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THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST:
AN ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S USE OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Kukwah Philemon Yong
December 2003

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**THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST:
AN ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S USE OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ**

Kukwah Philemon Yong

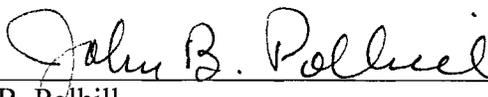
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Date 12/01/03

**THESES Ph.D. .Y61
0199701818494**

To Linda,

my honored fellow heir of the grace of life,

and to my children

Benjamin, Samuel, and Anna,

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ant</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Barnabas</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>1 Clement</i>
<i>Col</i>	<i>Colloquium</i>
ETSP	Evangelical Theological Seminar Papers
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Herm. Man.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate</i>
<i>Herm. Sim.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude</i>
<i>Herm. Vis.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Vision</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Ephesians</i>
<i>Ign. Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Magnesians</i>

<i>Ign. Phld.</i>	<i>Ignatius, Letter to the Philadelphians</i>
<i>Ign. Rom.</i>	<i>Ignatius, Letter to the Romans</i>
<i>Ign. Smyrn.</i>	<i>Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans</i>
<i>Ign. Trall.</i>	<i>Ignatius, Letter to the Trallians</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IVP</i>	<i>InterVarsity Press</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LouvStud</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
<i>n.</i>	<i>note</i>
<i>NKZ</i>	<i>Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Review d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>Sib. Or</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>

<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Trans. G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, 1964.
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>Theology</i>	<i>Theology</i> , London
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PREFACE

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven” (Eccl 3:1). Following in the counsel of the writer of Ecclesiastes, I would say, “There is a time to begin a dissertation and a time to bring it to conclusion.” I am amazed at the Lord’s great faithfulness and renewed mercies each morning (Lam 3:23) in this whole process. Through his saints, the Lord has provided strength and encouragement to stay the course, looking forward to the joyful fruit that lies ahead. While the completion of a dissertation may bring joy, it is nothing compared to inheritance that is reserved for me in heaven (1 Pet 1:4).

How can I thank Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner, my mentor, teacher, advisor, pastor, friend, and godly example? I am grateful to God for causing our paths to cross, and cross again these past nine years. His careful reading and helpful critique made this a better work. Many thanks to Dr. John B. Polhill, who contributed to my love for Paul’s prison epistles, and to Dr. Mark A. Seifrid, who made learning German fun and provided for thought-provoking class sessions on Issues in Pauline theology. Thank you also to Dr. Daniel B. Wallace for reading this dissertation. His concern for accuracy and fairness in argumentation made me slow down and write more carefully. All have set a good scholarly example I wish to emulate.

The library staff at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Luther Seminary in St Paul, Minnesota were knowledgeable and kind in

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My wife, Linda, who values education and loves me enough to see me through thirteen years of it, knows that I am grateful. Thanks for your patience and constant encouragement, and for reading the whole thing! And our children Benjamin, Samuel, and Anna never doubted that Daddy would someday be finished with school. My prayer is that they, too, will love God and treasure his Word.

By His grace and for His glory!

Kukwah Philemon Yong

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Since 1795, there has been an increasing debate over Paul's use of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ¹ (the faith of Jesus Christ) and its equivalents. This phrase appears seven times in Paul's writings:

πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (faith of/in Jesus Christ, Rom 3:22; Gal 3:22);
πίστις Ἰησοῦ (faith of/in Jesus, Rom 3:26);
πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (faith of/in Christ Jesus, Gal 2:16);
πίστις Χριστοῦ (faith of/in Christ, Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9);
πίστις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (faith of/in the Son of God, Gal 2:20).²

At issue is whether to translate the various πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases as “faith in Christ” where Χριστοῦ is taken as an objective genitive³ or as “faith/faithfulness of Christ” thus

¹πίστις Χριστοῦ henceforth.

²A similar phrase appears in Eph 3:12 διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (“through his faith” or “through faith in him” [see appendix 4]). Given that some question the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, we have chosen not to include this as a main text for consideration though evidence from Ephesians and other non-Pauline epistles will be brought to bear on the investigation.

³For example, J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 6th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1880), 115; William Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1895), 81-94; W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 46; Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 121; Ernest Wissmann, *Das Verhältnis von ΠΙΣΤΙΣ und Christesfrömmigkeit bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926), 68, 69; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1932), 48; C. F. D. Moule, “Reply to Torrance,” *ExpTim* 68 (1956-57): 157, 221-22; M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul Épître aux Romains* (Paris: Gabalda, 1950), 72-73; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens et l'Épître aux Colossiens*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Neuchâtel, Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1950), 65; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:365; J. F. Collange, *L'Épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1973), 115; Heinrich Schlier, *Der*

taking Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive.⁴ In other words, what is the relationship of the

Römerbrief, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Frieberg: Herder, 1977), 102, 105; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer, teilband 1: Röm 1-5*. Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 6 (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 88-89, 184-88; Karl Kertelge, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Patmos: Verlag Düsseldorf, 1971), 174-75; I-Jin Loh and Eugene Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1977), 102-03; A. J. Hultgren, "The Πίστις Χριστοῦ Formulation in Paul," *NovT* 22 (1980): 148-63; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 94; J. D. G. Dunn, "Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ," in R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 249-71; idem, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 379-85; idem, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 1:166; idem, *Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 131-41; Roy A. Harrisville III, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Witness of the Fathers," *NovT* 36 (1994): 240-41; C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans: and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 81-97; idem, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 203; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 138-40; Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 101; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 226; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 346; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 184; idem, *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 200; Moisés Silva, "Faith versus Works of the Law in Galatians," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming); idem, *Philippians*, (Chicago: Moody, 1988), 186-88; Jürgen Becker und Ulrich Luz, *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser und Kolosser*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 37, 42; R. Barry Matlock, "Detheologizing the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective," *NovT* 62 (2000): 1-23; idem, "Even the Demons Believe: Paul and Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 315-17.

⁴For example, James MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek of All the Apostolic Epistles* (London: Longman, Hurst, 1795), 1:232; J. P. Lange and F. R. Fay, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1869), 129; J. Haussleiter, "Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der christliche Glaube: Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung des Römerbriefs," *NKZ* 7 (1891):109-45, 205-30; Gerhard Kittel, "Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus," *TSK* 79 (1906): 424; G. Hebert, "'Faithfulness' and 'Faith,'" *Theology* 58 (1955): 373-79; T. F. Torrance, "One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith," *ExpTim* 68 (1957): 111-14; P. Vallotton, *Christ et la Foi* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960), 87-89; R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 148-53; idem, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 83-98; idem, "The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church," in *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 147; G. M. Taylor, "The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians," *JBL* 85 (1966):58-76; George Howard, "Notes On the 'Faith of Christ,'" *HTR* 60 (1967): 459-60; E. R. Goodenough and A. T. Kraabel, "Paul and the Hellenization of Christianity," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 23-68; M. Barth, "The Faith of the Messiah," *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 363-70; idem, "Romans 3:21-31 and the Inclusion of the Gentiles," *HTR* 63 (1970): 223-33; idem, "The 'Faith of Christ,'" *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 121-25; J. Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (London: Tyndale, 1963), 203-04; D. W. B. Robinson, "'Faith of Jesus Christ': A New Testament Debate," *RTR* 29 (1970): 71-81; Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 132-33; L. T. Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 78; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); idem, "Πίστις and Pauline Christology," in

genitive Χριστοῦ to the verbal noun πίστις?⁵

In the last fifty years, many scholars have embraced the position that πίστις Χριστοῦ should be translated as “faith/faithfulness of Christ” even though they differ on the exact meaning of πίστις, especially when it is connected to the genitive Χριστοῦ. Richard Hays believes that πίστις Χριστοῦ is a reference to Jesus’ faith/faithfulness which is simultaneously his obedience to God’s will.⁶ Morna Hooker, on the other hand, sees in the same phrase a reference to Jesus’ obedience in going to the cross as well as the human responding faith.⁷ George Howard believes that the “faith of Christ” is “the

Hays, *Faith*, 272-97; Morna Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 324; Leander E. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 454; David M. Hay, “*Pistis* as ‘Ground for Faith’ in Hellenized Judaism and Paul,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 475; Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 134; D. A. Campbell, “Romans 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum for the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 265-85; idem, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament—Supplement Series 65* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 58-69; Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 201; Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 133-34; John Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith – The Function of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology,” *Colloquium* 30 (1998): 3-25; Ardel B. Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross: Works of the Law and Faith in Galatians 3:1-14” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1992), 176-201; idem, “Galatians 3:22ff – A Crux Interpretum for Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul’s Thought,” *ETSP* (1999): 2-22; B. W. Longenecker, “Πίστις in Rom. 3:25: Neglected Evidence for the ‘Faithfulness of Christ’?” *NTS* 39 (1993): 478-80; G. N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study of Romans 1-4*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament—Supplement Series 39* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 36-38; Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 396-400; J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, *Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 246-77; N. T. Wright, *What St Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 123; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 169; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, *Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995); Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 113-16.

⁵Seifrid argues for Χριστοῦ being a genitive of source (Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 146). For reasons why the discussion is limited to the two categories of subjective and objective genitives, see discussion in appendix 1.

⁶Hays, “πίστις and Pauline Christology,” 274-75.

⁷Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 330-31.

divine faithfulness to the promise to Abraham, that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.”⁸ In contrast to these individuals, Dunn argues that πίστις Χριστοῦ means “faith in Christ” (“justifying faith”) and refers to the believer’s trust in Christ.⁹ These few examples illustrate the diversity of meanings ascribed to the Pauline phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ.¹⁰ Since πίστις Χριστοῦ could be interpreted as “faith in Christ” or “faith/faithfulness of Christ,” the question now is, which of these views best explains what Paul intended when he wrote πίστις Χριστοῦ as the means through which God justifies the ungodly?

Thesis

The history of research shows that much has been written on the subject of the faith of Christ. I now face the challenge of justifying the writing of a dissertation on the subject. Though it may be true that much has been written on this issue, there is no full-length monograph written from the objective genitive point of view. Conversely, there are at least two monographs written from the perspective of the subjective genitive interpretation.¹¹ My aim in this dissertation is to clarify the debate and show which view

⁸George Howard, “Notes and Observations On the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *HTR* 60 (1967): 463.

⁹Dunn, “Once More, Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 269-70.

¹⁰There are several reasons why πίστις Χριστοῦ poses problems for scholars. Lexically, πίστις could mean either “faith” or “faithfulness.” Semantically, there is the question of whether πίστις in the debated passages carries an active sense (to believe, trust), or passive sense (to be faithful), or both in a single usage. Theologically, what are the implications for Pauline theology if one adopts either the objective or subjective genitive view? Stylistically, there is the problem of redundancy if the objective genitive position is accepted. Contextually, how do the various contexts of πίστις Χριστοῦ affect its translation? These points will be treated in different portions of this work.

¹¹For example, Hays, *Faith*; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*.

fits best with the evidence. My working thesis,¹² which I will seek to prove and defend, is that the Pauline phrase, πίστις Χριστου, in its various contexts, is best translated as “faith in Christ” (objective genitive) and not “faith/faithfulness of Christ” (subjective genitive).

History of Research

The history of research on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ is rich and represents attempts by excellent scholars to explain a difficult phrase. Underlying this rich history is a genuine desire to understand Paul correctly. In this section the background of the debate will be sketched in order to acquaint the reader with the issues that have occupied scholars.¹³ The history of research will be divided into the following stages: Before 1950, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990 to the present.

The Debate before 1950

The debate during this period went in three different directions. For example, Haussleiter offers a more academic and exegetical investigation of πίστις Χριστοῦ, taking it as a subjective genitive.¹⁴ Beginning with the expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ

¹²This thesis is a result of my preliminary research, and as a working thesis, it needs to be proven. If in the course of further research I find evidence to the contrary, I will change my position accordingly, but my goal will remain the same: to state and defend the position that fits best with the evidence. I am working under the assumption that if the traditional position (“faith in Christ”) is valid, then it needs to be restated and defended rigorously. Thus my purpose in this dissertation is to provide a detailed investigation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Paul’s letters. Opponents of the traditional position have raised pertinent questions that need to be answered. Can these questions be answered while maintaining an objective genitive reading of the questioned phrases?

¹³The approach here is mainly descriptive, thus extensive critiques of the various views presented are not offered here.

¹⁴Haussleiter, “Der Glaube Jesu Christi,” 109-45, 205-30. Others who argue for the subjective genitive view during this period include Macknight, *New Literal Translation*, 1:232; Lange and Fay, *Romans*, 129; Kittel, “πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,” 424. According to Macknight, πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to the “faith which Jesus Christ has enjoined.” He observes that Χριστοῦ is a genitive of agent

(Rom 3:26) with emphasis on the name Ἰησοῦ he argues that πίστις here is a reference to Jesus' personal faith or faithfulness. Haussleiter's conclusion in Romans 3:26 became the basis for his interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans 3:22. This faith/faithfulness of Christ, according to Haussleiter, is the faith in God which Jesus himself maintained as he faced the cross.¹⁵ Haussleiter proposes the following arguments: (1) It is through the faithfulness of Christ that the righteousness of God is revealed (Rom 3:22) and not by our believing in Jesus. (2) If πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans 3:22 is an objective genitive, then Paul is redundant since in the same verse there is a reference to "those who believe." (3) There is a parallel between Romans 3:26 (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ) and 4:16 (ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ).¹⁶ As a result one cannot say "faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26) and "faith of Abraham" (Rom 4:16).

In 1906, Kittel, noting that Haussleiter's views had been ignored, tried to advance the debate further. He makes arguments similar to those of Haussleiter. For example, he argues that in Romans, πίστις Χριστοῦ falls between two other subjective genitives: πίστις θεοῦ (Rom 3:3) and πίστις Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:12, 16).¹⁷ His position

(Macknight, *A New Literal Translation*, 194). In defining πίστις Χριστοῦ Lange posits that it has the meaning, "Christ's faithfulness to us," or "Christ's believing faithfulness." Lange made two arguments in support of his view. First, our faith cannot be the ground for the revelation of God's righteousness. Second, since πίστις θεοῦ in Rom 3:3 means God's faithfulness, it makes sense that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Rom 3:22 should be translated as "faithfulness of Christ" (Lange and Fay, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 129).

¹⁵Haussleiter, "Der Glaube Jesu Christi," 127.

¹⁶Ibid. See especially pp. 137-45. Throughout the history of the debate, these same arguments have been advanced against the traditional view.

¹⁷Kittel, "πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus," 419.

did not receive wide acceptance mainly because of his attempt in Galatians to argue that Paul did not regard Jesus as the object of faith.¹⁸

Other scholars during this period rejected both the subjective and objective genitive reading of Χριστοῦ.¹⁹ Schläger agrees with Kittel that Paul does not portray Jesus as the object of faith, but he arrives at this conclusion by contending against the authenticity of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in texts that refer to Jesus as the object of faith. In his judgment, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is an interpolation in passages such as Romans 3:22 and 26 as well as in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22.²⁰ Deissmann argues against the view that πίστις Χριστοῦ should be translated as “faith in Christ.” He proposes a new category for the genitive construction. In his view, Χριστοῦ is a “genitive of fellowship” or “mystical genitive.”²¹

A third approach towards describing the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ prior to 1950 insisted that πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to “faith in Christ.”²² Lightfoot, in his

¹⁸Ibid., 428-29. Hays points out that Kittel “unfortunately fell into a tendentious attempt to deny that εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν (Gal 2:16) means, ‘we believed in Jesus Christ’” (Hays, *Faith*, 159).

¹⁹G. Schläger, “Bemerkungen zu Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,” *ZNW* 7 (1906): 356-359; Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. William E. Wilson, 2nd ed. (New York: George H. Doran, 1926), 161-65. The first edition was published in 1911.

²⁰Schläger, “Bemerkungen zu πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,” 356-59.

²¹Deissmann, *Paul*, 162, 163. According to Deissmann, “Faith is something which is accomplished in union of life with the spiritual Christ. That is the meaning of those passages in which Paul connects the preposition ‘in’ with the words ‘faith,’ ‘believe,’ and also of the passages in which the genitival construction appears” (ibid., 162). He further argues that the use of subjective genitive or objective genitive to explain the “faith of Jesus” phrase is insufficient since it fails to realize that Paul uses this phrase in a “wholly peculiar manner” (ibid.). The category, “genitive of fellowship” or the “mystical genitive” is preferred because it expresses a “mystical fellowship with Christ” so that “of Jesus Christ” is the same as “in Jesus Christ” (ibid., 163). “The faith of Christ Jesus is ‘faith in Christ,’ the faith which the Christian has in fellowship with Christ” (ibid.).

²²For example, Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 115; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 81-94; Hatch, *Pauline Idea of Faith*, 46; Burton, *Galatians*, 121; Wissmann, *Das Verhältnis von πίστις*, 68, 69; Lietzmann, *Römer*, 48.

commentary on Galatians, points out that πίστις Χριστοῦ means “faith in Christ” but also warns that faith is only the means and not the source of justification. Sanday and Headlam note the qualitative work done by Haussleiter but find his conclusions unpersuasive. In their view, Paul in Romans 3:22 argues for a “method of acquiring righteousness” which “does not turn upon works but on faith, i.e. [,] on ardent attachment and devotion to Jesus Messiah.”²³ Hatch argues that πίστις Χριστοῦ has the same meaning as πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ and πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστόν.²⁴ Burton makes an argument similar to Hatch’s, and adds that there is clear and unquestionable evidence that πίστις, like ἐλπίς and ἀγάπη, may take an objective genitive such as in Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Colossians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.²⁵

In sum, the arguments against the objective genitive interpretation were effectively made but did not gain wide acceptance. This may be due to the unpersuasive conclusions drawn (as was the case with Kittel), or the method applied toward ascertaining the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ (for example, Haussleiter). For a time (between 1930 and 1950) the controversy seemed to have ceased and the objective genitive translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ (“faith in Christ”) continued to be the accepted reading among scholars. Yet this was not the end of the battle. Already, the foundation had been laid for the debate that was to pick up speed beginning in the 1950s.

²³Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 81. For their summary and response to Haussleiter’s argument, see Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 84.

²⁴Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 46. He defines faith as follows: “Faith, regarded as the acceptance of the word of God or Christ, is the convert’s response to the gospel message under the influence of a divine power working in and through the missionaries, and hence faith is of divine origin. Faith is at once belief, trust, and loyalty” (ibid., 65).

²⁵Burton, *Galatians*, 121; cf. Wissmann, *Das Verhältnis von πίστις*, 68, 69; Lietzmann, *Römer*, 48.

The Debate in the 1950s

The controversy over the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ re-emerged in the 50s with the work of Hebert and Torrance who argued for translating πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faithfulness of Christ.”²⁶ Their work drew responses from Moule and Murray who sought to retain the traditional reading “faith in Christ.”²⁷ The key question for Hebert was “whether the word ‘faith,’ as St. Paul used it, carried a Hebrew rather than a Greek meaning.”²⁸ He argues that in Paul, πίστις is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה meaning “faithfulness” rather than “faith” or “to believe.” With this understanding, Hebert defines πίστις Χριστοῦ as God’s “faithfulness” made manifest in Christ’s human “faithfulness.” He explains that “faith” and “to believe” are not qualities in a man but refer to a man (in his frailty) taking refuge in God who is “firm and steadfast.”²⁹ The Hebrew background of “faith” and the concern to avoid redundancy in Paul forms the basis for Hebert’s conclusions.

Torrance’s contribution consists in his argument that πίστις Χριστοῦ is a “polarized expression” meaning that in the passages where the phrase appears, it refers both to Christ’s faithfulness and man’s answering faith.³⁰ In this light, “faith in Christ”

²⁶Hebert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith,’” 373-79; Torrance, “One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith,” 111-14. There is no indication from the work of these two that they had any knowledge of the arguments made by Haussleiter and Kittel.

²⁷Moule, “Reply to Torrance,” 157, 221-22; Murray, *Romans*, 1:365; cf. Lagrange, *Épître aux Romains*, 72-73; Bonnard, *Philippiens et Colossiens*, 65. Lagrange and Bonnard do not engage in the debate probably because their commentaries were published (1950) before Hebert and Torrance re-ignited the debate.

²⁸Hebert, “Faithfulness and Faith,” 373.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 374.

³⁰Torrance, “One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith,” 221-22. Torrance’s “polarized expression” is the equivalent to what Wallace calls plenary genitive, where the noun in the genitive is subjective as well as objective (Wallace, *Grammar*, 119-21).

and “faithfulness of Christ” are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, our faith in Christ is grounded on the faithfulness of Christ.³¹

Responding to Torrance, Moule charged him with pursuing “a false trail.”³² He insisted that although πίστις could mean faithfulness, it is wrong to see in πίστις Χριστοῦ the idea of Christ’s faithfulness. He argues as follows: (1) grammatically, the genitive could be either subjective or objective; (2) πιστεύω is used with Christ as the object of faith; and (3) πίστις when used without the genitive clearly refers to the faith of the believer.³³ For Moule, the burden of proof lies with those who seek to interpret πίστις differently from πιστεύειν such as in Galatians 2:16. He concludes, “To throw so much weight upon what God in Christ has done is, in the passages adduced by Professor Torrance, seriously to reduce necessary reference to man’s act of will in response to God’s approach.”³⁴

Murray dismisses Torrance’s argument for a “polarized expression,” charging him with “confusing a polarized situation with a ‘polarized expression.’”³⁵ Murray does not deny that πίστις is used with reference to God’s faithfulness but he finds only one instance in the NT where this is clear (Rom 3:3). Furthermore, he does not deny that there are references to Christ’s faithfulness in the Bible. Yet, he writes

The question is not . . . whether in these passages, to which appeal is made, the view that πίστις refers to the faithfulness of God or of Christ would be incompatible with

³¹Ibid., 221.

³²Moule, “Reply to Torrance,” 157.

³³E.g., Gal 3:2, 5.

³⁴Moule, “Reply to Torrance,” 157.

³⁵Murray, *Romans*, 1:365.

biblical doctrine or with Pauline doctrine in particular but whether this finding is borne out by the pertinent New Testament data.³⁶

According to Murray, πίστις Χριστοῦ is best understood as “faith in Christ.” In defending this meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, Murray focuses on the various contexts in which the phrase appears. Seeking to refute Torrance’s concept of “polarized expression,” he argues,

The examination of the evidence has shown, we believe, that what is reflected on in the passages concerned is the faith that is directed to Christ, if we may use the expression, πίστις εἰς Χριστόν or ἐν Χριστῷ. Now, faith that is directed to Christ cannot *consist* in any respect in the faithfulness of Christ himself. This faithfulness resides entirely in Christ as the one to whom faith is directed and it is confusion to inject into the faith itself the faithfulness which belongs to the person to whom the faith is directed and in whom it rests. Therefore, once it is demonstrated that the faith of the believer is reflected on in the passages concerned, that means that the faithfulness of Christ is not included in the faith that is reflected on. In other words, it is one thing to say that our faith always involves a polarized situation; it is another thing altogether to say that faith is a polarized expression.³⁷

Furthermore, even if one allows Torrance’s polarized expression, Murray asks how it can hold true in places such as Romans 1:17 and 3:22 since there (according to Torrance’s own view) we have a reference to the faithfulness of Christ (διὰ πίστεως) and the faith of men (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας). One could perceive of πίστις referring to the faithfulness of God or Christ in one instance and in another to the faith of human beings but not to both at the same time. He then concludes that Torrance’s argument is not supported by the evidence.³⁸

³⁶Ibid. For Murray’s defense of the traditional reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, see Murray, *Romans*, 1:363-74.

³⁷Ibid., 1:373.

³⁸Ibid., 1:374.

The Debate in the 1960s

In the 1960s the debate began to gain gradual momentum as more scholars argued for reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ. Barr's work stands out as the most serious refutation of Hebert and Torrance's argument from a linguistic viewpoint.³⁹ Barr argues against Hebert's thesis that the Greek πίστις in Paul carries a Hebrew meaning of "faithfulness" which applies "properly" to God and not to man. He questions Hebert's claim that the words "faith" and "to believe" in the OT do not describe a quality in man.⁴⁰ In the end, Barr sees no validity in the evidence put forward by Hebert and Torrance. He was not concerned with the theological arguments made by Hebert and Torrance, but with the linguistic justification for their conclusions. He writes, "the linguistic portions of the essays by Hebert and Torrance contain practically no facts which are not used or presented in extremely misleading ways."⁴¹

Barr's criticism of Hebert and Torrance did not stop the push for a subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, since he only refutes the linguistic grounds of their arguments and not their theological arguments.⁴² Putting Barr aside, the 1960s witnessed much progress for the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁴³

³⁹James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 161-205. Some commentators continued to hold to the objective genitive interpretation, but did not respond to the debate as Barr did. See William Hendriksen, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 166; Joachim Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 194.

⁴⁰Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, 163. Barr appeals to linguistic evidence to show that Hebert is wrong in this claim. He points out that in 2 Kgs 12:16 and 22:7 אֱמוּנָה is applied to a group of men thus calling into question the claim that the word is only used with reference to God.

⁴¹Ibid., 205. See his detailed discussion on pp. 161-205.

⁴²Cf. Hays, *Faith*, 146-47.

⁴³Prominent advocates of this position include Vallotton, *Christ et la Foi*, 87-89; Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, 148-53; Taylor, "The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians,"

Longenecker insists that the most natural translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ is “the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” which he defines as Christ’s perfect obedience.⁴⁴ In 1966, Taylor, without rejecting the subjective genitive interpretation, proposed a unique rendition for the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. He drew parallels between Paul’s use of πίστις and Roman juristic laws. In defining the faith of Christ, he writes,

I suggest that this particular πίστις—together with the πίστις of certain other passages not specifically qualified by a genitive—is the *fidei commissum* of Roman law; and that Paul uses this concept to explain, in juristic terms, how the inheritance of Abraham is transmitted, through Jesus Christ, both to Jews and Gentiles and upon precisely the same terms.⁴⁵

Taylor warns, on theological grounds, against any view that holds to justification by faith in Christ since it gives to man too much function and too little to Christ.⁴⁶

Goodenough, in an article published posthumously, linked the “faith of Jesus” with Abraham’s faith in Romans 4. Πίστις Χριστοῦ is not “faith in Christ” but “faith of Christ.”⁴⁷ He defines “faith of Christ” as follows: “This faith of Christ is simply his trusting that the cross would not be the end, and that God would save him from death because God is *pistos*.”⁴⁸

58-76; Howard, “Notes On the ‘Faith of Christ,’” 459-60; Goodenough and Kraabel, “Paul and the Hellenization of Christianity,” 23-68; Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” 363-70; Bligh, *Galatians*, 203-04.

⁴⁴Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, 150. See pp. 148-53 for his overall argumentation.

⁴⁵Taylor, “The Function of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians,” 58.

