. "Introduction: Relevance Theory and Literary Style." *Language and Literature* 5, no. 3 (1996): 157–62.

Plumer, Eric Antone. *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Plutarch. *Moralia*. Vol. 1. Loeb Classical Library 197. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.

Poythress, Vern S. "Dispensing with Merely Human Meaning: Gains and Losses from Focusing on the Human Author, Illustrated by Zephaniah 1:2-3." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 3 (2014): 481–500.

Punt, Jeremy. "Hermeneutics in Identity Formation: Paul's Use of Genesis in Galatians 4." *HTS: Theological Studies* 67, no. 1 (2011): 1–9.

————. "Revealing Rereading. Part 1: Pauline Allegory in Galatians 4:21-5:1." *Neotestamentica* 40, no. 1 (2006): 87–100.

Quintilian. *The Orator's Education* (Books 3-5). Translated by Donald A. Russell. Loeb Classical Library 125. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Radner, Ephraim. *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016.

Räisänen, Heikki. "Galatians 2:16 and Paul's Break with Judaism." *New Testament Studies* 31, no. 4 (1985): 543–53.

————. *Paul and the Law*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 29. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983.

Rapa, Robert K. *Galatians*. In vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, 547-640. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

Ridderbos, Herman N. *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953.

Robertson, A. T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*. 3rd ed. Leicester, England: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919.

Runge, Steven E. *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2010.

Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patters of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

Sanders, J. A. "The Ethic of Election in Luke's Great Banquet Parable." In *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, edited by James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

Schlier, Heinrich. *Der Brief an Die Galater*. 6th ed. Meyers Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Das Neue Testament. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Galatians*. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

————. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

————. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Schröter, Jens. *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*. Translated by Wayne Coppins. Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013.

————. *Von Jesus Zum Neuen Testament: Studien Zur Urchristlichen Theologiegeschichte Und Zur Entstehung Des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 204. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.

Schütz, John Howard. *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Scott, James M. *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Υἱοθεσία in the Pauline Corpus*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 48. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992.

Sechrest, Love L. *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*. Library of New Testament Studies 410. London: T&T Clark, 2009.

Seifrid, Mark A. *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 9. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

————. "Paul, Luther, and Justification in Gal 2:15-21." *Westminster Theological Journal* 65, no. 2 (2003): 215–30.

Silva, Moisés. "Are Translators Traitors? Some Personal Reflections." In *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World*, edited by Glen G Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth, 37–50. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

————. "Galatians." In *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, edited by D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale, 785-812. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

————. *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

————. "Old Testament in Paul." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993.

Smiles, Vincent M. *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia: Paul's Response to Jewish-Christian Separation and the Threat of Galatian Apostasy*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

Smith, Gary V. *Isaiah 40-66*. New American Commentary 15B. B&H Academic, 2009.

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995.

————. "Relevance Theory." In *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, edited by Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward, 607–32. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006.

Sprinkle, Preston M. *Law and Life*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 241. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Stanley, Christopher D. *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*. New York: T&T Clark, 2004.

————. *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Steel, Catherine. "Divisions of Speech." In *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, edited by Erik Gunderson, 77-91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Thielman, Frank. *Paul and the Law*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Tolmie, D. Francois. *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 190. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Treier, Daniel J. *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Verseput, D. J. "Paul's Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community: A Study of the Narrative in Galatians 1 and 2." *New Testament Studies* 39, no. 1 (1993): 36–58.

Vouga, François. *An Die Galater*. Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament 10. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.

Wagner, J. Ross. *Heralds of the Good News: Paul and Isaiah in Concert in the Letter to the Romans*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 101. London: Brill, 2002.

Wakefield, Andrew H. *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul's Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Westcott, W. Wynn, S. L. Mathers, Herman Adler, Adolf Neubauer, Samuel Rapaport, and Michael Friedlander, trans. *Medieval Hebrew: The Midrash, The Kabbalah*. The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East 4. New York: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917.

Williams, S. K. "The Hearing of Faith: AKOĒ PISTEŌS in Galatians 3." *New Testament Studies* 35, no. 1 (1989): 82–93.

————. "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (1987): 91–100.

Willitts, Joel. "Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah." *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 96, no. 3–4 (2005): 188–210.

Wilson, Deirdre, and Dan Sperber. *Meaning and Relevance*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Wilson, Todd A. "Wilderness Apostasy and Paul's Portrayal of the Crisis in Galatians." *New Testament Studies* 50, no. 4 (2004): 550–71.

Witherington, Ben, III. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Wright, N. T. *Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

—————. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*. Vol. 4. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.

Zerwick, Maximilian. *Biblical Greek*. Translated by Joseph Smith. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2001.

Ziesler, J. A. *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

ABSTRACT

PROMISE AND FREEDOM, FLESH AND SLAVERY: PAUL'S
HERMENEUTICAL KEY IN GALATIANS 4:21-5:1 IN LIGHT
OF THE THEMES AND STRUCTURE OF GALATIANS

Douglas Robert Wallaker, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert L. Plummer

The story of Sarah and Hagar has been treated as one of the foundational stories for the nation of Israel. Yet, Paul, in one deft allegory, will attempt to overturn centuries of theological and historical interpretation. Against other interpretations, I argue that Paul's untraditional uniting of Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem together was accomplished through the interpretive key provided in 4:23: *the one who comes from a slave has been born because of the flesh, and the one who comes from a free woman has been born through the promise.*

Paul no longer reads the story of Sarah and Hagar through a lens of separation based on physical realities, but rather through the lens of promise and flesh, as helpfully stated in 4:23. Ishmael was not "cast out" because of his sinfulness or supposed ethnic deficiencies, but rather because he was born "κατὰ σάρκα" and not "δι᾽ ἐπαγγελίας." These comparative realities are not introduced here in the allegory for the first time; rather, Paul has been building these comparisons as his primary argument since the foundational 2:15-21. This dissertation, therefore, not only interprets the allegory in consideration of the lens of 4:23, but seeks to set the argument within both the thematic and schematic content of Galatians.

While the first chapter summarizes and categorizes the typical interpretations of the difficult Galatians 4:21-5:1, the second chapter seeks to critique these approaches

to the allegory. The value of applying Paul's interpretive lens (Gal 4:23) to the allegory

is argued for in the third chapter. By using the hermeneutical lens of 4:23, many of the

allegory's difficulties are eased, and the meaning and import of the allegory is clarified.

The fourth chapter seeks to set the allegory within the epistle, both thematically and

schematically, centering the main *propositio* around Paul's remarks to Peter in Galatians

2:15-21. Finally, the last chapter looks at some limited applications of the thesis to OT

hermeneutics, specifically in literal and allegorical readings of the Sarah/Hagar incident.

VITA

Douglas Robert Wallaker

EDUCATION
> B.S., Michigan Technological University, 2002
> M.Div., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

ORGANIZATIONS
> Society of Biblical Literature
> The Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT
> Professor of Elementary Greek, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
> Visiting Professor, Romans, Seminário Teológical Batista do Litoral, São Paulo, Brazil, 2015
> Professor, Introduction to the NT II, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
> Course Designer, *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, Charleston Southern University, 2014
> Co-Professor, Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013-2015

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT
> Preaching Pastor, Crossway Christian Church, Bay City, Michigan; 2016-Present
> Interim Preaching Pastor, Highland Park First Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky; 2012-2013
> Lead Pastor, Fairview Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; 2006-2010