⁴⁶Taylor argues that if πίστις Χριστοῦ is “faith in Christ, then faith becomes a substitute for works and hence a precondition of salvation. (ibid., 75).

⁴⁷Goodenough, “Paul and the Hellenization of Christianity,” 45.

⁴⁸Ibid., 45. Goodenough does not deny that believers must exercise faith. In his view, when believers identify with Christ, they are given the faith of Christ. It is the transfer of this faith of Christ to believers that gives them hope of immortality.

M. Barth, arguing from the OT background of πίστις, calls attention to the fact that, grammatically, πίστις Χριστοῦ could mean “faith/faithfulness of Christ” especially since in Romans 3:3 τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ is clearly a reference to God’s faithfulness.⁴⁹ He argues as follows: (1) Paul appeals to the OT background of אֱמוּנָה when he wants to explain what he means by faith. (2) Jesus’ obedience is equal to his faith since in Paul the two are identical. (3) Just as Abraham’s faith is representative faith, so too is Jesus’ faith. (4) The πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase is placed in contrast to “works of the law.” Hence, the alternative to justification by “works of the law” is not our believing but Jesus’ “faithfulness.” (5) If the traditional position is upheld, then Paul is redundant since in passages where he talks about the “faith of Jesus” he also mentions “faith in Christ.” He concludes that stronger arguments favor the subjective genitive reading. According to Barth, there is indeed a place for the believer’s faith since God’s faithfulness calls for faith. This is why Paul can say that he lives by faith. But when Paul wants to explain justification, Jesus’ faith is the means and man’s faith is the purpose and response. This interpretation keeps one from viewing faith as “a cheap condition or means of justification.”⁵⁰ Barth’s contribution is significant in that he lays out the arguments that would be repeated in defense of the subjective genitive up to the present time. Another significant factor is his definition of “faith of Jesus” which he sees as his obedience, since the two are identical in Paul.

⁴⁹M. Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” 363, 364. Though he holds to “faith/faithfulness” translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ he is careful to note that “the traditional interpretation, according to which man is justified only by his faith in Christ, has occasionally been misrepresented, both by friend and foe, as if it meant that faith is but one work the meritorial value of which replaces the merits of fulfilling ceremonial (and moral) laws” (ibid., 364). Such misunderstanding, according to Barth, “does not prove the traditional translation of Gal 2:16 and other passages to be erroneous” (ibid.).

⁵⁰Ibid., 369.

In 1967, Howard made one of the strongest grammatical arguments against reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ.” He says that

The construction of πίστις followed by the genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun occurs 24 times in the Pauline Corpus not counting the places where πίστις Χριστοῦ and its equivalents appear. Twenty times this construction refers to the faith of Christians, individually or collectively, one time to the faith (fulness) of God (Rom 3:3), two times to the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:12, 16), and one time to any one who has his faith reckoned to him for righteousness (Rom 4:5). In all cases the phrase refers to the faith of the individual, never faith in the individual.⁵¹

Additionally, Howard argues that when Paul wants to indicate the faith of Christ, he uses the prepositions διὰ and ἐκ but when he has the faith of the believer in view, he uses εἰς with the accusative. This is made clear in Galatians 2:16 where Paul makes a distinction between man’s faith and Christ’s faith with the use of these prepositions.⁵² He defines the “faith of Jesus” as the link between God’s faithfulness to the promise made to Abraham and the inclusion of Gentiles in that promise. That is, Christ’s faithfulness is the means by which God’s covenant enacted with Abraham (i.e., all the nations will be blessed through him) becomes a reality for the Gentiles.⁵³

While most scholars in the 1960s supported the subjective genitive interpretation, a few proposed different ways of understanding the phrase. For Hans Urs von Balthasar, “faith of Christ” expresses a mystic relationship between the believer and Christ.⁵⁴ For some, the faith of Jesus means that we are saved both by Christ’s fidelity in

⁵¹Howard, “Notes on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” 459-60.

⁵²Ibid., 460.

⁵³Ibid., 460-61: Howard posits that “Luther appears to be the first in modern times to translate the construction as an objective genitive. He consistently renders it as *Glaube an Christum*,” even though translations contemporary with Luther rendered it “faith of Christ.”

⁵⁴Hans Urs von Balthasar, *La Foi du Christ* (Paris: Aubier, Montaigne, 1966), 38-40. Balthasar is dependent on Deissmann for his view.

carrying out the will of his Father and by our trusting response to the faithfulness of Christ. Thus our faith is a participation in Christ's faith which is his obedience in fulfilling his commission.⁵⁵ Others saw in the phrase neither a pure subjective nor an objective genitive. Rather, it refers to faith that has its source and ground in Jesus Christ.⁵⁶ Some, not wanting to draw a distinction between the objective and subjective genitives, argue that the two are not mutually exclusive.⁵⁷ In sum, the 1960s saw a significant progress in the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁵⁸

The Debate in the 1970s

The debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ was less intense in the 1970s. A few scholars continued to make a case for reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith/faithfulness of Christ” but most commentators retained the traditional position (“faith in Christ”).⁵⁹ Robinson contends that πίστις Χριστοῦ is a quality possessed by

⁵⁵Bligh, *Galatians*, 203-04. See chap. 6 for more interaction with Bligh.

⁵⁶Gerhard Ebeling, “The Question of the Historical Jesus,” in Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 303. See also Adolf Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 5th ed (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1963), 586-87.

⁵⁷Franz Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth, 1961), 99-100; Henrik Ljungman, *Pistis, A Study of Its Presuppositions and Its Meaning in Pauline Use* (Lund: Lund, Gleerup, 1964), 37-47. See especially pp. 38-40, 44, and 47.

⁵⁸Another treatment of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the 1960s that has not gained wide acceptance due to its striking conclusions is that of Vallotton, *Le Christ et la Foi*. He argues that God is faithful and exercises faith in the man Jesus Christ; that Jesus also believes in God and obeys him perfectly, and human faith is Christ's faith or God's faith working in us. See especially his definition of faith on p. 98. Hooker has praised the work as “one of the most notable expositions of the ‘subjective-genitive’ interpretation, and one which is based on exegesis of the text.” She complains that Vallotton's analysis has been ignored in recent discussion. See Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 321 n. 3. On the other hand, Moule, in a book review, finds no biblical foundation for the conclusions drawn by Vallotton. Moule comments, “To say that man's faith depends on God's *faithfulness* is biblical and intelligible. To say that it depends on God's *faith* is odd.” See Moule, review of *Le Christ et la Foi* by Pierre Vallotton, *SJTh* 14 (1961): 420.

⁵⁹See, for example, Collange, *Philippiens*, 115; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 102, 105; Wilckens, *Der Römer*, 1:88-89, 184-88; Kertelge, *Römer*, 174-75; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:203; Gerhard Barth, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), 60-61.

Christ.⁶⁰ Christ's πίστις, according to Robinson, is "his firmness, exhibited in his self-giving and his passion."⁶¹ Robinson does not limit his understanding of Jesus' faith to the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. He claims that if this phrase means "faithfulness of Christ," then it is likely that in places where πίστις occurs without a genitive modifier, the reference is also to the faith or faithfulness of Christ if the context allows it. His method was to observe the use of πίστις in Paul's earliest letters (1 and 2 Thessalonians) as a key to interpreting the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases in Romans and Galatians. In the end, Robinson does not find any instance of πίστις followed by a genitive clearly used in an objective sense, neither in Paul nor in the rest of the NT.

Howard continues to argue for the subjective genitive position, this time focusing on Romans 3:21-31. In his judgment, any examination of Romans 3:21-31 that focuses on the atonement does not do justice to the purpose of the passage. He argues that πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in Romans 3:26 is best translated as the "faithfulness of Jesus." Also, πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in Romans 3:22 shows that it is through the faithfulness of Christ Jesus (i. e., his loyalty to the promise of God given to Abraham) that all nations receive God's grace.⁶²

A major contribution to the debate in the 1970s was by Williams. He focuses on the phrase διὰ πίστεως in Romans 3:25 and argues that it refers to Jesus' faith. A drawback for this understanding, he points out, is that πίστις as Jesus' faith is not found

⁶⁰Robinson, "Faith of Jesus Christ," 71-81.

⁶¹Ibid., 78.

⁶²Howard, "Romans 3:21-26 and the Inclusion of Gentiles," 231; idem, "The Faith of Christ," 212-15; idem, *Crisis in Galatia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 57-65.

in the NT.⁶³ Yet, he insists that πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot mean “faith in Christ” since Paul would be redundant and the revelation of God’s righteousness would be dependent upon faith. Unique to Williams is the equating of πίστις Χριστοῦ with πίστις in Galatians 3:23, thus making it hard to see how “faith in Christ” is something that was to be revealed.⁶⁴ Though Williams argues against taking πίστις Χριστοῦ as faith in Christ, he equally challenges the subjective genitive reading. In his opinion, the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ “in Paul’s letters is too closely analogous to that of πίστις (when it is obvious that πίστις is the believer’s faith) to allow one to understand that phrase as a reference to Christ’s own faith.” Additionally, the juxtaposition of πίστις Χριστοῦ and “works of the law” in Galatians 2:16 suggests that πίστις Χριστοῦ is something that a man does or participates in. In this light, it cannot simply be rendered as “Christ’s own faith.”⁶⁵

Williams’ starting point is Galatians 3:23, where he sees a close link between Jesus and faith. He then suggests that “faith” and “Christ” designate the same event so that the coming of “faith” and the coming of “Christ” happened simultaneously. Thus, in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ, Paul “means specifically that faith which Christ brought.”⁶⁶

The 1980s

After a slower period in the 1970s the debate gained momentum again in the 1980s. More arguments were made in defense of both sides of the debate, especially the

⁶³S. K. Williams, *Jesus’ Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1975), 47.

⁶⁴Ibid., 47-48.

⁶⁵Ibid., 48.

⁶⁶Ibid. Williams goes on to explain how his view works in Phil 3:7-9.

subjective genitive interpretation. Early in the 1980s, Hultgren defended the objective genitive position on the basis of syntactical observations and exegetical insights.⁶⁷

Syntactically, he argues that the article is lacking before both nouns whenever Paul uses the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase to indicate objective genitive, but in places where πίστις is followed by a genitive indicating subjective genitive, the article is “invariably present” before πίστις. Exegetically, he examines πίστις Χριστοῦ in its various contexts.

According to Hultgren, Paul does use πίστις to refer to God’s faithfulness, but the question is whether in the passages concerned, Paul has in mind the “faithfulness of Christ” or the “believer’s faith” in Christ. Though arguing for the objective genitive interpretation, Hultgren suggests that Paul blends the objective genitive with the genitive of quality which functions adjectivally. He describes his position as follows:

When Paul uses the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation, he is not referring to Christ’s faithfulness. The center of interest is the faith of the believer, and that is particularly faith ‘of’ (or ‘in’) Christ. To emphasize the adjectival function of Χριστοῦ, one can speak (rather awkwardly) of ‘Christic faith’ or (more clearly) ‘faith which is in and of Christ,’ i.e., the faith of the believer which comes forth as Christ is proclaimed in the gospel (cf. Rom. 10:8, 17; Gal. 3:2, 5).⁶⁸

Johnson joins forces with those who reject the objective genitive position. In his view, based on exegetical grounds, “a subjective genitive reading of *pistis Christou* . . . is not only sometimes possible, but at times (as in Romans 3:21-26) necessary.”⁶⁹ The key to understanding the phrase, according to Johnson, is its placement between Romans 1:17 and 5:18-19. With reference to Romans 5, which addresses the obedience of Christ, Johnson writes,

⁶⁷Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation,” 248-63.

⁶⁸Ibid., 257.

⁶⁹Johnson, “Romans 3.21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” 78.

And by this obedience of Jesus, I suggest, Paul means, simply, Jesus' faith. The human faith of Jesus is certainly not a virtue, nor is it simply a matter of trust and fidelity. For Paul, it is essentially obedience . . . Rom 5:19 is a plain explication of Rom 3:21-26.⁷⁰

Thus Romans 1:17 and 5:18-19 inform Johnson's exegesis of 3:21-26. He admits that even the subjective genitive approach faces problems in 3:22, 25, and 26 but these are small compared to the problems facing an objective genitive reading. It is the faith of Jesus, understood as his obedience, which forms the basis for the response of faith on the part of the believer.⁷¹

Hays weighed in significantly on the debate in 1983 with the publication of his *Faith of Jesus Christ*. To understand Hays' argument for the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, one has to accept (even only theoretically) his view of the narrative structure of Galatians 3:1-4:11, especially the summaries of the narrative patterns of Paul's christological formulations in Galatians 3:14 and 22. Beginning with two narrative summaries in Galatians 3 (3:14 and 22) he argues that these summaries "seem to speak of πίστις as the power or quality which enables Christ to carry out his mission of deliverance." It is this meaning of πίστις as a power or quality in Christ that he seeks to defend in his investigation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.

Why does Hays begin with Galatians 3 in order to understand the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16? He reasons that Galatians 2:15-21 is a condensed summary of what Paul intends to argue in the whole letter. This being the case, Hays draws two conclusion: First, Galatians 2:16 cannot be the point of departure for

⁷⁰Ibid., 89.

⁷¹Ibid., 87, 89.

interpreting the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. Second,

There is a sense in which all of Galatians 3 and 4 can be read as Paul's "exegesis" of the concise authoritative formulations of 2:16. If it is true that phrases such as ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ are "formulaic summaries," then we must seek to unfold their meaning by seeing how Paul uses them in his exposition. Otherwise, we run the risk of merely reading our preconceptions into them.⁷²

Hays advances two theses in his examination of πίστις in Galatians 3. The first thesis is that Paul does not emphasize human faith in any of these passages (Gal 3:2, 3:11, and 3:22). The second is that Paul does not at all speak of Jesus as the object of faith in Galatians 3.⁷³

In his analysis of the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ he draws attention to Galatians 3:22 as the starting point and argues against the traditional view on two grounds: first, it makes Paul redundant, and second, the phrase cannot be legitimately translated as "faith in Jesus Christ."⁷⁴ This latter point is supported by grammatical and theological considerations.⁷⁵ Hays does not limit the definition of Jesus' faith to one particular meaning. The faith of Jesus refers to his death (in light of Phil 2:8 and Rom 5:8), his obedience (cf. Rom 5:19), and the power that enables him to carry out the mission set before him.⁷⁶ This faith of Jesus is at the same time the "key to his inheritance of life and the promises."⁷⁷ The faith of Jesus is the means through which all

⁷²Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 123.

⁷³Ibid., 124. Hays does not deny that Paul speaks of Jesus as the object of faith. He only questions whether the places where Paul speaks of Jesus as the object of faith should determine the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ (ibid., 123).

⁷⁴Ibid., 142.

⁷⁵See Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 148-52 for his detailed discussion.

⁷⁶Ibid., xii, xxx, 152, 154, 156.

⁷⁷Ibid., 138.

are justified.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase is “the demonstration of God’s righteousness, God’s πίστις.”⁷⁹ According to Hays, “. . . ‘faith in Christ’ is not the most natural translation of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.”⁸⁰ Otherwise one risks turning faith into a kind of work.⁸¹

Others who contributed to the debate in the 1980s in support of the subjective genitive include Williams and Morna Hooker. Williams sees Galatians 3:22-25 as key to understanding Paul’s use of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁸² He contends that, for Paul, the phrase refers to the faith that is Christ’s and is expressed in his absolute trust and obedience. The believer’s faith is Christ’s faith. This, he explains, is the relationship to God that Christ exemplifies. Thus,

For both Christ and the believer, faith is total obedience grounded in absolute reliance upon God. . . . For the apostle Paul, faith is that way of responding to God which is now a reality because at a particular moment in the fullness of time Jesus trusted and obeyed. When Paul wishes to direct focal attention to the source, the actualizer, of this faith, he uses the phrase *pistis Christou*. When he wishes to emphasize the commitment of persons who have shared Christ’s death and now live ‘in Christ,’ he can use the noun *pistis* absolutely.⁸³

In 1989, Hooker sought to explicate the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ which she argues must be understood in light of Galatians 3:22. According to Hooker, the promise given to Abraham is ratified on the basis of Christ’s faith. This faith of Christ is his obedience in going to the cross. She examines the use of πίστις in Galatians 3 and

⁷⁸Ibid., 141.

⁷⁹Ibid., xxxiii.

⁸⁰Ibid., 147.

⁸¹Ibid., 120.

⁸²S. K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 48 (1987): 446-47.

⁸³Ibid.

Philippians 3 and concludes that logic suggests that Paul intended the subjective genitive reading in his use of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁸⁴ Hooker does not deny the need for responding faith. She sees in the phrase a “concentric expression,” in which Jesus’ faith necessarily includes “the answering faith of the believers, who claim that faith as their own.”⁸⁵ She explains the believer’s responding faith as a response to what God has done in Christ. Hence, our faith responds to Christ’s faith and claims it as its own.⁸⁶

Keck insists that by seeing πίστις Χριστοῦ as Jesus’ fidelity, unwarranted awkwardness is removed from Paul’s statement thereby clarifying the role of Jesus in salvation.⁸⁷ According to Keck, reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” brings about two odd results: it creates an “un-Pauline wooden redundancy” and separates Christ from justification thus placing the emphasis on human believing. These problems are removed if one reads “faithfulness” of Christ in the various passages.

It seems that in the 1980s the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ continued to gain more support from scholars, especially with the publication of Hays’ monograph (*Faith of Jesus Christ*). The traditional reading “faith in Christ” continued to be assumed by most commentators.⁸⁸ Hultgren appears to be the only one

⁸⁴Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 321-42: Hooker puts forth different points in support of her argument. She argues that in all the passages where πίστις Χριστοῦ appear, (1) they all contain a reference to Jesus meaning that Paul is concerned with the activity of the earthly Jesus. (2) They all refer to πίστις Χριστοῦ as ground for the believer’s existence. (3) All the passages have a reference to the believer’s faith which would make Paul redundant if πίστις Χριστοῦ meant “faith in Christ.”

⁸⁵Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 341.

⁸⁶Ibid., 338.

⁸⁷Keck, “Jesus’ in Romans,” 454.

⁸⁸Käsemann, *Romans*, 94; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:166; Bruce, *Galatians*, 138-40; Silva, *Philippians*, 186-88.

who sought to defend the objective genitive reading in his article, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation.”

In terms of method, grammatical considerations continued to play a role in the debate, though most agreed that grammar alone would not solve the problem. Also, theological and stylistic concerns continued to be the driving force behind the arguments for the subjective genitive view. Attempts to interpret the “faith of Jesus” in its contexts were made as well. Hays, and to some extent Hooker, sought to discern the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the structure of Galatians as a whole. The question remains: does their contextual analysis justify the conclusions they drew?⁸⁹

The Debate from 1990 to the Present

At the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in 1991, the Pauline Theology group debated the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. The debate was between Hays who defended the subjective genitive position and Dunn who made the case for the objective genitive position. Hays states his argument as follows:

The gospel story depicts Jesus as the divinely commissioned protagonist who gives himself up to death on a cross in order to liberate humanity from bondage (Gal 1:4; 2:20; 3:13-14; 4:4-7). His death, in obedience to the will of God, is simultaneously a loving act of faithfulness to his covenant promise to Abraham. Paul’s use of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and other similar phrases should be understood as summary allusions to this story, referring to Jesus’ fidelity in carrying out this mission.⁹⁰

According to Hays, Jesus’ obedience is “simultaneously” his act of faith/faithfulness. He also sees Romans 5:12-19 as an explanation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Romans 3:21-26. Though he argues that syntax favors the subjective genitive reading, he

⁸⁹We are going to interact in more detail with Hays’ method in our discussion of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians.

⁹⁰Hays, Πίστις and Pauline Christology,” 274.

nonetheless agrees that syntax alone is inconclusive, leaving the interpretation of the phrase to be “governed by larger judgments about the shape and logic of Paul’s thought concerning faith, Christ, and salvation.”⁹¹

In his endeavor to show that the subjective genitive view of πίστις Χριστοῦ makes better sense in Romans 3:21-26, Hays maintains that “obedience of faith” in Romans 1:5 is an exegetical construction equating the two nouns “faith” and “obedience.” This is further supported in Romans 5:12-21 in the Adam-Christ contrast. Here too he sees Christ’s obedience as his faithfulness and concludes that the “faith of Jesus” in Romans 3:21-26 is Jesus’ faithfulness in going to the cross.⁹²

In 1993, B. W. Longenecker also argued for the subjective genitive position. He maintains that “within the debate, one important piece of evidence continues to be overlooked or undervalued: the πίστις of Rom 3:25.”⁹³ B. Longenecker argues that in Romans 3:25a, διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως is an original part of the quoted material and not an insertion by Paul.⁹⁴ He concludes from this that πίστις in verse 25a is describing Christ’s faithfulness. It cannot be the believer’s faith since “it would break apart the otherwise cohesive unit, ἰλαστήριον ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι.”⁹⁵ Taking πίστις as “Christ’s

⁹¹Ibid., 277.

⁹²Ibid., 282-84. Hays also remarks that “The parallelism between [Romans] 3:26 and 4:16 is a fatal embarrassment for all interpreters who seek to treat Ἰησοῦ an objective genitive.”

⁹³B. Longenecker, “Πίστις in Rom. 3:25,” 478.

⁹⁴Ibid., 479.

⁹⁵Ibid.

faithfulness,” all three terms in verse 25a (ἰλαστήριον, πίστις, and αἷμα) describe “Jesus’ death on the cross.”⁹⁶

Dunn presents the other side of the debate and refutes the arguments made by Hays and Hooker.⁹⁷ He agrees that the theology of the subjective genitive view is attractive, powerful, and important. This is especially true as it relates to the humanity of Christ. Yet the question is not about the humanity of Christ but what Paul meant by the phrase, πίστις Χριστοῦ. In Dunn’s view, Paul intended for his readers to hear it as “faith in Christ.” Dunn advances his arguments along three lines. First, the syntactical arguments do not resolve the issue, since there are clear cases where the objective genitive is used in the NT (Phil 3:8-9; Rom 10:2; Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16). Second, the absence of the article in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ which is “almost invariably present” if πίστις is accompanied by a subjective genitive. Third, the usage of the “faith in Christ” constructions in the deutero-Pauline letters. He concludes

In short, not too much significance can be read out of the form of the phrase; though the lack of the definite article does seem to give some support to the inference that whoever’s is the faith in view in the Pauline phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ, it would not be understood in the earliest Christian circles as ‘the faith of Christ’; and the relative absence from the undisputed Paulines of other phrases denoting ‘faith in Christ’ may indicate that πίστις Χριστοῦ filled that function for Paul.⁹⁸

According to Dunn, there are good grammatical reasons for affirming the objective genitive reading and rejecting the subjective genitive position. He asserts that “faith in

⁹⁶Ibid. From his understanding of πίστις in 3:25a, B. Longenecker believes that it resolves the dilemma of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation. It seems to him that Paul included the early Christian formula into his argument because it speaks both to God’s righteousness and to the faithfulness of Christ (ibid.).

⁹⁷Dunn, “Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 249-71; idem, *Theology of Paul*, 379-85.

⁹⁸Ibid., 256.

Christ” makes good sense in Paul’s line of thought. This is more so in light of the lack of any clear reference to the “faith of Jesus” outside of the passages in question.⁹⁹

Dunn’s grammatical argument has been criticized (briefly) by Wallace.

Wallace responds to Dunn’s argument that “πίστις in the NT takes an objective gen.

when both nouns are anarthrous; it takes a subjective gen. when both are articular.”¹⁰⁰

According to Wallace, this argument has no weight for two reasons: first, the examples

Dunn gives have a possessive pronoun in the genitive case “which almost always requires

the head noun to have an article.” Second, the πίστις Χριστοῦ texts occur in

prepositional phrases which tend to leave out the article. For these reasons, there is not

much to commend the objective genitive reading. Wallace finds more favorable

arguments for the subjective genitive though they still face some weaknesses. He

concludes that to speak of the faith/faithfulness of Christ is not to deny faith in Christ.

He writes,

The faith/faithfulness of Christ is not a denial of faith in Christ as a Pauline concept (for the idea is expressed in many of the same contexts, only with the verb πιστεύω rather than the noun), but implies that the object of faith is a worthy object, for he himself is faithful.¹⁰¹

In 1995, Wallis continued the debate in favor of the subjective genitive reading.¹⁰² His goal was to assess whether there was an interest in “the faith of Jesus” in early Christian traditions. He examines the use of πίστις in early Judaism, the Synoptic

⁹⁹Ibid., 269. For Dunn’s detailed interaction with Hays and Hooker on the use of πίστις in Galatians, see Dunn, “Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 257-61.

¹⁰⁰Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 115-16.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 116.

¹⁰²Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*.

Gospels, the Pauline and the deutero-Pauline epistles, Hebrews, Revelation, and extra-biblical sources. His purpose is to “assess whether early Christian traditions bear witness to interest in the faith of Jesus Christ and, if they do, to ask why?” Wallis’ approach is mainly theological. He asks of Paul, “Could Paul have made reference to the faith of Jesus Christ?” He argues that Paul saw Jesus’ death as an act of obedience and rejects the view that one is justified by faith since it makes faith another work. Based on theological concerns, he agrees with others who support the subjective genitive reading that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans, Galatians, and Philippians refers to Jesus’ faith/faithfulness and not faith in him. The faith of the believer is a participation in the faith of Christ.¹⁰³

At the same time, there were some who continued to defend the traditional position. Roy A. Harrisville III investigates how the church fathers understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. He focuses on the patristic renderings of πίστις Χριστοῦ and found that their use fell in three categories: (1) ambiguous cases, (2) subjective genitive, and (3) objective genitive. He summarizes his findings as follows:

It would seem that when the Fathers talk unequivocally of a subjective faith, they do so in using the phrase πίστις αὐτοῦ. However, when employing the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation, there is no clear and unambiguous indication of any subjective understanding. The contexts in which the phrase is found admit of no such interpretation. On the other hand, there is clear evidence in both Greek and Latin authors of an understanding of the phrase in an objective sense.¹⁰⁴

Harrisville’s contribution is important in the sense that he helps us see how those for whom Greek was an everyday language would have understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ

¹⁰³Others who argue in favor of the subjective genitive reading are Campbell, “Romans 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 265-85; Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith,” 3-25; Caneday, *Curse of the Law and the Cross*, 176-201; idem, “Galatians 3:22ff – A Crux Interpretum,” 2-22.

¹⁰⁴Harrisville, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 240-41.

phrase.¹⁰⁵ He finds it significant that there is no clear instance in which the Fathers saw in the phrase a reference to Christ's faith/faithfulness. The witness of the Fathers thus favors the objective genitive rendering of πίστις Χριστοῦ.¹⁰⁶

Another defender of the traditional position is Cranfield.¹⁰⁷ While admitting that the concept of "the faith of Christ" or "the faithfulness of Christ" cannot be simply ruled out as incompatible with the thinking of the early church, Cranfield asks whether in Paul's use of πίστις he had in mind Jesus' faith/faithfulness.¹⁰⁸ He writes, "In the absence of any clear statement that Jesus 'believed', 'had faith', it is surely difficult to accept that Jesus' faith was as important for Paul or for the early church generally as some recent writers have maintained."¹⁰⁹ Cranfield makes his arguments for "faith in Christ" via interaction with Wallis' arguments for "faith/faithfulness of Christ."¹¹⁰

In his commentary on Romans, Schreiner examines the subjective genitive arguments in his commentary and concludes that though the subjective arguments are appealing, "they do not contain enough persuasive force to overturn the objective genitive interpretation."¹¹¹ According to Schreiner, there are four important reasons that

¹⁰⁵Cf. Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 30. Silva has pointed out that since the Greek fathers had no problems understanding πίστις Χριστοῦ as "faith in Jesus" (objective genitive), ". . . weighty arguments are needed to counter this evidence" (ibid.).

¹⁰⁶Harrisville, "πίστις Χριστοῦ," 241.

¹⁰⁷Cranfield, *On Romans*, 81-97.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁰For a systematic response to the major arguments made by Wallis, see Cranfield, *On Romans*, 84-97.

¹¹¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 182; cf. Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory*, 200.

argue against the subjective genitive reading. First, there are many passages in Romans and Galatians that refer to the faith of believers. Second, there is no unambiguous evidence that Paul spoke of Jesus as faithful or believing. Third, Paul clearly makes references to Jesus as the object of faith. Fourth, the reading “faith in Christ” makes the best sense in the flow of Paul’s thought in Romans 3:21-4:25.¹¹²

In 2000 and 2002, Matlock and Seifrid brought additional insights to the ongoing debate.¹¹³ Matlock makes a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion. He approaches the debate from a lexical semantic point of view and in the end he defends the objective genitive interpretation. He questions Hays’ contention that Paul does not distinguish between “faith” and “faithfulness.”¹¹⁴ After surveying the senses of πίστις presented in the NT, he asks how one should go about distinguishing one sense from another. In such cases, context should decide which meaning is intended. Therefore, statistics will not be helpful.¹¹⁵ Matlock analyzes the uses of πίστις found in the lexicons and argues strongly that the sense of πίστις advocated by the subjective genitive interpretation does not “present itself.”¹¹⁶ In the end, the question remains how one should decide the sense of πίστις in a given context? His answer, “from the company it keeps.”¹¹⁷

¹¹²See his detailed discussion of these points in Schreiner, *Romans*, 183-86.

¹¹³Matlock, “The πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” 1-23; idem, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 315-17; Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, 139-46.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 5-6. Hays has recently responded to Matlock’s arguments in his second edition of *The Faith of Jesus Christ*. See pp. xlv-xlvii.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁷Ibid. Matlock’s second article, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 315-17, consists of systematic responses to arguments made for the subjective genitive position. He then argues for “reconceptualizing the

Seifrid, while joining forces with those who reject the subjective genitive interpretation, gives a different grammatical analysis of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. After providing arguments against the reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith” or “faithfulness” of Christ, Seifrid turns next to the phrase in question.¹¹⁸ He emphasizes Paul’s choice of the particular phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ when he could have used a prepositional phrase to indicate the object of faith. Focusing on the context in which the phrase appears in sorting out the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ,¹¹⁹ Seifrid concludes that Paul “uses the genitive relation [πίστις Χριστοῦ] to express the basis of faith and therewith its character.”¹²⁰ According to Seifrid, the genitive Χριστοῦ is a genitive of source or a “qualifying” genitive.

We have to do here with a “qualifying” genitive, which is roughly parallel to Paul’s usage of the genitive in “the word of Christ,” “the gospel of Christ,” “the truth of Christ,” “the law of Christ” and the like. In speaking of “the faith of Christ,” Paul points to the cross and resurrection as the ground of faith, the decisive act of God in which “faith” has come into the world as a reality and demand. He sets forth Christ as the exclusive, all-determining source of faith.¹²¹

Regardless of what one may think of Seifrid’s approach, it is clear that he rejects the objective genitive reading and sees pitfalls with the subjective genitive interpretation.

πίστις Χριστοῦ debate” (ibid., 314-18). See chap. 4 for interaction with his views. In a third article, “Πίστις in Galatians 3:26: Neglected Evidence for ‘Faith in Christ?’” *NTS* 49 (2003): 433-39 Matlock argues for the objective genitive view base on the variant reading of Gal 3:26 in P⁴⁶. See our interaction with his argument in chap. 6.

¹¹⁸Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness*, 140-43. Seifrid makes his arguments against a subjective genitive reading from several angles. For example, he argues from the point of view of the New Testament authors, who had no problem speaking of Jesus as the object of faith. Also, he points to the fact that Paul’s audience understood that God’s work in Christ is the object of faith, something Paul presupposed as he wrote to them. He also argues that faith itself is a work of God in us through the gospel. Thus it cannot be seen as a work accomplished by humans.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 145-46.

¹²⁰Ibid., 146.

¹²¹Ibid.

We will need to examine if the genitive of source or “qualifying” genitive provides the correct grammatical relationship between πίστις and Χριστοῦ.¹²²

Conclusion

If the history of the debate is any indication, the question of how to interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ is far from being settled. Both sides of the debate find grammatical arguments in favor of their various interpretations but at the same time, there seems to be an agreement that the debate cannot be settled on the basis of grammar alone. Exegesis is the way forward. The general consensus among supporters of the subjective genitive interpretation is that πίστις Χριστοῦ, as Christ’s faithfulness, refers to his obedience to the Father’s will. This is possibly the strongest argument for the subjective genitive view. Supporters of the objective genitive reading do not deny that Christ’s obedience is important in Paul’s theology. They question the argument that Paul communicates this concept of Christ’s obedience by the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ.

¹²²Recently Silva has written on the subject in defense of the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians. See Moisés Silva, “Faith versus Works of the Law in Galatians,” forthcoming. We will interact with Silva’s arguments in chap. 6.

CHAPTER 2

FAITH IN THE LXX AND IN THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CORPUS OUTSIDE OF PAUL: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

The history of interpretation shows that the debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ remains unsettled. The difficulty in determining the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ is compounded because the Greek πίστις in the active sense means, “trust,” or “belief,” but in the passive sense it has the meaning “trustworthiness,” “faithfulness,” or “fidelity.”¹ The question facing scholars is which of these two senses (active or passive [or both]) should apply to πίστις in interpreting the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Paul. As long as scholars continue to approach the subject with different presuppositions resulting in different conclusions, the debate will go on, leaving the reader to make up his or her mind on the strength of the evidence on both sides.²

This chapter looks at the use of πίστις in the LXX and in the rest of the NT literature outside of Paul. The goal here is to see how the use of πίστις in these two contexts might provide broader contextual evidence upon which to make an informed

¹J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957; reprint, 1974), 154; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, ed. and trans. Frederick William Danker et al. [BDAG henceforth], 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “πίστις.”

²M. D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 321. She notes that scholars approach the subject from different presuppositions, resulting in different interpretations. Thus exegesis is key to settling the issue.

judgment on the validity (or lack thereof) of arguments made for either the subjective or objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. In order to set the stage for this analysis and to highlight the importance of the results for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ, we begin by surveying briefly one approach employed in the debate (i.e., OT background for πίστις) with an evaluation of this approach to follow afterwards.

Various considerations inform the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. These vary anywhere from the OT background of πίστις, contextual analysis in Paul, style,³ grammar,⁴ and theological considerations. Due to limitation of space and since some of the points will be treated in future chapters, we are only going to summarize at this point the argument that the OT background of πίστις provides an interpretive key to the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. The aim here is to see how this argument holds or fails to hold in view of how the LXX and NT writers employ πίστις.

³It is argued that if πίστις Χριστοῦ is “faith in Christ,” then Paul is redundant since in the same verses where πίστις Χριστοῦ occurs, he makes reference to the faith of the believer. For example, πίστις Χριστοῦ is followed by ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν (Gal 2:16), τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (Gal 3:22), εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (Rom 3:22), ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (Phil 3:9). Those who argue thus include, Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 142; D. W. B. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’ – A New Testament Debate,” *RTR* 29 (1970): 80; L. E. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 456; L. T. Johnson, “Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 79; D. A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 65 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 62-63. For a response to this argument from the objective genitive point of view, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 184; James D. Dunn, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 166; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 226; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 346.

⁴First proposed by Howard, the argument is that whenever Paul uses πίστις followed by “the genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun . . . the phrase refers to the faith of the individual, never faith in the individual.” See G. Howard, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *HTR* 60 (1967): 459-60. This line of argument is followed by Hays, *Faith*, 148; Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79. See chap. 4 for a detailed treatment of grammatical arguments for both the subjective and objective genitive views. For a recent response to this grammatical argument, see R. B. Matlock, “Even the Demons Believe: Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *CBQ* 64 (2002): 303-05.

Paul's use of πίστις Χριστοῦ has been interpreted from the Hebrew background of אֱמוּנָה (faith, faithfulness, trustworthiness, reliability). This is found to favor the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ. When the debate over the meaning of πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ was revived in the 1950s, the leading argument was that "the word 'faith,' as St. Paul used it, carried a Hebrew rather than a Greek meaning."⁵ Consequently, for Herbert, πίστις is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה "faithfulness" rather than "faith" or "to believe." With this understanding, Hebert defines πίστις Χριστοῦ as God's "faithfulness" made manifest in Christ's human "faithfulness."

This line of reasoning is still followed by some scholars today. Richard Longenecker contends that when πίστις is understood in terms of its Hebrew background, it is not difficult to see Paul using πίστις Χριστοῦ in the same way that he uses πίστις θεοῦ (Rom 3:3) and πίστις Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16).⁶ In agreement with Hebert, Longenecker holds that in the OT אֱמוּנָה means both "faithfulness" and "faith," "the former when ascribed to God and the latter with reference to man." In this same way, Paul uses πίστις for divine faithfulness as well as the human response of faith.⁷ He concludes that

While it is true that the apostle spoke and wrote Greek, his words were always coloured by their Hebrew associations. It is therefore likely that in certain instances

⁵A. G. Hebert, "'Faithfulness' and 'Faith,'" *Theology* 58 (1955): 373.

⁶Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 87.

⁷R. Longenecker, "The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Moris on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 146.

in his letters the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be understood as ‘the faithfulness of Jesus Christ,’ the God-man.⁸

A similar argument is made by John Dunnill who notes that Paul is influenced by the LXX where πίστις translates the Hebrew term אֱמֻנָה which refers to the “firmness or reliability or covenant-faithfulness of God.” He concludes that the central sense of πίστις in Paul may be “firmness,” “reliability,” “faithfulness.”⁹ Furthermore, according to Howard, the LXX writers never express the object of faith in the genitive case. On this basis he argues against reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ.”¹⁰ Robinson also argues that the LXX never uses πίστις in the sense of “faith” or “trust” and therefore πίστις when it is by itself does not suggest the idea of “faith” or “trust.”¹¹

It seems, then, that for the scholars identified above the OT background of

⁸Ibid. Longenecker does not give any evidence to establish this conclusion.

⁹John Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith? – The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology,” *Colloquium* 30 (1998): 5.

¹⁰Howard, “The Faith of Christ,” *ExpT* 85 (1974): 213. He writes, “It was inappropriate to the Hellenistic Jewish mentality to express the object of faith by means of the objective genitive. Though a textbook case can be made for it, in actual practice it does not appear. Characteristically the writers use the preposition when they wish to express the object” (ibid.). Others who read πίστις in Paul from the Hebrew background include Hebert, “Faithfulness and Faith,” 376; T. F. Torrance, “One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith,” 111-14; R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 149-52; idem, “The Obedience of Christ,” 146; Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 76. Markus Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 365. Barth holds that Paul uses πίστις in the OT sense of “faithful obedience.” He makes a connection between the OT background of “faithful servant” and Jesus as fulfilling the role of the OT righteous and faithful servant of God. Therefore it makes sense to speak of the faithfulness of Christ. Whether Barth is correct in his theological assessment or not, his approach does not deal with πίστις in the context of Paul’s own letters and the NT as a whole. See also I. G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 78. Wallis contends that in the OT, God’s righteousness and God’s faithfulness are virtually synonymous. He goes on to suggest that we should ask what kind of relationship exists between God’s righteousness and Christ’s πίστις. He argues further that the background of Ps 89 and the Psalms of Solomon provides “a context in which Paul’s διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Rom 3.22 can be interpreted meaningfully as a subjective genitive, referring to the πίστις of Jesus Christ, the messiah, through which the covenantal faithfulness or righteousness of God is revealed” (Wallis, *Faith*, 78). For a response to this view and Wallis’ Christological reading of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 88.

¹¹Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 76.

πίστις is important for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ. But before one accepts or rejects this approach, it has to be evaluated in light of the usage of πίστις in the LXX. What can we learn from the way πίστις is used in the LXX, and does the evidence support the above argument?

Πίστις in the LXX

The word πίστις in the LXX, translates various Hebrew words such as אֱמוּנָה (faithfulness, reliability),¹² אִמּוּנָה (firmness, steadfastness, fidelity, trust),¹³ אֱמֻנָה (firmness, faithfulness, truth, reliability, stability),¹⁴ and אָמַן (to support, nourish, be made firm).¹⁵ In some instances, πίστις appears in the LXX without a corresponding Hebrew word, but the context suggests the meaning “faithfulness” (1 Sam 21:3; Prov 14:22; 15:28).¹⁶ A brief overview of πίστις in the LXX shows that it translates the

¹²Wilhelm Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic*, ed. Francis Brown with the co-operation of S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs [BDB henceforth] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), s.v. “אֱמוּנָה”; William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Braumgartner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), s.v. “אֱמוּנָה.”

¹³BDB, s.v. “אִמּוּנָה”; Holladay, *Hebrew Lexicon*, s.v. “אִמּוּנָה”. See 1 Sam 26:23; 2 Kgs 12:15 (12:16 LXX); 22:7; 1 Chr 9:22, 26, 31; 2 Chr 31:12, 15, 18; 34:12; Ps 33:4 (32:4 LXX).

¹⁴BDB, s.v. “אֱמֻנָה”; Holladay, *Hebrew Lexicon*, s.v. “אֱמֻנָה.” See also Prov 3:3.

¹⁵BDB, s.v. “אָמַן”; Holladay, *Hebrew Lexicon*, s.v. “אָמַן.” Cf. Jer 15:18.

¹⁶The Hebrew background for πίστις is well documented and will not be treated here. Our concern here is on the usage of the noun πίστις in the LXX and therefore not on the Hebrew words behind it. For a more comprehensive treatment of this topic, taking into account the Hebrew words behind πίστις, the following should be consulted: A. D. Verhey, “Faithful, Faithfulness,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. [ISBE henceforth] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:273-75; Joseph P. Healey, “Faith,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman [ABD hence forth] (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:744-49; O. Michel, “πίστις,” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown [NIDNTT henceforth] (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 1:595-97. In addition to πίστις, אֱמוּנָה is sometimes rendered by ἀλήθεια, ἀληθινός, πιστός, ἀξιόπιστος, ἐστηριγμένος, and πλοῦτος. See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 155.

primary stem אָמַן with a variety of meanings, such as faithfulness, firmness, fidelity, constancy, and trustworthiness.

The LXX employs πίστις in the moral sense of “steadfastness” and “faithfulness.”¹⁷ When so employed, it translates אָמַן or אָמֶן and applies both to people and to God.¹⁸ When referring to people, πίστις is used in the sense of steadfastness or faithfulness in conduct whether in speech or in carrying out an official duty.¹⁹ We note the following examples: God hides his face from those “in whom is no faithfulness” (πίστις [Deut 32:20]).²⁰ David says to Saul, “The Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness” (πίστις [1 Sam 26:23]). For those who did their work ἐν πίστει “faithfully” in the Temple, an accounting was not required from them (2 Kgs 12:15 [12:16 LXX]). Proverbs says, “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully, ποιῶν πιστεῖς are His delight” (Prov 12:22). “He who speaks truth [ἐπιδεικνυμένην πίστιν] tells what is right, but a false witness, deceit” (Prov 12:17, cf. 3:3; 14:22).²¹ During Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chro 29-31), we are told that the Israelites brought in their tithes ἐν πίστει “faithfully” (31:12), that the priests distributed the contributions to their brothers ἐν πίστει “faithfully” (31:15), and consecrated themselves ἐν πίστει “faithfully” in holiness (31:18). During Josiah’s repair

¹⁷Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), 476.

¹⁸In most cases, πίστις translates אָמַן but אָמֶן is translated by πίστις in Proverbs 3:3; 14:22; 15:27 (16:6 NASB); Jer 35:9 9 (28:9 NASB); 39:32 (32:41 NASB); 40:6 (33:6 NASB).

¹⁹Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 476.

²⁰This is the only instance where πίστις translates the Hebrew word אָמַן.

²¹For the use of πίστις with the meaning “truth,” see Jer 5:1, 3; 7:28; 9:2 (9:3 NASB).

of the Temple, the people did their work ἐν πίστει “faithfully” (2 Chr 34:12). Several times, πίστις has the idea of “office of trust” (1 Chr 9:22, 26) or “responsibility” (1 Chr 9:31).

Eschatological life is promised to the one who lives ἐκ πίστεως “by faith/faithfulness” (Hab 2:4). It is debated whether πίστις in Habakkuk 2:4 means “trust” or “faithfulness.” If one follows the Hebrew text, וַיֵּחַי הַצַּדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ “But the righteous will live by his faith” it could be interpreted to mean that “his faith” refers to the “steadfast trust” or the “faithfulness” of the righteous one.²² The LXX in rendering the Hebrew adds a first person personal pronoun μου to πίστις thus, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται, “But the righteous will live by my faith/faithfulness”²³ indicating that the πίστις is God’s. We should note that the Hebrew אָמוּנָה is constantly translated in the LXX in the passive sense of “faithfulness.” Also, the addition of μου to πίστεως seems to indicate that the LXX writers understood πίστις in Habakkuk 2:4 as “faithfulness,” and not “trust.” In any case, the two senses, active and passive, make sense in the context.²⁴

Πίστις also describes God’s work done in faithfulness or faithfully. The

²²We will return to the subject of Hab 2:4 in chaps. 6 and 7. For the meaning “steadfast trust” for πίστις in Hab 2:4, see O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 174; G. W. Bromiley, “Faith,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. [ISBE henceforth] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:270. But others see here a reference to “faithfulness” or “steadfastness.” See, for example, Schreiner, *Romans*, 75; G. N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1-4*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament — Supplement Series 39* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 44; Francis A. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, *Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 213; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 138.

²³My translation.

²⁴Schreiner observes that “a canonical reading of Habakkuk itself suggests that faithfulness and faith are inseparable” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 75; cf. Moo, *Romans*, 78).

Psalmist writes that “the word of the Lord is upright and all His work is *done* in faithfulness” (Ps 33:4 [32:4 LXX]); God promises that he will restore Israel to himself in faithfulness (Hos 2:20 [2:22 LXX]; cf. Jer 32:41 [39:41 LXX]). The basic meaning of πίστις (אֱמוּנָה) as applied to God meaning his faithfulness, refers to “that which can be relied upon.”²⁵ Applied to God, “faithfulness” emphasizes the fact that he will continually show compassion and honor the covenant.²⁶ According to Verhey, “The faithfulness of God can be defined as His ‘determined loyalty to a gracious covenant.’”²⁷

In light of this brief overview, we note that πίστις in the LXX refers to God only three times (Ps 32:4 [33:4 LXX]; Hos 2:22 [2:20 LXX]; Jer 39:41 [32:41 LXX]). The majority of the uses apply to people either in their relationship to God or in carrying out various duties. Although there are many cases of the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה referring to God’s faithfulness, the LXX rarely translates them with πίστις (cf. 2 Chr 19:9; Ps 33:4; 36:5; 37:3; 40:10; 88:11; 89:1, 2, 5, 8, 24, 33, 49; 92:2; 98:3; 100:5; 119:75, 90, 138; 143:1; Lam 3:23). In these cases, אֱמוּנָה is rendered in the LXX by different Greek words.²⁸ It is also clear that the LXX used πίστις in the passive sense and never in the active sense of “trust” or “believe.”²⁹ Thus, the noun πίστις never takes an object in the

²⁵A. Jepsen, “אֱמוּנָה” *TDOT* 1:317.

²⁶Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 19A (Nashville: Broadman, 1997), 94.

²⁷Verhey, “Faith,” 273.

²⁸According to Lightfoot, אֱמוּנָה is rendered in the LXX by ἀλήθεια, ἀληθινός (24 times) or by πίστις, πιστός, ἀξιόπιστος (20 times), and once by ἐστηριγμένος (Exod 17:12) and by πλοῦτος (Ps 36:3). See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 155.

²⁹Cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 155, 156; Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 76. Although Robinson rightly points out that the LXX never uses πίστις in the sense of faith or trust, his conclusion that by itself πίστις will not suggest the idea of “faith” or “trust” is unconvincing.

LXX. A possible exception is Habakkuk 2:4 but even if πίστις there means “believe” or “trust,” the object is not stated and the concept of “faithfulness” is not absent.³⁰ To communicate the response of “trust” or “believe,” the LXX writers use various forms of the verb πιστεύω (“I believe”) with a dative object³¹ or with the preposition ἐν or ἐπί (Ps 77 [78 LXX]: 22, 32; 105 [106 LXX]:12; Isa 28:16; Jer 12:6; Dan 6:24 [23 LXX]).³²

We conclude that the LXX makes a clear distinction in the use of πίστις and πιστεύω. While πίστις can mean faithfulness or faith (in the active sense), it is never used actively in the LXX. Where the act of believing or trusting is in view, it is communicated by the verb πιστεύω. This is an important distinction to note as we look at how πίστις is used in the NT, especially in response to the arguments that Paul was influenced by the LXX in his use of πίστις. From LXX usage alone, there is support for the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as faithfulness of Christ since πίστις in the LXX always means faithfulness. Still, we need to also weigh this against the evidence from the NT usage of πίστις.

³⁰The adjective πιστός occurs frequently in the LXX. Its range of meaning is similar to that of πίστις. When πιστός means “faithfulness,” it is used for people (Num 12:7; 1 Sam 22:14; Neh 9:8), or God (Deut 7:9; 32:4; Isa 49:7; Jer 49:5 [42:5 LXX]). See also 1 Sam 2:35; 25:28; 1 Kgs 11:38; 22:14; Ps 88:38 [89:37 LXX]; 100:6 [101:6 LXX]; Prov 25:13; Isa 1:21, 26; 8:2; 49:7. Another sense of πιστός in the LXX is “trustworthiness” or something that is “sure” and therefore worthy of trust (Job 12:20; Ps 18:8 [19:7 LXX]; Ps 110:7 [111:7 LXX]; Prov 11:13; 13:17; 14:5; 20:6; Isa 33:16; Hos 5:9). Πιστός in the LXX can also mean “firm” in the sense of “a firm place” (Isa 22:23, 25). At other times, it translates words such as אֱמֻנָה meaning “to be truthful” (Prov 14:25), אֱמֻנָה, “to be trustworthy” or “faithful” (Dan 2:45; 6:5 [6:4 LXX]) and צְדָיִק, “to be righteous” (Job 17:9). In sum, the analysis of πίστις and πιστός in the LXX shows that both words have a similar range of meaning and can be used interchangeably.

³¹Πιστεύω takes a dative object of God (Gen 15:6; Ex 14:31; Num 14:11; Deut 9:23; Prov 30:1; Jonah 3:5) or person/personal pronoun (Gen 45:26; Ex 4:1; 14:31; 19:9; 2 Chr 32:15; Jer 47:14 [40:14 LXX]). Similarly, πιστεύω takes as its object such nouns as life, report, word, and commandments (Deut 28:66; 1 Kgs 10:7; 2 Chr 9:6; Ps 105 [106 LXX]:24; 118 [119 LXX]:66; Prov 14:15; Isa 53:1; Jer 25:8).

³²In a number of cases, πιστεύω occurs in constructions with ὅτι denoting the content of what is believed (Job 9:16; 15:31; 39:12; Isa 43:10; Lam 4:12) and once it takes an object in the accusative case (Num 20:12). There are a number of cases where, πιστεύω is used absolutely with its object understood from context (Exod 4:31; Job 29:24; 39:24; Ps 115:1 [116:10 LXX]; Hab 1:5; Isa 7:9).

Πίστις, in the New Testament

The Synoptic Gospels

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, make use of πίστις predominantly in the active sense of “belief/trust.”³³ It is used in the Synoptics absolutely (without a stated object) but the object is understood from context. Πίστις is employed in the miracle accounts, where the implied object is Jesus’ or God’s power to heal.³⁴ The faith of the centurion (Matt 8:10, cf. Luke 7:9), in context, is faith in the power of Jesus to heal his servant from a distance (Matt 8:5-9, cf. Luke 7:7).³⁵ The faith that the disciples lack that enables them to heal the sick or cast out demons is faith in God’s power to work miracles (Matt 17:20, cf. Luke 17:6).³⁶ If the disciples would trust God, they could do great things. This is the idea in Matthew 21:21.³⁷ In these few examples, context provides the unstated object of faith.³⁸

Additionally, in the healing accounts, πίστις is used in connection with Jesus’ miracles performed in response to the faith of the one in need, for example, the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:34) and the healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:52).

³³In Matt 23:23, πίστις is definitely “faithfulness” and it is possible that in Luke 18:8 and 22:32, faith refers to the loyalty of the disciples. Thus R. T. France, “Faith,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall [DJG henceforth] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 224.

³⁴France, “Faith,” 223, indicates that the focus of faith in the miracle accounts is on Jesus as the one who heals and delivers.

³⁵BDAG, s.v. “πίστις”; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 58, allows that the centurion’s faith is confidence in Jesus.

³⁶This point is made by Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 449; cf. BDAG, s.v. “πίστις.”

³⁷Thus also, Morris, *Matthew*, 531-32.

³⁸Other examples are Mark 4:40; Luke 17:5 and 18:8.

At other times Jesus heals in response to the faith of another person on behalf of a sick person, such as in the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:5), the centurion's servant (Matt 8:10, 13), and the Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt 15:28).³⁹ In these situations, the object of faith is implied. Several examples illustrate this. While Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion, he said to him, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed" (ὑπάγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι [Matt 8:13]). His faith (πίστις [Matt 8:10]) is understood as his believing (πιστεύω) that Jesus will heal his servant.⁴⁰ Similarly, in Matthew 9:28 and 29, the faith, πίστις (v.29) of the blind men is their believing (πιστεύω) that Jesus is able to heal them. The same could be said of the faith of the woman in Mark 5:34. Jesus says to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well" (θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε). She had faith in Jesus' power to heal and she proceeded to touch him (cf. Mark 5:27-30).⁴¹

The absence of faith (on the part of the disciples) indicates a lack of trust in God's power or in Jesus, with the result that they could not perform miracles (Matt 17:19-21; 21:21) or were afraid (Mark 4:40). On the contrary, faith that could work miracles such as command a mulberry tree to be uprooted (Luke 17:6), or a mountain to be moved (Matt 17:20), is faith in God or belief that what is said will take place (Mark 11:22-24). What these examples show is that in the Synoptics, faith is central to the

³⁹This observation is also made by France, "Faith," 223.

⁴⁰A similar connection between the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω is found in Mark 9:23-24 where we have a verb (πιστεύω) and a noun (ἀπιστία) contrast. A father seeking healing for his son cries out, "I do believe; help my unbelief" (πιστεύω βοήθει μου τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ). Cf. Matt 8:10, 13.

⁴¹William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 194; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 368-69. Marcus is probably correct in his assessment that the faith of the woman is the climax of the story and that "the story is told in such a way that it would probably remind Mark's readers of their own entry into the Christian faith. . . . The example

working of miracles. The disciples must have faith if they are to perform miracles (Matt 17:20; Luke 17:6) and the object of such faith is God (Mark 11:22)⁴² or Jesus (implied from context). Thus, the absolute use of πίστις presupposes an understood object from context.

The Gospel writers often use πίστις with a subjective genitive of person or personal pronoun. Hence, πίστιν αὐτῶν (Matt 9:2, cf. Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20); ἡ πίστις σου (Matt 9:22; 15:28; cf. Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; 22:32); τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν (Matt 9:29; 15:28; Luke 8:25). In these examples, πίστις is used with the subjective genitive but it still retains its active sense. None of the sick is said to be healed because of an act of faithfulness. That would not make sense in the context of Jesus' ministry. Rather, context suggests that their πίστις is faith in God's power to work or in Jesus's power to heal. This is especially obvious in Matthew 9:28, 29 where the faith (πίστις) of the blind men is their believing (πιστεύω) that Jesus is able to heal them.

Mark 11:22 (ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ) is one exception to the use of πίστις with a subjective genitive in the Synoptic Gospels. The genitive θεοῦ can be interpreted as subjective or objective genitive. If subjective, the idea is to have the faith that God has (whatever this might mean). If objective, Jesus is commanding faith in God. There is a general consensus among scholars that this is a clear example of πίστις used with an objective genitive in the NT.⁴³ Yet, a few scholars have challenged this reading

of the woman, then, may function as an encouragement to the members of the Markan community to profess their faith boldly and not to hold back out of fear of the consequences" (Marcus, *Mark*, 369).

⁴²Cf. France, "Faith," 223.

⁴³For example, Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 269; R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 448; Vincent

suggesting that this should be understood as a subjective genitive construction. Robinson argues that the genitive θεοῦ is “either subjective or adjectival” on the ground that “Nowhere else in the gospels does the expression ‘have faith’ either have, or even imply, an object.”⁴⁴ In his judgment, ἐχετε πίστιν θεοῦ could mean “be firm as God is firm.”⁴⁵

Wallis, starting from the point of view that outside of Paul, “there are no unambiguous” instances of πίστις with a genitive of object, argues against taking θεοῦ as a genitive of object.⁴⁶ Thus, in Mark 11:22, θεοῦ is not an objective genitive but a genitive of origin, thus faith from God. His argument is built on his understanding of the Jewish literature which indicates that faith is an “eschatological gift from God (e.g., 1 *Enoch* 108.13; *Sib. Or.* 3.584-5; *Test. Isaac.* 1.8). This background, he argues, is consistent with Mark’s use of πίστιν θεοῦ in which faith becomes the means by which God’s acts are performed.⁴⁷ George Howard also rejects the objective genitive reading of θεοῦ in Mark 11:22, suggesting the translation, “Hold on to the assurance of God [who will do for you what you ask].”⁴⁸ Pierre Vallotton, holding the subjective genitive reading, contends that when Jesus said to his disciples ἐχετε πίστιν θεοῦ he meant for

Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), 466; R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 651; C. S. Mann, *Mark* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 452; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 317; Schreiner, *Romans*, 183; Hays, *Faith*, 149; Cranfield, *On Romans*, 84; Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 251-52; Wallace, *Grammar*, 116.

⁴⁴Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 78.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 71. In addition to Mark 11:22, Wallis dismisses an objective genitive construction with πίστις in Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13 and 14:12.

⁴⁷Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 53 n. 113.

⁴⁸George Howard, “Faith of Christ,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:759.

them to seize the faith of God in the sense of participating in its absolute power. He writes,

Jésus dit à ses disciples qui s'étonnent que le figuier ait séché sur sa parole: «Ayez la foi de Dieu!» (ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ, Marc 11:22), c'est-à-dire: Emparez-vous de la foi de Dieu, participez à sa toute-puissance!⁴⁹

He goes on to state that for Mark, it goes without saying that the withering of the fig tree is an act of Jesus' faith which must now serve as an example for those who believe.⁵⁰

In response we note that these arguments are not persuasive. Robinson's contention that "Nowhere else in the gospels does the expression 'have faith' either have, or even imply, an object" and therefore Mark 11:22 means "Be firm as God is firm,"⁵¹ does not explain all the occurrences of πίστις where the object is implied in context indicating that faith does take an object. Wallis denies any clear reference to πίστις with an objective genitive outside of Paul but others see Mark 11:22 as a clear example of πίστις with an objective genitive in the NT. According to Cranfield, Mark 11:22 is a challenge to Wallis' objection. His attempt to dismiss it is "surely a desperate move."⁵² Wallis does not explain why the Jewish literature context should decide how we interpret the genitive in Mark. While it is true that faith has its origin in God, the object of that faith still needs to be explained. In the end these scholars arguing for the subjective genitive reading in Mark 11:22 are not united as to the meaning of the phrase. Is it "Be

⁴⁹Pierre Vallotton, *Le Christ et la Foi* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960), 33, 113.

⁵⁰Vallotton writes, "Il va sans dire que, pour l'évangéliste, la malédiction du figuier est un acte de foi de Jésus qui doit servir d'exemple au croyant" (*Christ et Foi*, 121; cf. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentaries [London: Black, 1991], 269).

⁵¹Robinson, "Faith of Jesus Christ," 78.

⁵²Cranfield, *On Romans*, 84.

firm as God is firm,”⁵³ or is it God’s own faith by which he performs miracles,⁵⁴ or does it mean “Hold on to the assurance of God,”⁵⁵ or is it simply a call for participation in God’s own faith?⁵⁶

In spite of the arguments made for the subjective genitive interpretation the genitive θεοῦ is best taken as objective genitive making God the object of πίστις in Mark 11:22.⁵⁷ Lührmann argues that the substantive πίστις corresponds to the occurrences of the verb πιστεύειν when used absolutely but with God as the specified object.⁵⁸ There is support for this interpretation both from the context in Mark and the parallel passage in Matthew 21:21-22. Mark’s general use of πίστις in the active sense suggests that πίστις in Mark 11:22 probably has an active sense as well. For Mark, faith is what Jesus looks for and this is contrasted with disbelief. For example, Jesus rebukes disbelief, which is a lack of trust in God (Mark 4:40; 6:6; 9:19) but calls for faith in place of fear (Mark 3:36). He praises faith which shows a trust in Jesus’ power to work miracles (Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52).

Further support for this interpretation is found in Mark 11:23-24 where πίστις in verse 22 is picked up in the saying about believing (πιστεύω). Faith in God (v. 22) is believing that what one says or asks for in prayer will come about (vv. 23, 24). In short,

⁵³Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 78.

⁵⁴Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 71.

⁵⁵Howard, “Faith of Christ,” 759.

⁵⁶Vallotton, *Christ et la Foi*, 33, 113.

⁵⁷Lührmann, *Das Markus Evangelium*, 195.

⁵⁸He writes, “Das Substantive πίστις entspricht dem folgenden Verbum πιστεύειν, das freilich in 23 absolut steht. Was in 23 über den Glauben überhaupt gesagt wird, ist durch die Überschrift in 22 präzisiert auf den Glauben an Got thin” (ibid., 195).

faith in God is “faith in the efficacy of prayer.”⁵⁹ It seems that in the immediate context of Mark 11:22, πίστις is explained as believing. This connection is lost in the subjective genitive view.

The parallel passage in Matthew 21:21 further supports this interpretation for Mark 11:22. Matthew reports the same event but does not include the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ after πίστις. In place of Mark’s ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ, “Have faith in God,” Matthew has ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν καὶ μὴ διακριθῆτε, “If you have faith and do not doubt.” Here, faith, as opposed to doubt, seems to have the sense of trust or belief.⁶⁰ Mark 11:22 is then the only instance in the Synoptics where πίστις is used with an objective genitive.

Conclusion

Πίστις in the Synoptic Gospels is encountered often in the miracle stories. It has the sense of “trust” or “belief” and rarely the meaning “faithfulness.”⁶¹ When used absolutely, context is left to supply the implied object. Πίστις is always the faith of the individual in the Synoptics and never Jesus’ or God’s subjective faith. Faith is necessary for the working of miracles on the part of the disciples. The absence of faith results in powerlessness to perform miracles, or results in fear. Although faith is a prerequisite for the disciples to perform miracles, nowhere in the Synoptics is Jesus spoken of as having πίστις or as performing miracles from faith. Faith is never required of Jesus but it is

⁵⁹Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1914; reprint, 1982), 265.

⁶⁰According to Morris, in Matt 21:21, “Jesus is telling his followers about the importance of trust; he puts the truth positively, “*if you have faith,*” and then negatively, “*and do not doubt!*” (Morris, *Matthew*, 531).

⁶¹Two possible exceptions are (1) Luke 17:5 where the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith, but 17:6 indicates that this may be a reference to faith in God and not faithfulness. (2) In Luke 18:18

required of the disciples and those who come to Jesus for help.⁶² The disciples must have faith in order to perform miracles, but Jesus performs miracles by his own authority.

Contrary to the use of πίστις in the LXX, there appears to be a close link between the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω in the Synoptic Gospels. The verb occurs both in miracle and non-miracle accounts and describes the right response to the gospel message preached (Mark 1:15, cf. Luke 8:12-13)⁶³ or believing a person (Mark 11:31, cf. Matt 21:25, 32). It seems as if the two could be used interchangeably. For example, the centurion's faith (πίστις) is his believing (πιστεύω) in Matthew 8:13. The faith in God (πίστιν θεοῦ) that Jesus calls for in Mark 11:22 is explained as not doubting but believing (πιστεύω) that what one says will happen (Mark 11:23). The blind men's faith (πίστις) is their belief in Jesus' ability to heal them (Matt 9:28, 29). These examples and the active sense given to πίστις in the Synoptics suggests that both can be used interchangeably.⁶⁴

Jesus asks whether he will find faith on the earth at his return. It is possible that here πίστις is "faithfulness" but this is not certain.

⁶²While the Synoptic writers use πίστις for "belief" or "trust," the meaning "faithful" is communicated by the use of the adjective πιστός with reference to people, specifically, servants. It seems then, that in the Synoptic Gospels, the noun πίστις has an overall sense of "belief," or "trust," whereas "faithful/faithfulness" is conveyed by the use of the adjective πιστός. This is a shift from the way πίστις and πιστός are used in the LXX (see discussion above) where both have a very close semantic range and where πίστις is never used in the active sense.

⁶³France, "Faith," 224.

⁶⁴The object of πιστεύω is indicated by a preposition εἰς, ἐν, or ἐπι (Matt 18:6; 27:42; Mark 1:15; 9:42; Luke 24:25). Only in Matt 18:6 (cf. Mark 9:42) is Jesus explicitly stated as the object of faith in the Synoptics. Sometimes the object appears in the dative case (Matt 21:25, 32 [cf. Mark 11:31; Luke 20:5]; Luke 1:20). In the majority of cases, πιστεύω is used absolutely but its object or content is understood from context (Matt 21:11; 24:23, 26 [cf. Mark 13:21]; 27:42; Mark 5:36; 9:23, 24; 15:32; Luke 8:12, 13, 50; 22:67). In a few cases, ὅτι indicates the content of πιστεύω (Matt 9:28; Mark 11:23, 24; Luke 1:45). Finally, in one case, πιστεύω has the meaning "to entrust something to someone" (Luke 16:11). Such an overview of the use of πιστεύω brings to light several observations. First, it is linked with repentance so that "to believe" is to be converted (Mark 1:4, 15). Second, Jesus is the object of "believe" (Matt 18:6). The concept of "unbelief" (Mark 6:6; 9:19, 24) shows that the people did not believe Jesus.

The Gospel of John

The verb “to believe” (πιστεύειν) is central in John’s Gospel but the noun πίστις is absent. Faith (πιστεύω) in John summarizes what God requires of his people, that they believe in Jesus whom he has sent (John 6:28-29; 21:31).⁶⁵ John uses the prepositions εἰς and ἐν to denote Jesus or God as the object of faith.⁶⁶ A simple dative also shows the object of faith.⁶⁷ Also the content of what is believed is indicated by the use of ὅτι.⁶⁸ Overall, the most frequent occurrence of πιστεύω in John is without an expressed object.⁶⁹

Compared with the Synoptic Gospels, John is different in that he explicitly states Jesus as the object of faith.⁷⁰ Yet, whereas the Gospels use πίστις absolutely

Thus, “to believe” is to believe Jesus. Third, “faith” is the basis for belonging in the kingdom of God (Matt 8:10-13). Commenting on this point, France says that being a member of the kingdom of God is no longer on the basis of race but on the basis of a new principle, the principle of faith (Matt 15:21-28; 21:32 [France, “Faith,” 224]).

⁶⁵France, “Faith,” 225.

⁶⁶See John 1:12; 2:11, 23; 3:15, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40; 7:5, 31, 48; 9:35; 10:42; 11:25, 26; 12:11, 27, 36, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20. Compared with other NT writers, John uses πιστεύω with the prepositions εἰς and ἐν the most.

⁶⁷In these instances, Jesus (John 4:21; 5:38, 46; 6:30; 8:31, 45, 46; 10:37, 38; 14:11), God (John 5:24), Scripture (John 2:22), Jesus’ words (John 4:50; 5:47), Moses and his writings (John 5:46, 47) are all objects of faith.

⁶⁸Thus, to believe in Jesus is to believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24; 11:27; 13:19; 20:31). It is to believe that he has come from God (John 11:27, 42; 16:27, 30; 17:8, 21; 20:31), and that he is in the Father and the Father is in him (John 14:10, 11).

⁶⁹See John 1:7, 50; 3:12; 4:41, 42, 48, 53; 5:44; 6:36, 47, 64, 69; 9:38; 10:25, 26; 11:15, 40; 12:39; 14:29; 16:31; 19:35; 20:8, 25, 29. Commenting on the absolute use of πιστεύω, France notes that the object is easily determined in context and that it is shorthand for Christian commitment in John (France, “Faith,” 225). Given the frequency of this absolute use of πιστεύω, France is correct in his assessment. A significant point made by France on the use of faith in John is that John puts much emphasis on Jesus’ dependence on the Father but nowhere uses the language of faith (πίστις) to describe this relationship.

⁷⁰France, “Faith,” 225, writes, “While faith in the Synoptics is primarily faith in God and is directed principally toward the experience of miraculous power, in John, it is faith in Jesus, and its focus is not on miracles and on the meeting of physical need, but on the establishment of a relationship which

meaning “faith in” or “believe that,” John uses πιστεύω absolutely to the same end.

From the face of it, it might appear that there is a discrepancy between John and the rest of the NT as far as πίστις is concerned. On closer look, it seems that John uses the verb πιστεύω in the same way that πίστις is used by other NT writers. We note the following: Whereas John uses πιστεύω with a preposition to indicate faith’s object, Paul and others do the same with πίστις. The object of πιστεύω is characterized in John mainly by the prepositions εἰς and in a few occasions, by ἐν (John 1:12; 2:11, 23; 3:15, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40; 7:5, 31, 38, 48; 8:30; 9:35, 36; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45, 48; 12:11, 27, 36, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20).⁷¹ Paul indicates the object of πίστις predominantly with the preposition ἐν, once with εἰς and once with πρὸς (1 Cor 2:5; Gal 3:26; Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 1 Tim 3:13; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:15). Outside of Paul, πίστις is used three times with εἰς (Acts 20:21; 26:18; 1 Pet 1:21) and once with ἐπὶ (Heb 6:1).

In the Synoptics, πίστις is connected with miracles (e.g., Matt 8:10; Mark 2:5; 4:40; 5:34; 10:52). John makes a similar connection with the verb πιστεύω (John 2:11, 23; 4:53; 7:31; 11:15, 42, 45; 12:37; 20:31; 14:11; cf. Acts 3:16). Faith (πιστεύω) in John has Jesus as its object (e.g. 1:12; 2:23; 3:15, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35; 9:35). Jesus as the object of πίστις is not mentioned explicitly in the Gospels but it is implied (Matt 8:10; 9:29; 15:28; Mark 2:5; 5:34). In other cases, Jesus is the object of πίστις

results in eternal life.” This is not to deny that John connects “faith” with miracles (see John 2:11, 23; 4:53) but this faith is inferior (John 14:10-11; 20:29 [ibid.])

⁷¹According to Wallace, “πιστεύω + ἐν is the equivalent πιστεύω + εἰς” although in some cases ἐν is used with πιστεύω to indicate location and not the object of belief (Wallace, *Grammar*, 359 n. 10).

characterized by the use of a preposition (Acts 20:21; 24:24; 3:16; Gal 3:26; Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 2:5; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:15).

What these examples tell us is that there is no discrepancy between John and the rest of the NT writers in the use of πίστις. For some reason, John prefers the verb πιστεύω to the noun πίστις. Yet, John is capable of using the noun as well in the active sense (cf. 1 John 5:4; Rev 2:13, 19; 13:10; 14:12).⁷²

The Book of Acts

Πίστις appears in a variety of grammatical constructions in the book of Acts with the meaning “belief” or “trust.”⁷³ Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, πίστις is utilized with a preposition to indicate Jesus as its object. For example, τὴν εἰς θεὸν μετάνοιαν καὶ πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν (Acts 20:21), τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως (24:24), τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πιστεῖ τῇ εἰς ἐμέ (26:18). These are the only three instances where πίστις has an explicit object in Acts. In most cases the object is assumed. The following can be noted: Stephen was “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” ἀνδρὰ πλήρη πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος (Acts 6:5, cf. 11:24).⁷⁴ A man lame from birth had “faith to be made well” (ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι [Acts 14:9]). His faith was that he could be healed.⁷⁵ At the end of their missionary trip, Paul and Barnabas reported that God had opened “a door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). The phrase,

⁷²Later on we will discuss the use of πίστις with the genitive case in Rev 2:13 and 14:12.

⁷³There are a few instances where πίστις in Acts could mean “doctrine,” “Christianity” (Acts 6:7; 13:8) or “proof” (Acts 17:31).

⁷⁴It is possible that πίστις in 6:5 is Stephen’s faithfulness.

⁷⁵I. H. Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 236. Marshall suggests that his faith was in response to the gospel preached, a gospel which probably included a reference to the healing ministry of Jesus. The man then believed that he could be healed.

“door of faith” (θύραν πίστεως) is understood as “a way of believing” or as Marshall puts it, “the opportunity for Gentiles to respond to the gospel.”⁷⁶ Accordingly, both Gentiles and Jews are saved by faith (cf. Acts 15:9), understandably faith in Jesus given the context of Acts 15.

A unique grammatical construction is found in Acts 3:16 where πίστις is used with a genitive case, τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνοματος αὐτοῦ (“faith in/of his name”). It is debated whether τοῦ ὀνοματος αὐτοῦ is a genitive of subject or object. In general, there is agreement that the genitive in this instance is an objective genitive, but this view has been questioned. Robinson believes that in the four cases outside of the Pauline corpus (Mark 11:22; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12) where πίστις appears with a genitive case, “none of them is so unequivocally objective as to provide certain evidence for the usage we are looking for [namely, πίστις used with an objective genitive].”⁷⁷ In Acts 3:16, Robinson argues, τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνοματος αὐτοῦ may mean “the assurance, or pledge of his name.”⁷⁸

Wallis also argues that there are no unambiguous cases in the New Testament where πίστις followed by Christ or God in the genitive case must be interpreted objectively. Without offering any explanation for Acts 3:16, Wallis seems to suggest via various comments that πίστις here originates from Jesus, and is the faith of the disciples by which they perform miracles. In this sense, he leans more toward a genitive of source in Acts 3:16. In his words, “In addition to enabling his own mighty acts, Jesus’ faith was

⁷⁶Ibid., 242.

⁷⁷Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 78.

⁷⁸Ibid., 79.

also conceived of as something to be shared by others performing or experiencing miracles and answers to prayer.”⁷⁹ Howard supports the subjective genitive view for Acts 3:16. He translates it as follows: “And by the assurance (*pistei*) of his name, this one whom you see and know, his name has made strong, and the certainty (*pistis*) which [comes] through it [i.e., his name] has given to him his wholeness before you all.”⁸⁰

It is quite possible to see here a subjective genitive or genitive of source reading of τοῦ ὀνόματος but the arguments for these readings are not very convincing. Robinson’s case is influenced by three considerations: (1) The ninth edition of Liddell and Scott do not have an example of πίστις with an objective genitive. (2) Such a construction is absent in Moulton and Milligan’s “Vocabulary.” (3) Πίστις with an objective genitive is absent in the LXX.⁸¹ Thus, for reasons outside of the context of Acts, Robinson makes the case for a subjective genitive reading of τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ. Howard, in translating πίστις as “certainty” and “assurance” also does not give contextual reasons for this interpretation, nor does he make a case for the meaning “certainty” and “assurance” for πίστις.

Contrary to the subjective genitive reading, there are reasons (general usage of πίστις in Acts and the immediate context of Acts 3:16) why the objective genitive view is the better choice. First, πίστις is used in Acts with a preposition indicating faith’s object (Acts 20:21; 24:24; 26:18). It is possible that the genitive τοῦ

⁷⁹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 59, 71, 184. See also Vallotton, *Christ et Foi*, 123, for a similar argument.

⁸⁰Howard, *Faith of Christ*, 759.

⁸¹Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 78.

ὄνοματος αὐτοῦ is just another way of indicating the object of faith (cf. Mark 11:22).

Second, faith and healing are linked in the book of Acts. In Acts 14:9 a man lame from birth was healed because Paul saw that “he had faith to be made well,” ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι. Here the faith that results in healing is specifically the faith of the one who is sick. This speaks against any suggestion that in Acts 3:16, the man was healed on the basis of the apostles’ faith.⁸² The faith of the apostles is not out of question as John B. Polhill points out, but he notes with reference to the sick man,

If he had little faith to begin with, the miracle that led him to this point – clinging as he did to the apostles (v. 11) – was already bringing about in him the greater miracle of faith in Christ, the Author of life. Perhaps this is what Luke wanted us to see by emphasizing faith alone rather than the possessor of faith. For after all, faith is the greatest miracle of all, and that miracle stood open to all in Solomon’s Colonnade that day.⁸³

It is conceivable that faith here is the faith of the sick man (cf. 14:9). The object of this faith in context is the name of Jesus.⁸⁴ The next statement that faith comes through Jesus (3:16b) supports taking πίστις in 16a as that of the sick man. A similar construction of πίστις coming through Jesus is found in Ignatius *Phld.* 8:2 where he notes that justification comes through Jesus Christ meaning “his cross and death and his resurrection and the faith which comes through him.”⁸⁵

⁸²C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 200. According to Barrett, “The faith in question is that of the apostles; the sick man was expecting money, not exercising faith” (ibid.).

⁸³John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 133.

⁸⁴Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 28.

⁸⁵*The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Hammer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 183.

Third, if we allow that the blind man's healing was more than just physical healing and included his salvation, then we find that there are other texts which link faith (πιστεύω) with salvation (Acts 11:17; 13:39, 48; 14:22; 15:9; 16:31-34; 26:18).⁸⁶ Fourth, though this is not explicit in the context of Acts 3:16, Peter's speech might be influenced by his knowledge of the relationship between faith and healing as he experienced in the ministry of Jesus (cf. Mark 2:5; 5:34; 9:29; 10:52; Matt 8:10).⁸⁷

Fifth, the immediate context of Acts 3:16 also casts some light on the meaning of πίστις in relation to τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ. The context is about the healing of the lame man (3:1-10) and Peter here explains that this man was healed ἐπί τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ "by faith in his [Jesus'] name." The reference to the name of Jesus in the genitive construction, τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, probably indicates the object of the blind man's faith. Already in 3:6, Peter had said to the blind man, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk!" Now (3:16), says that the man was healed "by faith in his name" most likely meaning that he believed Peter, that he can be healed by the power of the name of Jesus (3:6).⁸⁸ Peter explains that faith, which is through Jesus, has given the man healing (3:16 cf. Acts 14:9). The message for his readers is that they too must have faith in Jesus and receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:19-26). As Johnson notes, the

⁸⁶Marshall notes that although nothing in the text suggests that the man displayed faith (saving faith), the way that he praised God after his cure could as well imply that he had faith. See Marshall, *Acts*, 93.

⁸⁷Bruce makes a similar point when he says "Here [Acts 3:16] is a further principle which gives the healing miracles of Acts the same evangelical quality as those recorded in the Gospels" (F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 89).

⁸⁸According to Bruce, "The power that wrought the cure resided in Jesus' name, and that the man had availed himself of this power by the exercise of faith" (Bruce, *Acts*, 89). See also R. C. H. Lenski, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1934), 137.

people of Jerusalem can have their sins wiped out (cf. 3:19) and be turned away from their wicked deeds (cf. 3:26) and enjoy “the seasons of refreshment” if they have faith in the name of Jesus.⁸⁹ With this understanding, faith (in Jesus) is an important part of Acts 3. Thus, in the end, an objective genitive reading fits the context better.⁹⁰ As Barrett notes, faith in this context “makes it clear that it was not the name but the faith accompanying – evoked by and directed towards the name – that saved.”⁹¹ Johnson also sees πίστις in 3:16 as the faith of the lame man. He explains that here there is an attempt by the author to link the “objective power of ‘the name’ working through the apostles, with the subjective necessity of ‘faith’ to make that power operative.”⁹²

The above references demonstrate that in Acts πίστις occurs primarily in the active sense of “belief” or “trust.” There is no unambiguous evidence of πίστις used passively in the sense of “faithfulness.” There are references to Jesus as the object of faith (πίστις), but he is never spoken of as exercising faith, nor is πίστις ever used to indicate his “faithfulness.” On the contrary, we find that πίστις can take an object characterized by a preposition or an objective genitive.⁹³

The point made earlier that πίστις and πιστεύω could be used interchangeably

⁸⁹L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 74.

⁹⁰Even Hays agrees that this is an example of πίστις used with an objective genitive (Hays, *Faith*, 149 n. 113). A subjective genitive reading would make sense in the first occurrence of πίστις in 3:16 but then faces the problem of explaining how this faith, if it is Jesus’ faith comes through Jesus (second occurrence of πίστις in 3:16).

⁹¹Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 200.

⁹²Johnson, *Acts*, 68.

⁹³Not even the adjective πιστός is applied to Jesus in Acts. It only occurs about four times in Acts with the meaning “faithful” (Acts 16:15), “believer” (Acts 10:45; 16:1), and “sure” (Acts 13:34).

in the Synoptic Gospels also holds true in Acts. Like πίστις (Acts 14: 27; 15:9; 20:21; 24:24; 26:18) πιστεύω appears in Acts largely in the context of conversion. Both are used with prepositions to indicate the object of what is believed.⁹⁴ Thus, it can be said that in Acts, Jesus is often the object of faith whether it is the noun or the verb form.⁹⁵ The most common use of πιστεύω in Acts, as well as πίστις, is without an expressed object but there is no doubt from context what the implied object ought to be.⁹⁶ This close link between the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω (in Acts and the Synoptics) marks a shift from the LXX usage.

Hebrews through Revelation

Hebrews. The importance of πίστις is unmistakable in Hebrews.⁹⁷ It is by faith that we receive the good news. In other words, without faith, the good news benefits us nothing (Heb 4:2). Πίστις in 4:2 is probably belief, in light of 4:3 where those who enter the rest are those who believe (οἱ πιστεύσαντες). Also, the background for this verse is most likely Numbers 14:11 where, according to Lane, “The past

⁹⁴Preposition with πίστις (Acts 20:21; 24:24; 26:18), with πιστεύω (Acts 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 14:23; 16:31; 19:4; 22:19). In these examples, πιστεύω is used with the prepositions εἰς or ἐπὶ or with the dative case. For example, Jesus is often the object of what is believed (Acts 5:14; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 14:23; 16:31; 18:8; 19:4; 22:19). In very few cases, God is the object (Acts 16:34; 27:25).

⁹⁵We must note that Philip, the prophets, and the things of the law are objects of faith as well in Acts (see Acts 8:12; 26:27; 27:25). Also, twice in Acts, the object of πιστεύω is denoted by the use of ὅτι (Acts 9:26; 27:25).

⁹⁶See Acts 2:44; 4:4, 32; 8:13; 11:21; 13:12, 39, 41, 48; 14:1; 15:5, 7, 11; 17:12, 34; 18:27; 19:2, 18; 21:20, 25.

⁹⁷William Lane notes that πίστις in Hebrews is “a quality of response that appropriates the divine promise and recognizes the reliability of God. . . . Only faith as confident expectation for the future can secure the promised reality” (William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47A [Dallas: Word, 1991], 98).

generation received the promise in vain because they refused to believe the word they heard.”⁹⁸ The author of Hebrews encourages his readers to imitate those “who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb 6:12). Πίστις in 6:12 could be understood as faithfulness but the sense of trust is not absent. If we read πίστις here in view of 4:2, 3 where lack of faith (πίστις) results in no rest (4:2) and where those who believe enter the rest (4:3), the idea in 6:12 could be that one inherits the promises (enters the rest) through faith (belief). According to Bruce, the author is here admonishing his readers to “follow the example of those who have gone before, those who are now entering into the enjoyment of things which God promised them long ago, *because they believed His word and persevered in hope.*”⁹⁹ The righteous one (the believer) shall have life by faith because believers are not “of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul” (Heb 10:38, 39). The quotation in 10:38 (“my righteous one shall live by faith”), a combination of Isaiah 26:20-21 and Habakkuk 2:4, is debated. Who is the righteous one and what does faith (πίστις) mean? There is some agreement that the surrounding context supports this being the believer (the righteous one in contrast to the wicked) who will live (or gain eternal life after persevering) by faith (trust).¹⁰⁰ This would be in keeping with our discussion of 4:2, 3 and 6:12 above where faith (belief) is linked to eschatological life and with 10:39 where πίστις is most likely used in the active sense of belief. By arguing for the meaning “belief” for πίστις, we are not denying that the idea of faithfulness is present.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Bruce, *Hebrews*, 127. Italics added.

¹⁰⁰See G. H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 360; F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 274; B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1892; reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 337. For the possibility that πίστις in

It is hard to imagine faith not leading to faithfulness. Thus, faith and faithfulness are always linked but the latter presupposes the former.

In 11:6, we read that “without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Faith (πίστις) in 11:6 is specifically “believe that. . .” thus active in meaning. Hebrews 11:6 may hold the key to understanding how the faith (πίστις) of the OT heroes of faith ought to be understood. While their life of faithfulness could not be denied, it is possible that this life was a result of a belief in God. As Guthrie points out, “This life of faith involves believing that God exists.”¹⁰¹ In light of the definition of faith given in 11:1-2, it seems that the author of Hebrews wants us to understand the faith of the OT examples as conviction or assurance which enabled them to persevere in life.¹⁰² In these examples, and others (10:22,¹⁰³ and all the references to faith in chapter 11; 12:2¹⁰⁴), πίστις (faith) is used absolutely with an understood object. Second, only once is πίστις used with a preposition to indicate its object, πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν (6:1).

From the above discussion, we conclude that the author of Hebrews uses πίστις mainly in the active sense. Though the meaning “faithfulness” is possible in 6:12

10:38 is faithfulness but belief in 10:39, see Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 175.

¹⁰¹Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 376.

¹⁰²According to Bruce, “Their faith consisted simply in taking God at His word and directing their lives accordingly” (Bruce, *Hebrews*, 277).

¹⁰³We take the phrase “full assurance of faith” (πληροφορία πίστεως) to be assurance that comes from faith. See also Bruce, *Hebrews*, 249.

¹⁰⁴In 12:2 Jesus is “the author and perfecter of faith.” This should not be seen as an instance where Jesus is an example of faith to be imitated such as the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 (contra Hays, *Faith*, xxxi-xxxii, 151). Rather, the phrase has the sense that Jesus “accomplished fully what it would take for new covenant faith to be a reality” (Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 399; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 141).

and the examples of people of faith in chapter 11, the active meaning of πίστις fits the context well. Thus the meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις is not stated explicitly in Hebrews though one cannot deny a close link between faith and faithfulness. It is a matter of which is emphasized in the present context.

In Hebrews, the meaning faithfulness for πίστις is communicated by the adjective πιστός (Heb 2:17; 3:2, 5; 10:13; 11:11). Unlike Paul, the author of Hebrews applies πιστός to Jesus (Heb 2:17; 3:2). It appears that for the author of Hebrews, the faithfulness of Jesus is indicated not with πίστις but with πιστός. This may be because of the close connection that he sees between πίστις and πιστεύω though he prefers the noun over the verb which is used only twice in Hebrews (4:3; 11:6). For example, after saying that the gospel does not benefit when it is not united with faith (4:2) the author of Hebrews indicates that those who have believed enter the rest (4:3). Thus the lack of faith (4:2) is understood as not believing (4:3). Also, the faith (πίστις) without which it is impossible to please God is specifically to “believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). The faith of the heroes which believers are to imitate (Heb 13:7) is their trusting God in the midst of uncertainties (Heb 11:3-23).

James. Faith (πίστις) is very important in the Epistle of James as well. According to Martin, “‘Faith’ has for James the ideas of full conviction and certitude, especially when associated with prayer (see 5:15, 16).”¹⁰⁵ Faith (πίστις) and believe (πιστεύω) appear fourteen times in James, nine of which are found in 2:14-26.¹⁰⁶ When

¹⁰⁵See Ralph P. Martin, *James*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Waco: Word, 1988), 19.

¹⁰⁶Douglas Moo, *The Epistle of James*, Pelican New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 60.

tested, faith produces “endurance,” ὑπομονήν (1:3). Here the understood object of faith is God.¹⁰⁷ Faith is contrasted with doubt and works. James writes that prayer is to be made in faith without doubting (1:6). The poor are made rich in faith (2:5). Faith without works is useless (2:14, 17, 18, 20, 26).¹⁰⁸

The necessity of obedience or works stemming from faith is obvious in the example of Abraham. James tells us that Abraham’s faith was working with his works and that because of Abraham’s works; his faith was perfected (2:22). Thus, for James, faith that justifies must also have works (2:24). Prayer that is offered in faith will restore healing to the sick one (5:15).¹⁰⁹ In all of the above instances, faith (πίστις) is the believer’s in the sense of belief and the content of this faith is to “believe that God is one” (2:19). A mere belief does not benefit anything since the demons also believe. Therefore, authentic faith for James is one that is accompanied by works; otherwise it is dead (2:14, 17, 18, 20, 26). Faith (πίστις) is closely linked to “believe” (πίστευω). Thus Moo, “James calls us to *believe and not doubt* as we come to God in prayer.”¹¹⁰ The contrast between faith (πίστις) and doubt (1:6) suggests that faith has the sense of belief.

Faith (πίστις) that lacks works is intellectual assent only (cf. 2:18, 19).

Abraham’s faith (πίστις), which was perfected through his works, is a possible allusion

¹⁰⁷Thus Martin, *James*, 15.

¹⁰⁸For a detailed discussion of faith, works and justification in James and its relation to Paul, see Martin, *James*, 82-84; Moo, *James*, 37-43; James Adamson, *James: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 199-227; Robert H. Stein, “‘Saved by Faith [Alone]’ in Paul Versus ‘Not Saved by Faith Alone’ in James,” *SBJT* 4 (2000): 4-19.

¹⁰⁹The connection between prayer and faith in James (1:6; 5:15) brings to mind Jesus’ teaching on prayer and doubting (Matt 21:21-22, cf. Mark 11:22-24).

¹¹⁰Moo, *James*, 60.

to Genesis 15:6 where it is said that Abraham believed (πιστεύω) God (2:22, 23). In the end, the meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις does not present itself in James. Rather, as Moo notes, faith in James is an active quality which must produce fruit.¹¹¹

There are four cases where πίστις is used with a genitive of person or personal pronoun in James.¹¹² Three of these are clearly subjective genitives (1:3; 2:18 [x2]) and refer to the belief or trust of the individual. In 2:1, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“faith in/of our Lord Jesus Christ”) is debated since τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ could be subjective or objective genitive.¹¹³ Opinions vary on the meaning of πίστις in connection with τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Robinson argues that in James 2:1, πίστις refers to “the Christian faith” and thus the genitive τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν is “broadly adjectival.”¹¹⁴ Dunn, on the ground that the definite article is present with πίστις translates James 2:1 as “You hold the faith which our Lord Jesus Christ himself displayed.”¹¹⁵ Wallis argues for the subjective genitive reading of James 2:1. He maintains that we have here another occurrence of the subjective genitive referring to Jesus’ faith. According to Wallis, this reading is viable because there are other subjective

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²ἡμῶν τῆς πίστεως (1:3), τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2:1), τὴν πίστιν σου (2:18 [twice]).

¹¹³Hays sees a reference to the [Christian] faith and makes the confusing statement that it is “broadly adjectival” (Hays, *Faith*, 149, 113; cf. Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79). Dunn seems to allow room here, based on the use of the article with πίστις, for πίστις being the “faith that Jesus himself displayed” (Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 253). For the view that πίστις here is a reference to faith in Christ, see James Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 102; Martin, *James*, 59; Moo, *James*, 100; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 116.

¹¹⁴Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79. See also Hays, *Faith*, 149 n. 113.

¹¹⁵Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 253. See chap. 4 for a summary and evaluation of Dunn’s argument that when πίστις is used with a genitive of subject, the article is “invariably present” (Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 252).

genitive constructions in James such as τὰ ὠτα κυρίου Σαβαώθ (5:4); τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου (5:7, 8); ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου (5:10); τὸ τέλος κυρίου (5:11).¹¹⁶

Christoph Burchard, although he translates μὴ ἐν προσωποληψίαις ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “haltet nicht unter Ansehen der Person euren Glauben an die Herrlichkeit unseres Herrn Jesus Christus” (Do not hold your faith in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ with personal favoritism¹¹⁷) thus taking τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as objective genitive, goes on to argue that the phrase “to have faith” is not the same as “to believe” (ἔχειν πίστιν . . . ist nicht gleich πιστεύειν).¹¹⁸ He concludes that James is not talking about the possession of faith but its working out in the divine service.¹¹⁹

The attempt to explain τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν as a subjective genitive in James 2:1, though possible, still is not clear on the sense of πίστις in this verse. Is πίστις used in the active (belief) or passive (faithfulness) sense? Dunn’s translation “You hold the faith which our Lord Jesus Christ himself displayed” still leaves faith and faith’s object undefined.¹²⁰ Dunn depends solely on the presence of the definite article with πίστις but this can be explained in other ways. Cranfield has suggested that the definite article is intended not to indicate a subjective genitive but to “make reference to faith more

¹¹⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 175.

¹¹⁷My paraphrase.

¹¹⁸Christoph Burchard, *Der Jakobusbrief*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 95, 97.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 97.

¹²⁰Dunn, “Once More,” 253.

specific – not faith generally but the faith which those addressed are assumed to possess.”¹²¹ Wallis works hard to justify the subjective genitive interpretation but his only evidence is that there are other subjective genitive constructions in James. Out of the four examples he gives, one only two (5:7, 8) are true subjective genitives and all the examples are found in James 5. By his own admission, the subjective genitive reading lacks strong support in the letter of James. He writes,

There is, then, nothing in the letter which gives meaning of substance to the faith of Christ, if alluded to in 2:1. . . although τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης may be a subjective genitive, the absence of corroborative evidence means that the content of Christ’s faith remains undefined and its significance for the rest of the letter unspecified.¹²²

Such a conclusion illustrates the challenges facing a subjective genitive interpretation of James 2:1, challenges which are minimized if it is read as an objective genitive construction.

Contrary to the arguments made above there are good reasons to suggest that in the phrase τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ James is referring to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, faith in 2:1 is the “subjective faith” of the believer addressed.¹²³ First, as was indicated above, πίστις in James is used in the active sense of belief (1:3, 6; 2:5, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26; 5:15). This would seem to suggest that πίστις in 2:1 is used in the active sense as well. This is supported by the close link between the noun faith and the verb believe in James (cf. 2:18 and 19; 2:22 and 23) and fits the context of James’ letter better.

¹²¹Cranfield, *On Romans*, 84.

¹²²Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 175-76.

¹²³James Hardy Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1916; reprint, 1954), 187.

Second, the context of James 2 allows for the objective genitive interpretation. Faith in 2:1 sets the stage for James' discussion of authentic faith that leads to salvation in contrast to dead faith (2:14-26). In this light, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not show partiality (2:1). It is faith in Christ, not Christ's faith that is inconsistent with favoritism.¹²⁴ What matters is not riches or poverty (2:2-4) because God has indeed "chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him" (2:5). Faith must be accompanied by works for it to be real (2:14-17); otherwise, faith, as mere belief that God is one, does not save because the demons have this kind of faith also (2:19-20). Therefore one's faith must be demonstrated in works just as the examples of Abraham and Rahab show (2:21-23, 25). Therefore, faith that justifies includes works (2:24, 26). In the context of chapter 2, the focus is on the nature of saving faith and nothing here suggests that faith in 2:1 belongs to Jesus. According to Seifrid,

Since James's statement concerning the 'faith of Christ' prepares for his subsequent discussion of the character of saving faith, it is very unlikely that he has in view 'Christ's believing,' since he could hardly suppose that the Lord of glory was in need of a faith which saved him in the same way that the ungodly are (see 2:14-26).¹²⁵

Thus, contextually, the objective genitive interpretation is the most likely in 2:1.

It appears that in James, the noun πίστις is used to communicate the idea of responding faith that characterizes the Christian life. On occasions James uses the verb πιστεύω (2:19 [x2]; 2:23) in close connection with the noun πίστις. In the only instance where he uses πίστις with a genitive of Christ, we have shown that it is best taken as an

¹²⁴Moo, *James*, 60.

¹²⁵Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 140.

objective genitive construction. Thus the concept of the “faithfulness of Christ” is not evident in James.

1, 2 Peter and Jude. Peter emphasizes the centrality of faith in the daily lives of his audience. Believers are protected by God’s power through faith (1 Pet 1:5). This faith is the believer’s trust in God (implied). As Paul J. Achtemeier writes, “That divine guarding is now visibly appropriated by the Christians’ trust (διὰ πίστεως), which becomes the instrument whereby the divine protection becomes reality.”¹²⁶ This understanding is not necessarily contrary to J. Ramsey Michaels contention that πίστις here “is understood as continuing trust or faithfulness.”¹²⁷ Michael’s explanation seems to allow room for faithfulness being a result of trust. Still, the connection between faith and salvation (1:5, 9) and the close link between faith and believing (1:8-9) suggests that the emphasis in 1:5 is on the believer’s trust (πίστις) though the idea of faithfulness is not absent. In this light, faithfulness is a consequence of active trust.

When faith endures, the outcome is salvation (1 Pet 1:7, 9). Michaels argues that πίστις in 1:7 is faithfulness (cf. 1:5).¹²⁸ But it is not so clear that Peter is here referring to the faithfulness of his readers. Achtemeier notes that “The related idea that the purity of a person’s trust in God was tested by adversity as precious metal was tested by fire was a commonplace of Jewish thought.”¹²⁹ This would suggest that what is tested

¹²⁶Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 97. Others who see πίστις in 1:5 as the believers’ trust in God include Robert H. Mounce, *A Living Hope: A Commentary on 1 and 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 12; Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 50.

¹²⁷J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Waco: Word, 1988), 23.

¹²⁸Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30.

¹²⁹Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 102.

is their faith and not their life of faithfulness. The latter presupposes the former. If we take into consideration that in 1:5 πίστις as trust is likely (as noted above), the close link between faith (πίστις) and believing (πιστεύω) in 1:8-9, and the similar idea of the testing of faith in James 1:3 (where πίστις is the believer's trust), it makes good sense to see a similar meaning in 1 Peter 1:7. We are not denying that the idea of faithfulness might be present as well, but faithfulness presupposes faith as trust. It is a matter of which sense of πίστις is emphasized.¹³⁰ The object of faith and hope is God (1:21) and faith is a weapon against the devil (5:9). The use of πίστις in 1:21 with a preposition to indicate its object should be brought to bear on the meaning of πίστις in 1:5, 7, 9. The power of God which raised Jesus from the dead so that "your faith and hope are in God" (1:21) is the same power that is guarding us through faith (presumably faith in the power of God which raised Jesus from the dead) for a salvation to be revealed in the last time (1:5). The outcome of faith (in God's power) when it endures though tested, is salvation (1:7, 9). Hence we have a consistent use of πίστις as trust in God which is brought out more clearly in 1:21.

In 2 Peter, we read that both Peter and his readers have the same faith (2 Peter 1:1). It is suggested that Peter's point here is that the faith of his audience is by no means inferior to that of the apostles.¹³¹ Mounce suggests that faith in 2 Peter 1:1 is "the body of the apostolic teaching."¹³² This does not exclude the idea of faith as belief,

¹³⁰Some see πίστις in 1:9 as faithfulness. Thus Michaels, *1 Peter*, 35; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 104 n. 69.

¹³¹Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 50 (Waco: Word, 1983), 167.

¹³²Mounce, *1 and 2 Peter*, 102.

where faith could be understood as acceptance of a body of doctrine.¹³³ Such faith is to be supplemented with other Christian virtues (2 Pet 1:5). We understand faith in 1:5 to be the Christian's faith or trust which now becomes "the root of all the virtues."¹³⁴ This may suggest that faith is the means by which believers have received all the things granted by divine power (1:3) and the means of receiving the promises of God (1:4). While Peter does not attribute the meaning "Christianity" for πίστις, Jude does (Jude 3, 20).

Following the line of thought developed here on the use of πίστις in 1, 2 Peter and Jude, we continue to see a use of πίστις to denote mainly the believer's belief or trust, though some cases might be debated. In any case, even if πίστις bears the meaning faithfulness, it is the faithfulness of the believer. Consequently, there is no instance of faithfulness applied to Jesus with the noun πίστις. The sense faithfulness is portrayed by the adjective πιστός (1 Pet 4:19; 5:12) which in one instance means "believer" with God as object (1 Pet 1:21). The explicit object of faith being God or Jesus Christ is shown by the use of πιστεύω and a preposition (1 Pet 1:8; 2:6).

1, 2, 3 John. The three epistles of John have only one occurrence of the noun πίστις (1 John 5:4) where John says that our faith is the victory that has overcome the world. In keeping with the Gospel of John, he prefers the verb πιστεύω to express belief in God, although there is a definite close link between πίστις and πιστεύω in 1 John 5:4.

¹³³Ibid., 103.

¹³⁴Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 185.

Our faith that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4) is the belief that Jesus is the Christ (5:1) and that he is the Son of God (5:5).¹³⁵

Revelation. In Revelation, the verb πιστεύω does not appear. The author uses πίστις four times (2:13, 19; 13:10; 14:12). Two facts are debated. In 2:13 we read, “You did not deny my faith” (καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου). The challenge here is how to translate τὴν πίστιν μου, “my faith” or “faith in me.” Is this a reference to Jesus’ faith/faithfulness or our faith in Jesus? The same challenge appears in 14:12 where we have the expression “faith in/of Jesus” (τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ). Opinions vary here and scholars are divided on how to interpret the genitives in these verses. In 2:13, τὴν πίστιν μου is translated as “My faith,”¹³⁶ “faith in me,”¹³⁷ or “my faithfulness.”¹³⁸ In 14:12 τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ is rendered in various ways: “faith in Jesus,”¹³⁹ “the faith of Jesus,”¹⁴⁰ “the faithfulness of Jesus,”¹⁴¹ or “faithful to Jesus.”¹⁴² These various translations reflect the

¹³⁵John writes, καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικῆσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἢ πίστις ἡμῶν. Τίς [δέ] ἐστὶν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ [1 John 5:4b, 5]).

¹³⁶Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969; reprint, 1975), 66; George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 46.

¹³⁷NET, NRSV, NIV, G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London: Black, 1966), 188; R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 77; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 246; David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52A (Dallas: Word, 1997), 177; Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940; reprint, 1947), 29.

¹³⁸Dunn, “Once More,” 253.

¹³⁹NET, NRSV (mg), NASB.

¹⁴⁰NRSV, KJV.

¹⁴¹Dunn, “Once More,” 253.

¹⁴²NIV.

difficulty in deciding the meaning of πίστις in relation to the person of Jesus in these texts.

John Dunnill views the basic sense of πίστις to be what he calls “the Hebraic ‘firmness, steadfastness, faithfulness under duress,’ often linked to ‘endurance’ (2:19; 13:10) and to ‘truth’ (19:11; 21:5; 22:6).” In this light, πίστις in 2:19 and 13:10 is “faithfulness,” a character required of humans if they are to “stand by God’s purposes in the face of persecution.”¹⁴³ He points to references to Jesus as “the faithful witness” (1:5; 13:14) and as the one who is “faithful and true” (19:11).¹⁴⁴ For these reasons, Dunnill concludes that πίστις cannot mean “belief” in Revelation and this meaning (belief) is “blatantly imported in some of these examples of lazy exegesis.” On the contrary, the subjective genitive “Christ’s faith” or the “faithfulness” of the believer under trial makes better sense in context. Thus Dunnill concludes, “‘Jesus’ faithfulness’ in Revelation, is the supreme example for disciples to imitate, but it is not in itself a saving act, as it is for Paul.”¹⁴⁵

Wallis, again theorizing that “there are no unambiguous cases of πίστις with the objective genitive in the New Testament,” insists that there is little support for the objective genitive interpretation in these two texts.¹⁴⁶ He maintains that πίστις in Revelation 2:19 and 13:10 is not about belief in Jesus. It is about the quality of life

¹⁴³Dunnill, “πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 22.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 23.

¹⁴⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 167.

marked by endurance and faithfulness. Additionally, the presence of the definite article with πίστις in 2:13 and 14:12 supports the subjective genitive interpretation.¹⁴⁷

Other scholars do not go into details on the meaning of πίστις in 2:13 and 14:12. They simply point out that πίστις refers to the Christian faith and that the genitives μου and Ἰησοῦ are broadly adjectival.¹⁴⁸ Dunn, who argues for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul, holds that here in Revelation 2:13 and 14:12, πίστις is the faithfulness of Jesus. His conclusion is based on the presence of the definite article with πίστις and on his belief that “faithfulness of Christ (ὁ πιστός) is a particular theme of the seer (Rev 1:5; 3:14; 19:11).”¹⁴⁹

These are good arguments for the subjective genitive reading. It is true that Revelation emphasizes the faithfulness of Jesus with the adjective πιστός (Rev 1:5; 3:14; 19:11) and believers are called faithful (πιστός [2:10, 13; 17:14]). One can conclude that Jesus’ faithfulness does serve as an example for believers in Revelation.¹⁵⁰ Another support for the subjective genitive argument in 2:13 and 14:12 is that πίστις in 2:19 and 13:10 could be the believer’s faithfulness. In this light, taking πίστις in 2:13 and 14:12 as Jesus’ faithfulness would make sense in the context of Revelation. While the subjective genitive reading is possible, two reasons make this reading questionable.

First, when references are made to Jesus’ faithfulness (1:5; 3:14; 19:11) or the faithfulness of the believer (2:10, 13; 17:14) the adjective πιστός is used. There is no

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79; Hays, *Faith*, 149 n. 113.

¹⁴⁹Dunn, “Once More,” 253.

¹⁵⁰Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 141.

clear case in Revelation where πίστις means faithfulness referring to Jesus. Even in the examples of 2:19 and 13:10 where πίστις is possibly the believer's faithfulness, it is not clear that πίστις as belief is not what John emphasizes. After all, faithfulness presupposes belief on the part of the believer. While faithfulness as an emphasis fits the context of Revelation, John communicates the idea with πιστός. We must at least wonder why John makes this distinction between πίστις and πιστός.¹⁵¹

Second, a potential weakness in the subjective genitive view is a lack of clarity on the meaning of the faith/faithfulness of Jesus in Revelation. Dunn translates πίστις as faithfulness of Jesus and offers no comment as to its content.¹⁵² Robinson maintains that Jesus' faithfulness here is an example for believers to follow but it is not a saving faithfulness.¹⁵³ Hays argues that πίστις here means the Christian faith but says little as to its content as well.¹⁵⁴ Wallis believes that Jesus' πίστις is his life of testimony to God in the face of suffering. To speak of Jesus' πίστις is the same as referring to him as the faithful witness (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός) in suffering.¹⁵⁵ If the subjective genitive arguments are accepted, a consistent explanation of the content of Jesus' faith evades the reader.

Contrary to the arguments made in support of the subjective genitive position, there are good reasons for reading the two phrases τὴν πίστιν μου (2:13) and τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ (14:12) as objective genitive constructions. One must admit that with only

¹⁵¹Ladd translates τὴν πίστιν μου (2:13) as "my faith," but interprets it as an objective genitive construction. See Ladd, *Revelation*, 46. Some scholars do not have a problem seeing πίστις in 2:13 as belief. Thus Aune, *Revelation*, 184; Mounce, *Revelation*, 80; Beale, *Revelation*, 246.

¹⁵²Dunn, "Once More," 253.

¹⁵³Robinson, "Faith of Jesus Christ," 79.

¹⁵⁴Hays, "Faith," 149 n. 113.

¹⁵⁵Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 173.

four instances of πίστις in Revelation (2:13, 19; 13:10; 14:12) and the absence of the verb πιστεύω it becomes somewhat difficult to decide with certainty the meaning of πίστις in the debated texts. Still, there is some supporting evidence for an objective genitive interpretation. We note first of all other instances of Jesus in the genitive case in Revelation. First, the noun τὴν μαρτυρίαν appears five times in Revelation with a genitive referring to Jesus or Jesus Christ. For example, τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:2), τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ (1:9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4). In each of these examples, the genitives Ἰησοῦ or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ are likely objective genitives although one could argue for a subjective genitive interpretation.¹⁵⁶ When we take into account the other occurrences of τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, the objective genitive reading gains more support. The reason for John's exile in the island of Patmos is "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ (1:9). Although a subjective genitive reading of Ἰησοῦ is possible here, it seems contextually better to read it as an objective genitive. Thus, John is in exile because of his testimony about Jesus.¹⁵⁷ It does not make good sense contextually to say that John was exiled because of testimony borne by Jesus.

In 12:17 the dragon goes to make war with those "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. The testimony of Jesus could be understood as the testimony borne by Jesus, taking Ἰησοῦ as subjective genitive. Yet, in

¹⁵⁶Contra Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 171. In 1:2, τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is construed by David E. Aune as subjective, "the witness borne by Jesus" although he allows for the possibility of an objective genitive, "the witness about Jesus Christ." See Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 19, 80.

¹⁵⁷Cf. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 81.

light of 12:11, it is likely that an objective genitive is intended, thus, “testimony about/to Jesus,” or as Aune translates it, “maintaining their witness to Jesus.”¹⁵⁸ Revelation 12:11 says that God’s people overcome the devil “because of the blood of the lamb and because of the word of their testimony,” διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν. As Ladd points out, the “word of their testimony” is “their witness to the saving power of the blood of Christ.”¹⁵⁹ This might suggest that “the testimony of Jesus” (12:17) is the believer’s witness to the saving power of the blood of Christ which overcomes the dragon (12:11). The same construction appears in 19:10 where John is one among those “who hold the testimony of Jesus,” τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. Aune argues that in view of other instances where the emphasis is on the testimony to Jesus borne by believers (6:9; 11:7; 12:11; 17:6) it is better to take Ἰησοῦ in 19:10 as an objective genitive.¹⁶⁰ If our understanding of these texts as objective genitive constructions is correct, then we have evidence supporting the objective genitive interpretation of 2:13 and 14:12 in that there are other cases in John where Jesus, in the genitive case, is used objectively with a verbal noun.

The second argument favoring the objective genitive reading is simply that the faithfulness of Jesus in 2:13 would not make sense. It is not clear how the church in Pergamum is commended for not denying the faith/faithfulness of Jesus. It seems more probable that they are commended for not denying faith in Christ in that they held fast Jesus’ name. This would mean that κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, “you hold fast my name” is

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ladd, *Revelation*, 172.

¹⁶⁰ Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52C (Dallas: Word, 1998), 1038.

explained as οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου, “you did not deny my faith” meaning “faith in me.” This understanding gains support in 3:8 where a similar phrase οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου appears except that there, the direct object of ἠρνήσω is τὸ ὄνομά μου.¹⁶¹

Turning to 14:12, we find that an objective genitive interpretation is also plausible. John writes, “Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.” In the context of 14:9-12, John warns that those who worship the beast will become objects of God’s wrath (14:10). Then he calls for the saints to persevere, “Here is the perseverance of the saints” (14:12). But how will the saints persevere? The answer seems to be the keeping of God’s commandments and faith in Jesus (14:12; cf. 12:17). The idea of perseverance here connected to faith might suggest that faith leads to perseverance.

In the end, the evidence needs to be weighed accordingly by the reader. There is a strong likelihood, for reasons given above, that John alludes to the believers’ faith in these chapters and could possibly intend for the genitive constructions to be seen as referring to faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁶² Additionally, he alludes to Jesus being “faithful” but he uses the adjective πιστός in this instance (1:5; 3:14; 19:11).¹⁶³ As we noted earlier, John also made use of Jesus in the genitive case, which is most likely an objective genitive construction (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4). If the objective genitive reading is

¹⁶¹As Seifrid notes, “The faith of Jesus’ which the faithful Antipas did not deny is faith which ‘holds fast his name’” (*Christ, Our Righteousness*, 141). Aune makes this point when he says that “This clause [You hold fast my name and did not deny my faith] is in the rhetorical form of an antithesis in which the initial positive statement (‘hold my name’) is reiterated and reinforced through a negative statement (‘you did not renounce faith in me’)” (Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 184).

¹⁶²See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 116; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 141. Dunn, “Once More Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 253; Hays, *Faith*, 149 n. 113.

¹⁶³Cf. Rev 2:10, 13; 17:14; 21:5, 6.

valid, then we have here (2:13; 14:12) two more examples of πίστις with an objective genitive outside of Paul.

Conclusion

In the NT, πίστις has a variety of meanings such as belief, confidence, trust, and faithfulness depending on context.¹⁶⁴ Unlike the LXX where πίστις is mainly used in the passive sense, the NT employs πίστις predominantly in the active sense. The object of πίστις is characterized by the use of a preposition or by an objective genitive but most often it is simply implied in context. Rarely do we find the meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις in the NT. With reference to Jesus, he is always the object and never the subject of faith. This is supported by the fact that the NT does not present Christ as the subject of the verb “to believe.”¹⁶⁵ Outside of the debated πίστις Χριστοῦ passages, there is no explicit reference to Jesus’ faith or faithfulness in the rest of the NT with the use of πίστις.¹⁶⁶ Where the “faithfulness” of Jesus is in view, the NT authors seem to use πιστός to indicate this meaning.¹⁶⁷

Evaluation of Arguments from the OT Background in Light of the NT Evidence

This chapter began with a brief overview of the OT background argument made in support of the subjective interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. After surveying the

¹⁶⁴For textual support for these different uses see BDAG, s.v. “πίστις.” See also Bromiley, “Faith,” 270. He notes that πίστις as trust or reliance is the basis of man’s faithfulness. In this sense, πίστις as “faithfulness” presupposes πίστις as “belief” or “trust.”

¹⁶⁵Thus Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 345. See also Cranfield, *On Romans*, 83.

¹⁶⁶Cranfield, *On Romans*, 83.

¹⁶⁷We are not denying that the concept of Jesus as “faithful” is present in the NT. We are only arguing that this concept is rarely, if at all, communicated by the noun πίστις.

use of πίστις in the LXX we concluded that the LXX supports the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ. Then we examined how this argument fares in light of the evidence from the use of πίστις in the NT. The argument from the OT background does not gain much support from the NT usage of πίστις. There are many instances in the NT where πίστις is used differently from the LXX. For example, while the LXX predominantly uses πίστις in the passive sense, the NT employs it primarily in the active sense. Thus, a direct correlation cannot be drawn between πίστις in the NT and the LXX. C. H. Dodd, for example, may be right in his view that Paul was influenced by the use of πίστις in early Christianity and not by the LXX background.¹⁶⁸ Seifrid also points out that “Only five texts in the New Testament speak of the ‘faithfulness of Christ’ using the adjective *pistos*, a paucity which stands in stark contrast to the approximately 400 (both implicit and direct) references to faith in Christ in the New Testament.”¹⁶⁹ In the end, the OT background of πίστις may not be as important in deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ as has been claimed.

Second, the most problematic textual evidence for the subjective genitive reading in light of OT background, is the use of πίστις with objective genitives in the NT literature outside of Paul (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12). These are the closest parallels to the debated texts (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9), but they fail to support the subjective genitive reading. Noting that these parallel examples do not support clearly the subjective genitive view, Murray concludes that the

¹⁶⁸Dodd, commenting on the use of πίστις in the active sense and its influence on Paul, notes that “it is likely that the Gospel usage, or rather the usage in primitive Christian tradition lying behind the Gospels, has helped to determine Paul’s use of the term (πίστις).” See C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 69, 70.

¹⁶⁹Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 140.

“analogy creates no presumption in favour of the interpretation [subjective genitive interpretation] in question.”¹⁷⁰ On the contrary, these examples fit well with the objective genitive interpretation.

What this background study has shown is that in the LXX πίστις always means “faithfulness” but in the NT, that meaning is not prominent. We find instead that the NT writers prefer to use πίστις predominantly in the active sense of belief. Hence, the translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faithfulness of Christ” is not supported by the wider usage of πίστις in the NT. In fact, we have argued that the parallel examples of πίστις with the genitive case outside of Paul (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12) are examples of objective genitive constructions. Therefore, we have rather significant support outside of Paul for taking the Pauline phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive construction as well.

¹⁷⁰Murray, *Romans*, 1:369-70.

CHAPTER 3

FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Introduction

In the history of research the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate has centered on the application of various methods towards a definition and interpretation of this phrase. Rare in the history of research is any detailed investigation into the use of this phrase in the writings of the apostolic fathers.¹ To our knowledge, only two attempts have been made to determine the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ during this time and even these have their limitations.²

It is true that much has been done to advance this debate in the last fifty years. Yet, a consideration of how πίστις Χριστοῦ and similar constructions of πίστις with a

¹The term “apostolic fathers,” according to Holmes, “is traditionally used to designate the collection of the earliest extant Christian writings outside the New Testament” (*The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Hammer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 1. These documents date from first and second centuries AD and are a primary source for the study of the postapostolic period (ca. A.D. 70-135 [ibid., 1]). We follow the list in Holmes (ibid. 3). Our focus will be on *1 Clement*, the letters of Ignatius, Polycarp, Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas.

²R. A. Harrisville III, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Witness of the Fathers,” *NOVT* 36 (1994): 233-41; Ian. G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 175-212. Harrisville’s work centers on the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the writings of the fathers, but he is limited in his approach. For example, he only goes as far back as Clement of Alexandria and limits his investigation to the quotation of the Pauline phrase. Wallis, on the other hand, investigates the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in the apostolic fathers from a theological point of view. His focus is more on the fathers’ theological interest in Jesus’ faith and how it relates to salvation. For this reason he does not explain the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the context of the fathers. Our approach here is broader. We will investigate how the fathers used and understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase and other constructions using “faith” with a genitive case.

genitive case were understood and used by the fathers would advance the debate further and may help in determining the meaning of this phrase in Paul.³

The use of πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ and other genitives in the writings of the fathers is important for our research in that it provides a useful literary context for deciding the meaning of an ambiguous phrase. This chapter will investigate whether the fathers used πίστις with an objective genitive. If it becomes evident that the fathers understood πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ,” then we would have significant evidence from a very early period supporting the objective genitive view.⁴

There are a number of instances in the writings of the apostolic fathers where πίστις is used with a genitive case.⁵ We have references to “the faith of Christ,” “the faith of God,” “his [Christ’s] faith,” among others. The fathers also used “faith” with the genitive case of other things and people such as “the faith of a superior being” and “faith of the promise.” There are also many examples of πίστις used with a genitive of a person (other than God or Christ) or a personal pronoun. In each of these instances where “faith” is used with a genitive case, it could be translated either as “faith in”

³Our investigation is limited to the writings of the apostolic fathers (first two centuries) for several reasons: (1) while it would be beneficial to investigate the meaning beyond the second century, it would make this chapter too long. (2) The apostolic fathers provide sufficient evidence to determine how πίστις with a genitive construction was used by those closest to Paul’s time. (3) Paul’s writing is more likely to be similar to the apostolic fathers than to writings of those who wrote centuries after him.

⁴Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 30. Silva argues that in cases where we have an ambiguous phrase and it is clear that the Greek Fathers assumed that “one of the possible meanings is the right one, that fact can become highly significant. In other words, his use of Greek at that point is very strong evidence for the way a native speaker would naturally understand the language” (ibid).

⁵Unless indicated otherwise, the Greek text and English translations are taken from Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*.

(objective genitive) or “faith/faithfulness of” (subjective genitive). The approach here is to look at each father and how he used the above phrase and ask which of the two options (objective or subjective genitive) is best supported by the context.⁶ Thus, emphasis will be given to the context of the various authors since that is our best hope of arriving at the author’s intended meaning.

The Letter of the Romans to the Corinthians (*1 Clement*)

First Clement uses πίστις variously: (1) absolutely (i.e., without a stated object, 10.7; 12.1; 26.1; 31.2; 32.4; 55.6), (2) with a preposition (22.1; 35.2, 5) and (3) with a genitive modifier (2.2; 3.4; 5.6; 6.2; 27.3; 58.2). It is our goal here to analyze the use of πίστις to see the sense in which Clement uses the word.

Faith Used Absolutely

On different occasions, Clement makes use of “faith” absolutely but the object of faith is understood in context. He writes that Abraham received the blessing of a son in his old age because of his faith (10:7). In the preceding verse, Clement quotes Genesis 15:6, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (10.6). This indicates that Abraham’s faith in 10.7 is his act of trust in God.⁷ Again, Clement

⁶In situations where the genitive is used with a verbal noun (i.e., a head noun that has a verbal idea), the categories are generally limited to subjective, objective, and plenary genitives. In the examples discussed in this chapter, the subjective and objective genitives are the most likely categories, thus the limitation to the two choices. This is not to deny the validity of other categories (such a genitive of source) but that will be discussed in appendix 1. For a helpful discussion of “verbal genitives,” see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 112-121.

⁷Cf. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, ed. and trans. Frederick William Danker et al. [BDAG], 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “πίστις”; Rom 4:5, 9, 11-13.

writes that Abraham was blessed by God because he (Abraham) obtained righteousness and truth through faith (διὰ πίστεως [31.2]). It is understood that God is the object of Abraham's faith just as in 10.6, 7. The references to Abraham's faith and his justification (10.6, 7; 31.2) is significant since Clement most probably reflects Paul himself here. Lona makes this same point and writes that there might be a Pauline influence behind the phrase διὰ πίστεως (cf. Gal 3:14; Rom 4:23) that goes back to the expressions of faith in Galatians 2:16; 3:14, 26; and Romans 3:22, 25.⁸

In another absolute use of faith, Clement links it to justification. He writes,

And so we, having been called through his will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works which we have done in holiness of heart, *but through faith* [ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς πίστεως], by which the almighty God has justified all who have existed from the beginning; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.⁹

The words "through faith" here bring to mind Paul's use of the phrase in Galatians 2:16; 3:14, 26 and Romans 3:22, 25.¹⁰ Wallis correctly comments that this passage is "reminiscent of Romans 3," but his suggestion that the passage "explains how human response is rendered impotent in the light of God's salvific initiatives fulfilled in Christ" is unpersuasive.¹¹ On the other hand, Lawson agrees that the concept of justification by

⁸Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern, Zweiter Band (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 339. He writes that "Die Wendung διὰ πίστεως hier [*1 Clem.* 31.2] und in 32,4 dürfte auf den Einfluss der paulinischen Begrifflichkeit zurückgehen (vgl. Gal 2,16; 3,14.26; Röm 3,22.25. Vgl ferner Eph 2,8; 3,12)" (ibid.). See also Robert M. Grant and Holt H. Graham, *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), 2:57, who see a Pauline influence here as well.

⁹*1 Clem.* 32.4. Italics added.

¹⁰This point is also made by Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 339. Cf. *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, ed. W. K. Lowther Clarke (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), 27. Clarke notes that *1 Clem.* 32.4 shows that Clement "clearly intends to teach St Paul's doctrine of faith" (ibid.). Another possible reflection of Pauline thought in Clement is in 30.1, where he says that justification is by works (cf. Rom 2:13).

¹¹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 197.

faith here is thoroughly Pauline, but goes on to argue that faith is fidelity and not trust as in Paul.¹² Contrary to Wallis and Lawson, the human response of faith (trust) in this passage is pivotal. We are not justified by works but by faith through which God has justified those who have existed from the beginning.¹³ The human response of faith is not rendered powerless (contra Wallis), and there is no convincing reason to argue that “faith” as used here could not mean “trust” (contra Lawson). If the emphasis is on “fidelity,” then Clement’s argument that we are not justified even “through works which we have done in holiness of heart” (*1 Clem.* 32.4) is contradictory.

It is worth noticing that in a context where Clement speaks of justification, he says that justification is by faith (human response of faith). There is no mention of Christ’s faith/faithfulness in this context. Clement does not resist language that correlates God’s gifts with human faith. For example, Abraham was given a son because of his faith (*1 Clem.* 10.7), Rahab the harlot was saved because of her faith (*1 Clem.* 12.1),¹⁴ and Abraham attained righteousness and truth because of his faith (*1 Clem.* 31.2). Such statements do not diminish God’s role in salvation since Clement also recognizes that faith is not a human work but a gift from God (*1 Clem.* 35.1-2; 62.2). Clement’s use of

¹²John Lawson, *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 40, 44. Lawson’s argument lacks support, especially when Clement tends to use πιστός when referencing Abraham’s faithfulness (cf. 10.1). Lawson’s argument here also goes against his earlier point. Commenting on *1 Clem.* 10, he writes, “Clement does not say that faith is simply obedience to God . . . He rightly affirms that Abraham’s obedience was the fruit and mark of his faith” (ibid., 35). Another problem facing Lawson’s view is that he has to arbitrarily decide when the noun “faith” means “fidelity” or “trust” in Clement. Was Rachel saved because of her “faith” (trust) in God or because of her “fidelity” (*1 Clem.* 12.1)?

¹³Probably a reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who all received God’s blessings through faith. See *1 Clem.* chaps. 31-32. It is unlikely that Clement is saying that these individuals were justified because of their faithfulness.

¹⁴Rahab’s faith is understandably her faith in God. Cf. BDAG, s.v. “πίστις.”

πίστις absolutely in these examples indicate that πίστις for him is mainly “belief” or “trust” with God being the understood object (*1 Clem.* 10.7; 12.1,7-8; 31.2; 34.4; 35.5; 42.3; 55.6).

Πίστις with a Preposition

Twice the object of faith is indicated by ἐν (ἢ ἐν Χριστῷ πίστις [22.1]) and πρὸς (διὰ πίστεως πρὸς τὸν θεόν [35.5]).¹⁵ Here, Christ or God is the object of faith. These two examples support the possibility that when πίστις is used without an expressed object, Christ or God is the understood object if the context allows.

Πίστις with a Genitive

Subjective genitive. There are clear instances in which Clement makes use of πίστις with a subjective genitive of a personal pronoun. He writes, “For has anyone ever visited you who did not approve *your most and steadfast faith* (τὴν πανάρετον καὶ βεβαίαν ὑμῶν πίστιν [1.2])?”¹⁶ Speaking of Paul, he notes, “After he had been seven times in chains, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, and had preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith (τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ [5.6]).” He also writes that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit “are the faith and the hope of the elect” (ἡ πίστις καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν [58.2]). These are clearly subjective genitive

¹⁵Lawson, *Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers*, 40, argues that in *1 Clem.* 22.1, “faith” refers to Christianity and shows a departure in Clement’s use from the Pauline conception of faith. He supports his argument by appealing to Acts 6:7; Gal 1:23; Eph 4:5; and Jude 3, where “faith” means a body of doctrine or Christianity. The NT references to which Lawson appeals do not support his contention that “faith” in *1 Clem.* 22.1 means “Christianity” since none of the examples he gives from the NT is used with a prepositional phrase. Contrary to Lawson, Lona and Torrance see here a reference to the believer’s faith in Christ (Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 285; Thomas Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959], 46).

¹⁶Italics added.

constructions. In the first two examples (1.2; 5.6) πίστις could have the sense “faithfulness.” Against taking πίστις in 1.2 and 5.6 as “faithfulness” is the fact that πίστις in Clement, when used absolutely, almost always carries the active sense (see reference above). The addition of “steadfast” (βεβαίον) to “faith” in 1:2 indicates that “steadfastness” is a characteristic of faith (cf. 6.2). Thus, “belief” or “trust” necessarily includes “faithfulness” but the emphasis appears to fall on the act of “belief.”¹⁷ Also, in places where πίστις is clearly the individual’s faith even without a genitive pronoun, it is understood to be faith as “trust.”¹⁸ Additionally, Clement seems to make a clear distinction between faith (as “trust”) and “faithfulness” by using πιστός for the latter (*1 Clem.* 9.4; 10.1; 17.5; 27.1; 48.5; 60.1; 62.3). In the third example (58.2), πίστις hardly refers to the “faithfulness of the elect” even though τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν is a subjective genitive. The addition of “hope” to “faith” suggests that Clement might have meant to indicate that God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are the object of faith and hope or, as Lona suggests, faith and hope come through God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ This is clear in 12.7 where the verbs for faith and hope are used together with God as the object, “. . . through the blood of the Lord redemption will come to all *who believe and hope in God*” (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν καὶ ἐλπίζουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν).²⁰ It seems to us that even in those cases where πίστις is used with a subjective genitive, it most

¹⁷Cf. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 121.

¹⁸This is certainly true of the example of Abraham (10.7; 32.2), Rahab (12.1), and possibly true of Esther (55.6).

¹⁹Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 580.

²⁰Italics added. In *1 Clement*, God or Christ is the object of faith (22.1; 35.5) and hope (11.1; 12.7; 16.16; 22.8).

likely has the meaning “trust” or “belief” rather than “faithfulness.”

Possible object genitive constructions. In 3.3-4, Clement points out that the presence of strife in the church has led to the absence of righteousness and peace. He links the absence of righteousness and peace to the lack of the “fear of God” (τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ [cf. 2.8]) in their lives. As a result, they have become nearly blinded in “his faith” (ἐν τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ). Clement writes,

So men were stirred up: those without honor against the honored, those of no repute against the highly reputed, the foolish against the wise, the young against the elders. For this reason righteousness and peace stand at a distance while each one has abandoned the fear of God and become nearly blinded *with respect to faith in Him* [ἐν τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ], neither walking according to His commandments nor living in accordance with his duty toward Christ.²¹

Most translators see αὐτοῦ as an objective genitive and translate τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ as “faith in him.”²² Context itself supports this objective genitive reading. For example, the result of abandoning the “fear of God (τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ)”²³ is that they became “nearly blinded with respect to faith in him” so that they do not walk in accord with God’s commands. An attempt to see the “faithfulness of God” here does not seem to work since the focus is on the believer’s faith that manifests itself in obedience to God’s commands.²⁴ We conclude that the object of “faith” is expressed here in the genitive case.²⁵ In light of 1.2, faith here is their “steadfast faith in Christ.”

²¹I *Clem.* 3.3-4. Italics mine.

²²*Apostolic Fathers* (ed. and rev. Holmes, 33); *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library [LCL] 2 vols. (London: Harvard University Press, 1912-1913), 1:13. *The Apostolic Fathers: An American Translation*, trans. E. J. Goodspeed (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), 50. Lightfoot has “the faith of him” retaining the ambiguity in the τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ phrase (see *The Apostolic Fathers*, J. B. Lightfoot, ed. and completed, J. R. Harmer [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956], 14).

²³Θεοῦ is clearly an objective genitive.

²⁴BDAG takes πίστις in 3.4 as “faith,” “trust,” or “confidence” in God (ibid. s.v. “πίστις.”)

²⁵Cf. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 144. Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 197-98 makes no comment on the meaning of the genitive construction. He is only concerned to show that Clement associates faith “intimately with God’s salvific provision in Christ” (ibid.).

Another possible example of an objective genitive construction with πίστις appears in chapter 27. Clement warns against double-mindedness (unbelief) which he contrasts with faith, exhorting his readers to live worthily of God and shun double-mindedness, which characterizes those who do not fear God.²⁶ According to Clement, the life that is pleasing to God is a life of faith.

With this hope²⁷, therefore, let our souls be bound *to him who is faithful* [τῷ πιστῷ] in his promises and righteous in his judgments . . . *Therefore, let our faith in him be rekindled within us*, [ἀναζωπυρησάτω οὖν ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν], and let us understand that all things are near to him.²⁸

Should ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ be translated as “faith in him” or “his faith/faithfulness”?

Holmes and Lake translate αὐτοῦ as an objective genitive (cf. *1 Clem.* 3.3).²⁹ Lake’s rendering of αὐτοῦ as an objective genitive is significant since he tends to leave such constructions vague (“his faith”).

While it is possible to take the genitive αὐτοῦ here as a subjective genitive, context does not favor this reading. The exhortation rests on the truth that God is both faithful (πιστός) in his promises and righteous in his judgments (*1 Clem.* 27.1). In this light, the admonition draws an inference relative to the preceding statements about God. Thus, in view of who God is (*1 Clem.* 27.1), let faith in him be rekindled within us.³⁰ The focus here is unmistakably on the believer’s response of faith to God founded on the

²⁶See especially chaps. 21-23 of *1 Clement*.

²⁷Referring to the hope of the resurrection which Clement discussed in chap. 26.

²⁸*1 Clem.* 27.1-3.

²⁹*Apostolic Fathers* (ed. and rev. Holmes, 59); *Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 1:55). See also Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 312.

³⁰BDAG, s.v. “πίστις”; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 315. Lawson, *Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers*, 41. Lawson correctly states that according to Clement, “faith is kindled in the heart by a conviction of God’s sovereign majesty . . . and by trust in His faithfulness to His promises” (ibid.).

knowledge of God's faithfulness and justice. To take αὐτοῦ as subjective genitive would create difficulties in explaining how God's faith is to be rekindled within us. The phrase, "within us" calls into question the subjective genitive.³¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, we note the following from *1 Clement*: first, it is significant that in *1 Clement* the person of Jesus Christ plays a central role in God's plan of salvation. The blood of Christ is precious to the Father and was poured out for our salvation (*1 Clem.* 7.4). Through the blood of Jesus, redemption comes to those who believe and hope in God (*1 Clem.* 12.7). In all of these references an obvious connection exists between the work of Christ and the necessity of faith for salvation. Yet, Clement nowhere makes an explicit link between Christ's death and Christ's faith where his death would be understood as an act of faithfulness or obedience. Clement does not use the word "obedience" with reference to Christ, though he applies it to believers often (1.3; 9.1, 3; 10.2, 7; 13.3; 37.2). There is therefore no evidence from Clement that would support the argument that Jesus' πίστις is his act of obedience in dying on the cross.³²

Second, Clement's use of πίστις in an absolute sense, with a preposition, with

³¹Contra Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 198. Wallis has "his faith" for ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ. Commenting on this reference he writes, "He [Clement] exhorts his readers, on the basis of God's faithfulness, not so much to believe in God as to allow his faith to take seed in them" (ibid.). Wallis's interpretation is possible but several points argue against it. First, we have already shown that Clement uses πίστις mainly in the active sense of "trust" or "belief." Second, when he intends to point to the meaning "faithfulness" he uses the adjective πιστός. Third, there are no clear instances of πίστις with the meaning "faithfulness" in *1 Clement*. It seems that in terms of usage, Clement's readers understood πίστις not as "faithfulness" but as the act of putting one's trust in God. Wallis simply assumes the sense "faithfulness" for πίστις here but does not give any evidence for it from within the letter. Also lacking is an explanation of what God's faith entails and how it is rekindled in the believer.

³²See chap. 1. Clement does link "obedience" to πιστός in 10.1. Clarke is misleading when he says that in 10.1 Abraham's faith is "defined as becoming 'obedient to the words of God'" (*First Clement*, 27). He does not note that here πιστός is used instead of πίστις.

subjective and objective genitives is consistent with how other NT writers use the word.³³

For the NT writers and Clement, πίστις is used predominantly in the active sense of “trust” or “belief.” The meaning “faithfulness” is mainly absent. Neither Clement nor other NT writers outside of Paul equate πίστις with “obedience.” If we assume that Paul’s use of πίστις is consistent with the NT writers and Clement, then it becomes increasingly difficult to accept the argument that for Paul, Christ’s πίστις is his “obedience” understood as his death on the cross.

Third, in areas where Clement seems to reflect Paul on justification and faith, he does not mention the πίστις of Christ. Instead, Clement argues that it is the believer’s faith that justifies (10.7; 31.2). Like Paul, he also draws a contrast between works and faith in justification. In this case, it is clearly a contrast between the human act of works and believing (32.3-4). This piece of evidence seems to go against the argument that in the context of justification (Gal 2:16; Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9) Paul contrasts our works and Christ’s faithfulness.³⁴

In sum, although *1 Clement* does not use the specific phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ, he provides evidence for the use of “faith” with a genitive to indicate its object. One wonders if this was not a short-hand way of writing in the same way that the verbal noun “fear” (φόβος) is used with a genitive case to illustrate the object of “fear” (cf. *1 Clem.* 2.8; 12.5; 21.6, 8; 22.1). Additionally, the absence of any explicit use of πίστις for God’s or Christ’s faithfulness in Clement, cautions against reading the genitive αὐτοῦ (*1 Clem.* 3.3-4; 27.1-3) as a subjective genitive.

³³See chap. 2.

³⁴See discussion in chaps. 1, 6, and 7.

The Letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch

To the Ephesians

In the letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians, πίστις is used in various ways. We note the following: first, there are those instances where πίστις takes a preposition (1.1; 14.1). The letter begins with an appreciation for the righteous character of the Ephesians. Ignatius writes that their “righteous nature . . . is characterized *by faith in and love of Christ Jesus our Savior*”³⁵ (κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν, 1.1). In 14.1 he also writes, “None of these things escapes your notice, *if you have perfect faith and love toward Jesus Christ*” (ἐὰν τελείως εἰς Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἔχητε τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην).³⁶ These are two clear examples where the noun πίστις is used with a preposition to indicate its object.

Second, in most cases, πίστις is used without a stated object (3.1; 8.2; 10.2; 14.2 [x2]; 20.2). In some of these examples, the sense of πίστις is not clear. Ignatius speaks of the need for him to be trained “in faith” (3.1). He states that “faith cannot do the things of unfaithfulness, nor unfaithfulness the things of faith” (8:2).³⁷ Ignatius calls on his readers to be “steadfast in the faith” (ἐδραῖοι τῇ πίστει, 10.2). Πίστις here could be taken as constancy in the faith or as faithfulness. Yet, it is also possible that he means for them to be steadfast (which [steadfast] already contains the idea of constancy or faithfulness) by means of their trust in Jesus (cf. 1:1; 14.1; cf. *1 Clem.* 1.2). This

³⁵Literally, “faith and love in Christ.” Here is at least a reference to “faith” used with a preposition to indicate its object. Italics added.

³⁶Italics added.

³⁷It is also possible to render 8.2 as “faith cannot do the things of unbelief, nor unbelief the things of faith” (ἡ πίστις τὰ τῆς ἀπιστίας οὐδὲ ἡ ἀπιστία τὰ τῆς πίστεως).

interpretation is supported by 14.2 where perseverance to the end is possible through the power of faith.³⁸

Third, there are two instances where faith is used with a genitive of a personal pronoun (9.1; 13.1). In these two cases, it is clearly a subjective genitive construction, but does πίστις mean “faithfulness” or “trust” in these cases? In 9.1, “your faith” might be “your faithfulness,” but the same cannot be said in 13.1 where Ignatius writes that “the powers of Satan are overthrown and his destructiveness is nullified by the unanimity of your faith.” Shortly thereafter, with a close link to 13.1, he says, “None of these things escapes your notice, if you have perfect faith and love toward Jesus Christ” (14.1). Here, it seems that the faith in 13.1 is faith that is directed toward Jesus Christ. Thus, in a clearly subjective genitive construction with πίστις, it (πίστις) means “trust” or “belief.”

Finally, we come to two other genitival constructions with πίστις (Ign. *Eph.* 16.2; 20.1). Here the noun in the genitive refers to Christ or God and could be taken either as subjective or objective genitive. In the first case, Ignatius warns against false teachers who corrupt “the faith of God.”

Do not be misled, my brothers: those who adulterously corrupt households will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now if those who do such things physically are put to death, how much more if by evil teaching someone corrupts *faith in God* [πίστιν θεοῦ] for which Jesus Christ was crucified?³⁹

³⁸ πίστις is used twice in 14.2, and both are likely references to the believer’s faith. Ignatius writes, “No one professing faith sins, nor does anyone possessing love hate.” The next line appears to explain what it means to profess faith and possess love, “those who profess to be Christ’s will be recognized by their actions.” Thus, to profess faith is to profess that one belongs to Christ. The sense of “faithfulness” for πίστις does not seem to fit the line of thought here.

³⁹ Ign. *Eph.* 16.2. It is possible to take πίστις in 16.2 as doctrine. Against this possibility is the phrase ὑπερ ἧς (“for which”) which points back to πίστιν θεοῦ suggesting that it is faith in God for which Christ died.

At issue here is how to translate πίστιν θεοῦ. Is it “faith of God” or “faith in God”? If the latter, whose faith is it? To answer these questions, one has to take into account the preceding context of this passage. In our analysis of the way πίστις is used up to this point in the letter, it seems that it is used mainly in the active sense of “trust” or “belief” with its object stated explicitly (1.1; 14.1) or understood from context (14.2). Even in the examples where πίστις is used with a subjective genitive of a personal pronoun, it still, in all probability, means “belief” (13.1; cf. 14.1). There is absent in the preceding context a clear reference to πίστις as “faithfulness.”⁴⁰ It seems that from general usage, the meaning “belief” or “trust” for πίστις in 16.2 has greater support from the preceding context.

Coming back to the two questions above, whether πίστιν θεοῦ is “faith of God” or “faith in God” and if the latter, whose faith is it, the following can be noted: first, translating πίστιν θεοῦ as God’s faith is least likely in context. Translations that have “faith of God” simply retain the ambiguity of the phrase and do not make a decision as to whether it is objective or subjective genitive.⁴¹ The reading “faith of God” meaning God’s faith or faithfulness is unpersuasive since nothing in the preceding chapters has prepared the readers for it.⁴² More plausible is the reading “faith in God.”⁴³ This reading receives support from the preceding context.

⁴⁰Admittedly, there are those instances where a clear decision is not possible (3.1; 8.2; 10.2). Though the sense “faithfulness” is possible here, the active sense of πίστις cannot be totally excluded.

⁴¹Thus *Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 1:191).

⁴²We have already argued that although πίστις ὑμῶν in 9.1 and 13.1 are clearly subjective genitives, πίστις retains the active sense (especially in 13.1).

⁴³W. R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 79.

But whose faith is referenced here? Is it the believer's faith in God or is it Jesus' faith in God? Wallis agrees that the genitive θεοῦ in Ign. *Eph.* 16.2 is "clearly objective" but he contends that "faith" in this verse is Jesus' faith in God.⁴⁴ Such a reading is foreign to Ignatius because nowhere in the preceding passages did he make reference to Jesus' faith in God or establish a connection between Jesus' faith and his crucifixion. Wallis does not even seek to demonstrate how this understanding is supported contextually in Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians. It seems that the context of this sentence strongly supports the conclusions that the faith envisioned here is the faith of the believer with θεοῦ as the object of that faith.

In 20.1 πίστις is used with the genitive referring to Christ. Ignatius promises to write to them again with a view to explain more about "faith and love of Christ."

If Jesus Christ, in response to your prayer, should reckon me worthy, and if it is his will, in a second letter which I intend to write to you I will further explain to you the subject about which I have begun to speak, namely, the divine plan with respect to the new man Jesus Christ, involving *faith in him and love for him*⁴⁵ [ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ], his suffering and resurrection.⁴⁶

Holmes reads αὐτοῦ as an objective genitive but Lake has "his faith and his love."⁴⁷ It is grammatically possible to see here a reference to Jesus' "faith/faithfulness," but this

⁴⁴Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 190-91. According to Wallis, Jesus' crucifixion is a demonstration of his faith. Amazingly, Wallis goes on to justify Jesus' faith in God by saying that "although the relation between Jesus and faith in God is not spelt out, the implication is that the latter was the cause of his execution: Jesus died because of his faith in God" (ibid., 190). There is nothing in the context of this book to support the view Wallis puts forth here, not to mention the fact that his definition of "faith" is unclear. Robert M. Grant also sees here a reference to Jesus' faith in God. He writes that Jesus "himself was crucified for his faith in God" (*The Apostolic Fathers. A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Robert M. Grant, 6 vols. [Camden, NJ.: Nelson and Sons, 1966], 4:16).

⁴⁵Literally, "his faith and his love."

⁴⁶Ign. *Eph.* 20.1.

⁴⁷*Apostolic Fathers*, (ed. and rev. Holmes, 149); *Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 1:195).

needs to be taken in light of the meaning of πίστις in the letter. We have already discussed this point.

Given the tone of the whole book, which gives great importance to the role of faith and love in the believer's life, the translation "faith in him and love for him" seems preferable, since in Ignatius faith and love are used to describe the "religious affections of people."⁴⁸ For example, only two chapters earlier we read the following words, "None of these things escapes your notice, *if you have perfect faith and love toward Jesus Christ*" (ἐὰν τελείως εἰς Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἔχητε τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην).⁴⁹ This is another example of the noun "faith" used with a preposition to specify its object (cf. Ign. Eph. 1.1). Paulsen, earlier, in Ign. Eph. 16.2 translated πίστιν θεοῦ as "den Glauben Gottes" ("the faith of God") but now in 20.1 he translates ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ as "im Glauben an ihn und in der Liebe zu ihm" ("faith in him and love for him") showing that he views αὐτοῦ to be an objective genitive.⁵⁰

In sum, the letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians makes use of πίστις mainly in the active sense of "trust" or "belief." There are no explicit references to πίστις as

⁴⁸Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 96. He writes, "The Greek may mean, 'having to do with his faith and his love.' But elsewhere in Ignatius faith and love are always the religious affections of people." See especially pp. 24-26 for a summary of this concept in the letters of Ignatius. This is challenged by Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 191. He says, "Not only is the objective interpretation of ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ questionable contextually . . . it is also debatable whether faith and love are the sole prerogative of believers elsewhere in Ignatius' letters" (ibid., 96). Wallis argues that "ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει and ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ are best taken as subjective genitives referring to Jesus' faith and love" (*Faith of Jesus Christ*, 191). While this is possible it is unlikely given the context. Wallis' contextual justification for his conclusion is weakened by the lack of references to Jesus' faith in God and by the fact that Ignatius' does not refer to Jesus' death as an act of faith/faithfulness. Our reading of Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians supports Schoedel's assessment. See for example Ign. Eph. 1.1; 9.1; 14.1, 2 and 16.2.

⁴⁹Ign. Eph. 14.1. Italics added.

⁵⁰Paulsen comments that πίστις αὐτοῦ and ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ "meint kaum jene Liebe und jenen Glauben, den Christus entwickelt hat" ("His faith and his love can scarcely mean that love and that faith which Jesus has developed"). See Henning Paulsen, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Brief des Polykarp von Smyrna* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985), 45. My translation.

“faithfulness” though there are a few ambiguous cases. Christ or God are clearly portrayed as the object of faith (with the use of a preposition and as we have argued, by use of an objective genitive). There are no references to Christ as believing or to his faithfulness in this letter. Also absent is any reference to Christ as obedient. We conclude that there is no evidence in this letter in support of the arguments for Christ’s πίστις being his faithfulness, i.e., his obedience to the Father in dying on the cross. Rather, there is evidence that πίστις takes a genitive object of Christ.

To the Magnesians

In the opening verse of the letter to the Magnesians, Ignatius writes, “When I learned how well-ordered your love toward God is, I rejoiced and resolved to address you *in the faith of Jesus Christ* (ἐν πίστει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ign. Magn. 1.1]). The genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ can be either objective or subjective (thus “with reference to faith in/of Jesus Christ”). Although a dogmatic statement about the meaning of this phrase cannot be made here, some factors must be considered in this process. The letter makes references to the faith of the individual without a genitive modifier (see 1.2; 6.1; 10.3; 13.1). Nowhere is there an unambiguous reference to Jesus’ faith/faithfulness or to πίστις used in the sense of “faithfulness.”

To the Romans

Ignatius makes mention of the “faith of Jesus” in the letter to the Romans and again the question is how to understand the genitive case. He writes,

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the church that has found mercy in the majesty of the Father Most High and Jesus Christ his only Son, beloved and enlightened through the will of him who willed all things that exist, *in accordance*

with faith in and love for Jesus Christ our God [κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν].⁵¹

Holmes has argued that in this passage, Jesus is the object and not the subject of both faith and love.⁵² Wallis, on the other hand, believes that here we have another reference to the death of Jesus which is the ultimate expression of faith and love.⁵³ Deciding for either objective or subjective genitive is difficult since there is nothing in the rest of the letter to suggest one way or another. Yet, seeing that in Ignatius, faith and love are used mainly to indicate something in the believer,⁵⁴ a slight edge might go to Holmes, who translates Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive.

Further Considerations from Ignatius

So far we have examined the use of faith with the genitive case in Ignatius' letters and have argued that the genitives identified above are more likely objective genitives. Further evidence from the broader context of Ignatius' work lends support to these conclusions. First, one finds instances where Ignatius portrays Jesus, Jesus' death, God, and the gospel as the objects of faith (Ign. *Trall.* 2.1; Ign. *Smyrn.* 6.1), and he writes that faith comes through Jesus (Ign. *Phld.* 8.2). Yet, there is no instance where he explicitly connects "faith" (πίστις) with the concept of fidelity or faithfulness. Ignatius

⁵¹Ign. *Rom.* Introduction. Italics added. It is not quite clear how κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν relates to what precedes. Schoedel suggests taking the phrase as a prepositional phrase depending on the words "beloved and enlightened." In this case, "'faith' in Christ is the mark of one 'enlightened' by God and 'love' for Christ the mark of one 'beloved' by God" (Schoedel, *Ignatius*, 167). This is possible though not conclusive.

⁵²*Apostolic Fathers*, (ed. and rev. Holmes, 167 n. 8). Cf. Schoedel, *Ignatius*, 165, 167; J. H. Srawley, *The Epistle of St. Ignatius of Antioch* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1900; reprint, 1935), 70.

⁵³ See Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 191.

⁵⁴Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 24-26, 96.

uses πιστὸς in such cases (Ign. *Eph.* 21.2; Ign. *Magn.* 5.2; Ign. *Rom.* 3.2). Second, Ignatius does call on his readers to imitate God and Christ, but he never includes faith among the things they are to emulate (Ign. *Eph.* 1.1; 10.3; Ign. *Trall.* 1.2; Ign. *Phld.* 7.2). Finally, when Ignatius speaks of justification, he says that we are justified by the cross and death and resurrection of Christ and by faith (Ign. *Phld.* 8.2). In 8.2, faith comes through Jesus and could refer to the Christian teachings or the believer's faith. Thus, while the work of Christ is central in our justification, faith is also necessary.⁵⁵

It is reasonable, then, to conclude that Ignatius and Clement used “faith” with the genitive case to describe faith's object. This fits with their use of the verb “to believe” and occasionally the noun “faith” with a preposition.⁵⁶

The Epistle of Barnabas

In a context where the author explains how the covenant of Christ is sealed in our hearts, we read the following words:

And Moses understood and hurled the two tablets from his hands, and their covenant was broken in pieces, in order that the covenant of the beloved Jesus might

⁵⁵For a more detailed examination of faith in Ignatius, see *The Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Grant, 4:16-18).

⁵⁶We should mention here that in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, he writes in 4.3, “The widows must think soberly about the faith of the Lord” (περὶ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου πίστιν). Holmes, who normally follows the objective genitive reading simply, has “faith of the Lord” here (*Apostolic Fathers* [ed. and rev. Holmes, 211]), but Johannes Bauer translates the phrase as an objective genitive (see Johannes Bauer, *Die Polykarpbriefe*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995], 48). A clear-cut decision is not possible here. Yet, in the verse before v. 3, the author writes that children are to be instructed with instructions that lead to “the fear of God” (τοῦ φόβου τοῦ θεοῦ). The proximity of τοῦ φόβου τοῦ θεοῦ (an objective genitive construction) to τὴν τοῦ κυρίου πίστιν seems to suggest that the latter is also an objective genitive. General usage of πίστις in the letter to the Philippians does not provide much help in this case. Polycarp writes of “your faith” (1.2). Also, faith is a gift (3.2; 4.2). Faith is the means by which the race is run (9.2). The Philippians are to be “firm and immovable in faith” (10.1). He prays that Jesus will build them up in “faith and truth.” In all these instances of πίστις a case could be made for the active or passive sense of faith or for faith as doctrine.

be sealed in our heart, *in hope inspired by faith in him* [ἐν ἐλπίδι τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ].⁵⁷

Lake leaves ἐν ἐλπίδι τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ ambiguous (“in hope of his faith”)⁵⁸ but Holmes has “hope inspired by faith in him.” So also Pierre Prigent who renders ἐν ἐλπίδι τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ as “par le’espérance de la foi en lui” (“by the hope of faith in him”).⁵⁹ If the subjective genitive is adopted here, then the point is that the covenant of the beloved Jesus is sealed in our hearts in hope of Jesus’ faith (thus Lake), or “in hope inspired by his faithfulness.” If objective genitive, then the point is that hope which is inspired by faith in Jesus is the means by which the covenant is sealed in our hearts (thus Holmes).

What evidence is there in the letter to tip the scale one way or another? First, attention should be given to how Barnabas uses faith and hope.⁶⁰ He explains that “great faith and love” dwells in his readers “in hope of his life” (ὅτι μεγάλη πίστις καὶ ἀγάπη ἐγκατοικεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αὐτοῦ [*Barn.* 1.4]). Here “in hope” (ἐλπίδι) is linked with a genitive “his life (ζωῆς αὐτοῦ) which is best taken as objective genitive (cf. 1.6).⁶¹ This is strengthened by the fact that hope is used with Christ as object (*Barn.* 6.3, 9; 8.5; 11.11; 12.3; 16.8). With reference to faith, there is an emphasis on its significance

⁵⁷*Barn.* 4.8. Italics added.

⁵⁸*Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 1:351).

⁵⁹*Épître de Barnabé*, trans. Pierre Prigent (Paris: Éditions du Cerf., 1971), 99. My translation. See also Ferdinand R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 190.

⁶⁰In Barnabas, “faith” (7.2; 9.4; 11.11; 12.7; 13.7; 16.7) and “hope” (6.9; 8.5; 11.8; 12.2-3; 19.7) are common expressions and in some cases are used synonymously.

⁶¹Maybe the sense here is that “faith and love” are inspired by the “hope of his life” (hope in his life) just as in 4.8 “hope” is inspired by “his faith” (faith in him).

in the Christian life. Faith is a quality in the believer (*Barn.* 2.2; 3.6; 4.9; 6.7, 9).

A second possible construction of πίστις with an objective genitive is in 6.17.

Barnabas writes,

So why, then, does he mention the “milk and honey”? Because the infant is first nourished with honey, and then with milk. So in a similar manner, we too, being nourished by *faith in the promise* [τῆ πίστει τῆς ἐπαγγελίας] and by the word, will live and rule over the earth.⁶²

Lake renders τῆ πίστει τῆς ἐπαγγελίας as “faith of the promise” in keeping with his more literal translation of such genitive constructions. Holmes and Prigent translate it as “faith in the promise.”⁶³

Clearly, there are examples of πίστις with the subjective genitive in Barnabas, πίστις ὑμῶν (1.5), πίστις ἡμῶν (1.6; 2.2; 4.9). This might suggest that τῆς ἐπαγγελίας is a subjective genitive as well. While it is obvious that these are subjective genitive constructions, the sense of πίστις as “trust” or “faithfulness” is not as clear in these instances. Barnabas wants his readers to have “perfect knowledge” along with their faith (1.5). It is very possible that here “faith” is their “belief” which is linked to knowledge. Also, considering that there is a reference to the believer’s faith in *Barn.* 1.4; 11.8, and the high probability of an objective genitive construction in 4.8, it seems that τῆ πίστει τῆς ἐπαγγελίας in 6.17 should be translated as “faith in the promise.”⁶⁴ In the absence of any specific reference to Jesus’ faith/faithfulness in Barnabas, this interpretation is preferable.

⁶²*Barn.* 6.17. Italics mine.

⁶³*Apostolic Fathers* (ed. and rev. Holmes, 291); Prigent, *Épître de Barnabé*, 127. Cf. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, 259.

⁶⁴Prostmeier makes the point that τῆς ἐπαγγελίας is Christ centered. In that case, “faith in the promise” is essentially “faith in Christ” (Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, 278).

The Shepherd of Hermas

Visions

In *Vision* 4.22.8 the Shepherd refers to the “faith of the Lord” (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου). This phrase appears in the context of his discussion on the life that is pleasing to God. The life that pleases God is not double-minded (it does not doubt) but is one of faith. It is this life of faith that gives strength in time of need. He describes the role of faith in a moment of crisis in his own life as follows: “So, brothers, having put on *the faith of the Lord* [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου] and remembering the great things he had taught me, I took courage and faced the beast.”⁶⁵

We are faced now with deciding the syntactical function of τοῦ κυρίου. Is it subjective or objective genitive? Some translations simply have “faith of the Lord” for τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου⁶⁶ but others takes it as an objective genitive.⁶⁷ Wallis is confident that in this text the Shepherd teaches that Christians are called to share in the faith of Jesus.”⁶⁸ Hence, Wallis sees a clear reference to Jesus’ faith. But is this what τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου means here?

⁶⁵Herm *Vis.* 4.22.8. Italics added.

⁶⁶*Apostolic Fathers* (ed. and rev. Holmes, 369) although Holmes tends to follow the objective genitive reading); *Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 2:63).

⁶⁷Norbert Brox, *Der Hirt des Hermas*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern, 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 161; Carolyn Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 92.

⁶⁸Alluding to Herm. *Vis.* 4.22.8, Wallis writes, “Christians are called to share his faith; not only to believe in the one who is able to perform miracles on their behalf, but also to be clothed with that faith which comes from above and communicates miracle working power (*Faith of Jesus Christ*, 184, 185 n. 31). Although the Shepherd does not make reference to Jesus’ ministry, Wallis sees strong allusions in the Visions to the teachings of Jesus on faith as recorded in the Synoptics. However, Wallis does not give convincing evidence from the writings of the Shepherd to support his contention that he calls on Christians to share the faith of Jesus.

There are instances in the Visions of the Shepherd that show his concern for faith and the important role it plays in the believer's life. For example, the elect received God's commands with great faith (Herm. *Vis* 1.3.4). Double-mindedness (unbelief) hinders righteousness (Herm. *Vis* 2.6.7) but faith promotes righteous conduct. This is the point of Herm. *Vis* 3 which exhorts the readers to be strong in faith and thereby avoid double-mindedness because it derails from the true path of faith (Herm. *Vis* 3.15.1). God's elect are saved through faith and faith produces self-control leading to salvation (Herm. *Vis* 3.16.3-4).

By the time the reader gets to Herm. *Vis* 4 he or she is fully aware that faith is the antonym of double-mindedness.⁶⁹ The reader is also aware that faith is the means through which God saves his elect and that faith brings forth a righteous life. When this double-mindedness is contrasted with "faith of the Lord" (Herm. *Vis* 4.22.7-8) it seems that the reader will see not a reference to the faith or faithfulness of the Lord but a reference to the faith of the shepherd. Such faith is grounded on the works of the Lord himself (Herm. *Vis* 4.22.8).⁷⁰ It is this faith (trust in the Lord), that enabled the shepherd to face the beast.⁷¹

Mandates

In the Mandates, there are two places where the Shepherd uses "faith" with a genitive case (Herm. *Man*. 11.43.4, 9). In *Mandate* 11, the Shepherd is told in a vision

⁶⁹This is obvious in 4.23.6, where Hermas writes, "Trust in the Lord, you who are double-minded. . . ." The theme of double-mindedness contrasted with faith is found again in Herm. *Man*. 11.43.17.

⁷⁰According to Osiek, when faced with danger, the shepherd "realizes that faith in the Lord protects him like armor and is the source of his courage to face the beast head-on" (Osiek, *Hermas*, 92).

⁷¹Brox, *Hermas*, 169.

that the devil destroys the minds of the double-minded (unbelievers) and seeks to break down the righteous but only those who are “strong in the faith of the Lord” can resist him (Herm. *Man.* 11.43.1).

So, those who are strong *in the faith of the Lord* [ἐν τῇ πίστει τοῦ κυρίου], having clothed themselves with the truth, do not associate with such spirits (evil spirits), but have nothing to do with them.⁷²

Any decision about the genitive τοῦ κυρίου here should be made in light of a similar construction in *Mandate* 11.43.9 where Hermas writes,

So, then, when the man who has the divine Spirit comes into an assembly of righteous men who have *faith in a divine Spirit* [πίστιν θείου πνεύματος] and intercession is made to God by the assembly of those men, then the angel of the prophetic spirit which is assigned to him fills the man, and being filled with the Holy Spirit the man speaks to the multitude, just as the Lord wills.⁷³

The genitive θείου πνεύματος seems to be a clear case of faith used with an objective genitive.⁷⁴ “Faithfulness” of the divine spirit does not make sense here, although Lake again leaves it ambiguous (“faith of a divine spirit”).⁷⁵ We suggest that the use of this objective genitive with “faith” helps with the interpretation of τῇ πίστει τοῦ κυρίου in *Mandate* 11.43.4. It shows that the author is capable of using a genitive to indicate the object of faith.

Further support for this interpretation comes from references to God (Herm. *Man.* 1:26:1-2) and the divine spirit (Herm. *Man.* 11.43.17) as faith’s object. Also, faith is the means through which the law is kept (Herm. *Man.* 12.47.5). At the conclusion of

⁷²Herm. *Man.* 11.43.4. Italics added.

⁷³Ibid., 11.43.9 (ed. and rev. Holmes, 407).

⁷⁴BDAG, s.v. “πίστις;” Osiek, *Hermas*, 139; Brox, *Hermas*, 250.

⁷⁵*Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Lake, 2:121).

the Mandates, we see that faith in God is the means by which one can resist the devil (Herm. *Man.* 12.49.1-2). The active sense of πίστις seems to be intended in these examples.

The Parables⁷⁶

In the Parables, the Shepherd is commanded not to be double-minded but to put on “the faith of the Lord” (cf. Herm. *Man.* 11.43.4) in order to keep the commandments of the Lord (Herm. *Sim.* 6.61.2). The angel speaks to the Shepherd and says,

Why are you double-minded about the commandments that I gave you? They are beautiful. Do not be double-minded at all, *but put on the faith of the Lord* [ἀλλ’ ἔνδυσαι τήν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου], and walk in them, for I will strengthen you in them.⁷⁷

The context of this message to the Shepherd suggests that τοῦ κυρίου is an objective genitive.⁷⁸ For the Shepherd, faith is the opposite of double-mindedness and facilitates the keeping of God’s commandments. The context also suggests a link between the putting on of faith and repentance so that to put on faith is to repent from sin (Herm. *Sim.* 6.61.3-4; 6.63.6). Furthermore, those who turn to the Lord from their evil deeds are strengthened in the faith of the Lord and they serve the Lord with a pure heart for the rest of their lives (6.63.6). The underlying thought in the passage above is that faith is what makes godly lives possible. In this sense, faith necessarily includes and precedes faithfulness. The emphasis seems to lie on the faith of the believer. Nowhere in the

⁷⁶This portion of the Shepherd is often referred to as the “Similitudes,” abbreviated *Sim.*

⁷⁷Herm. *Sim.* 6.61.2. My italics.

⁷⁸Cf. BDAG, s.v. “πίστις.”

Parables is the believer called upon to imitate Jesus' faith or to believe as he did. On the contrary, there are references to Jesus as the way to God's Kingdom (Herm. *Sim.* 9.89), and those who believe in the Lord through the Son enter the Kingdom (9.90.5; 9.92.2-3). Those who believe are called by the name of the Son of God (9:94:4), and a life of faith is a life that bears fruit (9.96.2). Such an emphasis on the believer's faith favors reading τοῦ κυρίου in Herm. *Sim.* 6.61.2, as an objective genitive.

In the end, the Shepherd of Hermas gives strong evidence that faith could be used with a genitive to express its object. The examples may not always be as clear as one might desire, but the presence of references to the believer's faith and the absence of any unquestionable allusions to πίστις as "faith/faithfulness" suggests that this might have been a conventional way of writing.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on the use of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase and similar constructions of πίστις with a genitive in the writings of the apostolic fathers. It has been shown that in some instances the fathers used πίστις with a genitive case. For example, τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ (*1 Clem.* 3.3; *Ign. Eph.* 20.1), ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ (*1 Clem.* 27.3), πίστιν θεοῦ (*Ign. Eph.* 16.2), πίστει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*Ign. Magn.* 1.1), πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*Ign. Rom.* Introduction), τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (*Barn.* 4.8), τῇ πίστει τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*Barn.* 6.17), τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου (Herm. *Vis.* 4.22.8; Herm. *Man.* 11.43.4; Herm. *Sim.* 6.61.2), πίστιν θεοῦ πνεύματος (Herm. *Man.* 11.43.9). All of these are not examples of πίστις Χριστοῦ but they provide evidence from the fathers of πίστις with an objective genitive.

It has been argued that in light of the context of the writings of the fathers, the object of faith is at times expressed in the genitive case. The overall contextual evidence and the absence of any explicit use of πίστις for God's or Christ's faith/faithfulness in the fathers, inclines us to an objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. It seems that such constructions may have been a shorthand way of indicating faith's object in the same way that they use the verbal nouns "fear" with an objective genitive.⁷⁹ The use of πίστις with the genitive case in the fathers does not resolve the problem of what πίστις Χριστοῦ means in Paul but it shows that πίστις with the objective genitive can be defended lexically, and probably even preferable in the fathers. Another significant point is that the fathers do not refer to the obedience of Christ (to our knowledge) and do not equate faith with obedience. Such evidence, from Paul's earliest interpreters, cannot be ignored in our interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

Synthesis: History of Research and πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Writings of the Fathers

The fathers' use of πίστις with the genitive case calls into question some of the arguments postulated in the history of research. For example, in 1967, George Howard argued,

The construction of πίστις followed by the genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun occurs 24 times in the Pauline Corpus not counting the places where πίστις Χριστοῦ and its equivalents appear. Twenty times this construction refers to the faith of Christians, individually or collectively, one time to the faith (fulness) of God (Rom 3:3); two times to the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:12, 16), and one time to

⁷⁹For example, the fathers often used "fear" with an objective genitive as in the following: *1 Clem.* 2.8; 3.4; 13.5; 21.6, 8; 22.1; 57.5; *Barn.* 4.11; 11.4; 19.5; 20.1, 2; *Herm. Man.* 8.9; 10.6; 12.2.4. Additionally, they also used the verb "fear" with God as direct object. See *1 Clem.* 21.7; 23.1; 28.1; 45.6; *Barn.* 10.10, 11; *Herm. Man.* 1.2; 7 (many times in *Man.* 7); 12.3; *Herm. Sim.* 5.1.5; 8.11.2.

any one who has his faith reckoned to him for righteousness (Rom 4:5). *In all cases the phrase refers to the faith of the individual, and never faith in the individual.*⁸⁰

Howard's argument that, "In all cases the phrase refers to the faith of the individual, and never faith in the individual" is true but does not account for the sense of πίστις in these instances. In the fathers, πίστις is also followed by a genitive of a personal pronoun, but in those cases, πίστις is used mainly in the active sense. Πίστις is also used with a genitive referring to God or Christ. In these cases we argued that an objective genitive reading is possible and often preferable.

In 1974, Howard made the same argument based on his study of the use of πίστις in the LXX and the Hellenistic literature. He argues that

It was inappropriate to the Hellenistic Jewish mentality to express the object of faith by means of the objective genitive. Though a textbook case can be made for it, in actual practice it does not appear. Characteristically the writers use the preposition when they wish to express the object.⁸¹

This is a bold general statement and needs to be reevaluated in light of the testimony of the fathers.

Some object that if πίστις Χριστοῦ means "faith in Christ" as the means of justification, then faith becomes another kind of work.⁸² Such a conclusion finds no support in the fathers. Clement, for example, links faith to justification (*1 Clem.* 32.4). He also connects God's gift with faith (*1 Clem.* 10.7; 12.1; 31.231.2). Yet, he does not make faith a kind of work since for him, faith itself is a gift from God (*1 Clem.* 35.1-2;

⁸⁰Howard, "Notes on the 'Faith of Christ,'" *HTR* 60 (1967): 459-60. Italics mine.

⁸¹Howard, "The Faith of Christ," *ExpT* 85 (1974): 213.

⁸²For example, R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 120; G. M. Taylor, "The Function of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Galatians," *JBL* 85 (1966): 75.

62.2). If Clement, possibly influenced by Paul, thought that our faith is the means through which we are justified, then his understanding can be a helpful guideline in our interpretation of Paul.

Also absent from the writings of the fathers is support for the view held by many that Jesus' faith/faithfulness refers to his obedience manifested in his going to the cross.⁸³ In places where the fathers connect πίστις with a genitive referring to Christ, they never explain that "faith" equals "obedience" or that Jesus' death was an act of faithfulness or a demonstration of his faith. The fathers make no references, to our knowledge, to Christ's obedience to God.

In conclusion, although significant arguments for the subjective genitive have been made in the history of research, these arguments should be reevaluated in light of the evidence derived from the writings of the fathers. In some cases, the evidence calls into question some of the conclusions drawn. Harrisville has aptly stated that "scholars must wrestle with the reason for such a witness and why that witness has been consistently ignored or forgotten in the current debate."⁸⁴ In our investigation, the witness of the fathers inclines one toward the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul.

⁸³L. T. Johnson, "Romans 3.21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 89; Hays, *Faith*, 152, 154, 156; Morna Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *NTS* 35 (1989): 330-33.

⁸⁴Harrisville, Πίστις Χριστοῦ, 241.

CHAPTER 4

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ DEBATE

This chapter provides an opportunity to address matters related to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, such as the nature of the genitive case, rationale for limiting the debate to the two choices of subjective and objective genitives (appendix 1), grammatical considerations, analysis of Paul's use of the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου and θεοῦ with πίστις and other verbal nouns, and theological issues that have been raised by supporters of the subjective genitive interpretation. By discussing these matters, this chapter will also serve as a reference for future chapters where it would not be possible to consider these issues in detail.

Analysis of the Genitive Case

Nature of the Genitive

The difficulty in deciding the meaning of πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ in the debated texts in Paul (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Phil 3:9; Eph 3:12) arises from the fact that the Greek genitive case is complex. C. F. D. Moule remarks that the genitive “is so immensely versatile and hard-worked a case that anything like an exhaustive catalogue of its uses would be only confusing and unnecessarily dull.”¹ Yet,

¹C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 37; cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 493.

grammarians are in general agreement that the genitive's most basic function is adjectival. According to Daniel B. Wallace, the heart of the genitive is in its adjectival use.² That is, when the genitive functions as an adjective, it describes and defines the noun it modifies.³ Taking into account the versatile nature of the genitive case, three things are helpful in deciding the kind of relationship between a genitive and the word it modifies. These are (1) the meaning of the words, (2) context, and (3) "facts presupposed as known."⁴ If one applies these three criteria to the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, the connection between the two words is determined by (1) looking at the meaning of πίστις. Is it used in the active sense (trust, belief) or passive sense (trustworthiness, fidelity, faithfulness)?⁵ (2) Asking which reading is best supported by the context.⁶ (3) Seeking to understand which facts are presupposed by Paul and understood by his readers.⁷ These

²Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 78.

³F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 89; Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. Gordon M. Messing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 313; James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979), 8; H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 72.

⁴Smyth, *Grammar*, 314.

⁵For the importance of sense distinction in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, i.e., whether πίστις in this phrase means "belief" or "faithfulness," see R. Barry Matlock, "Even the Demons Believe: Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 315-17.

⁶Commenting on the nature of the genitive, Nigel Turner writes that "the relationship expressed by the genitive is so vague that it is only by means of the context and wider considerations that it can be made definite" (Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, III, Syntax [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963], 207). Robertson makes a similar comment when he explains that the genitive case has many possible combinations making it hard to group them in their various usages (Robertson, *Grammar*, 494).

⁷For example, Mark A. Seifrid states that "Paul generally presupposes that his addressees share his understanding that faith has its object in God's work in Christ, a stance which is common to the letters of the New Testament" (Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 142).

three criteria may cast some light in making a decision on the meaning of πίστις as it relates to the genitive Χριστοῦ.

The objective and subjective genitive categories describe instances where a genitive is used with a verbal noun.⁸ In this case, the noun defined by the genitive signifies an action, or has a verbal idea.⁹ In other words, “the head noun has a verb as a cognate (e.g., βασιλεῦς has βασιλεύω as cognate).”¹⁰ When used this way, there are two possible categories under which the genitive could be classified: objective or subjective (or plenary genitive¹¹). A decision between these categories is not always easy, thus the debate over the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction. Grammarians agree that the decision rests not with the grammarian but with the exegete.¹² But what is meant by the terms “objective” and “subjective” genitives?

Objective Genitive. The objective genitive is a genitive in which the “genitive substantive functions semantically as the *direct object* of the verbal idea

⁸It is not easy discerning verbal nouns in a passage. Young has provided some criteria for determining verbal nouns in a text. He notes that “nouns with endings that name actions (-σις, -μος) or agents (-της, -τηρ, -τωρ, -ευσ) are usually verbal nouns. Those which are built on verb stems (e.g., ἀγάπη, ἀποκάλυψις, ἐλπις, εὐαγγέλιον, and ὄργη) are often verbal nouns, but in some contexts they may denote an abstraction rather than an event” (Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek* [Nashville: Broadman, 1994], 29). According to Brooks and Winbery, “A noun of action is a noun the definition of which contains a verbal idea. Often there will be a cognate verb which has the same root” (*Syntax*, 15).

⁹Dana and Mantey, *Grammar*, 78.

¹⁰Wallace, *Grammar*, 112.

¹¹Ibid., *Grammar*, 119-21. According to Wallace, when the noun in the genitive can be both subjective and objective, then it is a plenary genitive. Phrases such as “the love of Christ” (2 Cor 5:14), “the love of God” (Rom 5:5), and “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:1) are examples of plenary genitive constructions. The meaning of the genitive in each case is debated.

¹²When deciding the meaning of πίστις, grammarians suggest that context is to be the determining factor. Thus, Robertson, *Grammar*, 499; Wallace, *Grammar*, 113; Porter, *Idioms*, 95.

implicit in the head noun.”¹³ For example, if πίστις Χριστοῦ is taken as an objective genitive construction, Χριστοῦ (genitive substantive) functions as the direct object of the verbal idea “belief” contained in πίστις (head noun). In that case we would translate the phrase as “believing Christ.” There are many examples of objective genitives in the NT.¹⁴

Subjective Genitive. In cases of the subjective genitive, “the genitive substantive functions semantically as the subject of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun.”¹⁵ In other words, “If the word in the genitive produces the action implied by the noun of action, it functions as the ‘subject’ of the verbal idea contained in the noun of action.”¹⁶ For example, taking πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive construction, Χριστοῦ (genitive substantive) becomes the subject of the verbal idea “belief” contained in πίστις (head noun). Thus, Christ believes or Christ is faithful. There are also many examples of the subjective genitive construction in the NT.¹⁷

Sometimes a decision between a subjective and an objective genitive is not easy. For example, Paul writes, ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, “For the love of Christ controls us” (2 Cor 5:14). Is the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ objective (our love for Christ) or is it subjective (Christ’s love for us) or both (thus plenary genitive)? According to Wallace, “Since the lexico-syntactic features in such instances are identical,

¹³Wallace, *Grammar*, 116 (italics his); Smyth, *Grammar*, 318.

¹⁴See appendix 2.

¹⁵Wallace, *Grammar*, 113. For similar definition, see Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, 15.

¹⁶Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, 15.

¹⁷See appendix 2.

appeal must be made to context, authorial usage, and broader exegetical issues.”¹⁸ This is good counsel in interpreting the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.

This brief analysis shows that the Greek genitive case is complex and creates difficulties in interpretation when used with verbal nouns. Therefore a decision cannot be made by simply appealing to one of the functions of the genitive case (subjective, objective, or plenary). Context and authorial usage must decide how the genitive is used. James Dunn rightly remarks that the form of the genitive itself does not tell us much. “It is the function of the form within its context which is determinative.”¹⁹

Grammatical Considerations

The consensus among scholars is that the debate over πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot be settled by grammatical analysis alone.²⁰ Hence, the decision between objective and subjective genitive does not depend on grammar but on exegesis. Such a conclusion does not preclude the need to examine grammatical considerations to see what light that might cast on the debate.²¹ Granted that there are grammatical arguments given for each side of the debate, they need to be summarized and evaluated.

An added reason for pursuing grammatical arguments here is that some on

¹⁸Wallace, *Grammar*, 113. See also Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, 16; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994; reprint, 1999), 95.

¹⁹James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 380.

²⁰For example, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 183; idem, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 213; M. D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 321 n. 9; J. G. D. Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 252; Wallace, *Grammar*, 113.

²¹Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 302, says that this conclusion does not “obviate the need to go back over the linguistic ground.”

both sides have tended to emphasize grammatical analysis in support of their view, though they also admit that grammar alone cannot decide the debate. The strongest suggestion that grammar favors the subjective genitive reading comes from Hays and Johnson. According to Hays, “The balance of the grammatical evidence favors the view that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ means ‘faith of Jesus,’ however that might be interpreted.”²² According to Johnson, “Hays marshals an impressive set of arguments in support of the subjective genitive reading. What is particularly impressive here is that he . . . shows the *superiority of the subjective position strictly on grammatical grounds.*”²³

On the objective genitive side, Hultgren comments that “based on syntax alone . . . the interpretation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation along the lines of the subjective genitive is excluded.”²⁴ Since these arguments have played a role in the debate we should take a closer look at some of them.

Grammatical Arguments for the Subjective Genitive Interpretation

Three main grammatical arguments are put forward to support the subjective genitive reading: (1) the use of πίστις followed by a genitive of a person or personal pronoun, (2) the parallel between ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26; cf. 3:3) and ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16), and (3) πίστις in the Hellenistic Jewish Greek literature.²⁵

²²Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 150.

²³L. T. Johnson, “Foreword” in Hays, *Faith*, xiii. My italics.

²⁴A. J. Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 258.

²⁵The denial that there are occurrences of πίστις with an objective genitive in the NT is not held by all proponents of the subjective genitive but some make this argument. See discussion below. D.

Πίστις followed by genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun. George

Howard first proposed this argument in 1967. He argues that the subjective genitive interpretation is the better reading of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase based on the following statistics:

The construction of πίστις followed by the genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun occurs 24 times in the Pauline Corpus not counting the places where πίστις Χριστοῦ and its equivalent appear. Twenty times this construction refers to the faith of Christians, individually or collectively, one time to the faith (fullness) of God (Rom. 3:3), two times to the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:12, 16), and one time to any one who has his faith reckoned to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). In all cases the phrase refers to the faith *of* the individual, never faith *in* the individual.²⁶

A number of scholars have pointed to Howard's argument as important for the subjective genitive view. Hays concedes that Howard's argument is inconclusive but still maintains that the grammatical analysis favors the subjective genitive reading and renders the objective genitive view very weak.²⁷ According to Wallace, Howard's argument "has much more going for it, but still involves some weaknesses" in light of clear references to πίστις with objective genitive in the NT (cf. Mark 11:22). Then he adds, "Nevertheless, the predominant usage in the NT is with a subjective gen."²⁸ Peter T. O'Brien, in light of Howard's argument, concludes that "the case for understanding πίστις Χριστοῦ as 'the

W. B. Robinson, "Faith of Jesus Christ: A New Testament Debate," *RTR* 29 (1970): 78, makes arguments based on the absence of πίστις with objective genitive in Liddell and Scott. This is not a very convincing since other lexicons and grammars give examples of πίστις with objective genitive in the NT.

²⁶George Howard, "Notes and Observations on the 'Faith of Christ'," *HTR* 60 (1967):459-60; idem, "Romans 3:21-31 and the Inclusion of Gentiles," *HTR* 63 (1970): 229.

²⁷Hays, *Faith*, 150; idem, "Pauline Christology," 276.

²⁸Wallace, *Grammar*, 116. For similar arguments, see S. K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *JBL* 99 (1980): 273; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69.

faith [fulness] of Christ' is stronger" and "the genitive Χριστοῦ is best taken as subjective rather than objective."²⁹

The statistics seem compelling and pose a challenge for the objective genitive view, which must explain why πίστις Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive construction when πίστις is used predominantly with a subjective genitive in Paul. However, on closer analysis the argument has weaknesses. It is true that πίστις is used in Paul with the subjective genitive to refer to the faith of believers either individually or as a group (cf. Rom 1:8, 12, 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 1:24; 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5, 7; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 2 Thess 1:3, 4; 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Tim 2:18; Titus 1:1, 20; Phlm 6). Yet, it does not follow that these examples support a subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. To draw this conclusion creates what Matlock calls "a linguistic prejudice against the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ."³⁰ Several points caution against Howard's grammatical analysis. First, in most of the examples, the personal pronouns are possessive genitives (cf. Rom 1:8, 12; 4:5; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14; 2 Cor 1:24; 10:15; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 2 Thess 1:3, 4; Phlm 5, 6).³¹ Even with these clear examples of possessive/subjective genitives, πίστις seems to be used in the active sense of belief or trust with an implied or stated object. For example, πίστις in Romans 4 is Abraham's active trust in God (Rom 4:3, 5). In a few instances, πίστις with

²⁹Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 398.

³⁰Matlock, "Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ," 304.

³¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 182; idem, *Paul*, 213; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), makes the same point when he says, "A genitive following πίστις certainly need not be subjective. Most such genitives in the NT are, indeed, possessive or subjective, usually employing the personal pronoun. . . . But many are objective . . . while only a few are purely subjective Only context, then, can determine the force of the genitive" (ibid., 225).

a personal pronoun has a stated object (1 Cor 2:5; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8). In most of the cases Howard adduces, πίστις, though followed by a subjective genitive, does not have the meaning “faithfulness.” It is doubtful that this offers support for the reading “faithfulness” for πίστις in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.

Second, as Matlock points out, Howard’s argument does not take into account sense distinction in that he does not seek to decide whether πίστις is used in the active sense of “belief” or in the passive sense of “faithfulness.” He notes that when the examples Howard puts forth are subjected to sense distinction, a different picture other than the subjective genitive view begins to emerge.³² In other words, one must distinguish between πίστις as “faithfulness” and πίστις as “trust” or “belief.” Therefore context plays a role in this sense distinction. For example, context demands the meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις in Romans 3:3 but in 4:12 and 16, context shows that Abraham’s πίστις is his trust in God and not his “faithfulness.”³³ For the above reasons, Howard’s conclusion, in agreement with Kittel, that “after Paul has used the subjective genitive in Romans 3:3 in reference to the ‘faith of God,’ and the subjective genitive in 4:16 in reference to the ‘faith of Abraham,’ he is hopelessly confusing his readers unless he intends the same grammatical construction in 3:22, 26 to refer to the ‘faith of Christ’” is unconvincing.³⁴ Context shows that πίστις has a passive sense in Romans 3:3, but in 4:12, 16, it has an active sense.

³²See Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 304.

³³Moo argues that in Rom 3:3, “the meaning ‘faithfulness’ for πίστις is warranted by the parallel terms and by the fact that the reference is clearly to God’s own πίστις” (Moo, *Romans*, 225 n. 28).

³⁴Howard, “Notes and Observations,” 460. See also G. Kittel, “Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,” *TSK* 79 (1906): 424.

Third, Howard's argument is also weakened when one considers that there are possible instances of πίστις followed by an objective genitive in Paul (Col 2:12; Phil 1:27; 2 Thess 2:13) and the rest of the NT (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12).³⁵ These examples of πίστις with an objective genitive are the closest parallels to the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, but they fail to support the subjective genitive reading. Howard does not comment on these examples which are possibly weightier than his observation of the general use of πίστις with subjective genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun.³⁶ At the very least, Howard has succeeded in pointing out that πίστις is used with the subjective genitive most of the time in Paul (and the rest of the NT), but he has not succeeded in arguing that one should therefore read πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive construction based on this evidence.

Ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (3:26) and ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (4:16). Hays claims that “the most telling piece of evidence [against the objective genitive interpretation] from a grammatical point of view is the fact . . . that the expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Χριστοῦ) (Rom 3:26; Gal 3:22) has a precise parallel in Romans 4:16, ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ.”³⁷ In his judgment, this parallel is a “fatal embarrassment” for the objective

³⁵See chap two for arguments that these are examples of πίστις with objective genitive in Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:14. For a discussion on Col 2:12; Phil 1:27; 2 Thess 2:13, see appendix 3.

³⁶Wallace notes these examples and although he sees much in favor of Howard's argument, he carefully points out that, “there are two or three clear instances of πίστις + objective personal gen. in the NT (Mark 11:22; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13), as well as two clear instances involving an impersonal gen. noun (Col 2:12; 2 Thess 2:13).” Yet, he concludes, “Nevertheless, the predominant usage in the NT is with a subjective genitive” (*Grammar*, 116).

³⁷Hays, *Faith*, 149, cf. L. T. Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 80.

genitive reading.³⁸ He picks up the argument from Kittel, who observes that if one does not want to say that Paul talks of faith in Abraham (Rom 4:16), then one must also admit that he did not want to talk about faith in Christ in the parallel passage (Rom 3:26).³⁹ The importance of this parallel for the subjective genitive view is brought out by several scholars. Keck holds that “τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ has an exact parallel in 4:16, where Paul argues that the promise comes τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ; does anyone think this means ‘to the person who has faith in Abraham’? If this cannot be the meaning here, then identically constructed phrases can scarcely mean different things simply because ‘Abraham’ has been replaced by ‘Jesus.’”⁴⁰ Campbell argues that if the objective genitive reading is accepted, then “Paul has, within the space of 21 verses, radically changed the meaning of an identically constructed phrase – not an impossible feat linguistically, but an unlikely one.”⁴¹ Stanley Stowers sees in this parallel construction a “dramatic” demonstration of the “impossibility” of the objective genitive view.⁴² Similarly, for Markus Barth the two constructions show that Jesus’ faith is representative faith just as Abraham’s faith is representative faith.⁴³

³⁸Hays, “Pauline Christology,” 284.

³⁹Kittel, “πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,” 424. Pointing to the parallel between Rom 3:26 and 4:16, Kittel writes, “Will man nicht behaupten, dass Paulus von einem Glauben an Abraham redet, so muss man auch zugeben, dass er bei dem korrelaten Ausdruck von einem Glauben an Christus nicht hat reden wollen” (ibid., 424).

⁴⁰Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 456.

⁴¹Douglas A. Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 65 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 66-67.

⁴²Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 201.

⁴³Markus Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 367.

Again the objective genitive view is challenged to explain why two similarly constructed genitive phrases must be read differently. But this argument only serves to highlight the importance of context in deciding the meaning of πίστις. If one accepts that πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26) is “faith of Jesus” and πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16) is “faith of Abraham” this still does not tell us what sense πίστις has in both examples. We have to turn to context for a decision. Schreiner correctly comments that “The observation that Romans 4:12 and 4:16 refer to the faith of Abraham is not decisive, for the issue is what the phrase means in its present context.”⁴⁴ Matlock also emphasizes the role of context when he says that “This appeal to Rom 4:16 simply reinforces the principle that context is decisive, not the use of the genitive as such, which is neutral to the interpretive choice in question.”⁴⁵ Contextual analysis shows that Abraham’s πίστις is his trust in God (cf. Rom 4:3, 5, 12, 16) and this is different from reading πίστεως Ἰησοῦ as Jesus’ faithfulness though the constructions are similar. Again πίστις is active and passive depending on the context. In the final analysis, this argument too is inconclusive.

Πίστις in Hellenistic Jewish Literature. Howard, based on his survey of Hellenistic Jewish Literature (OT Apocrypha, Greek Pseudepigrapha, Philo, and Josephus), concludes that,

The use of *pistis* in Hellenistic Jewish Literature as a whole supports the subjective genitive. *Pistis* followed by the personal genitive is quite rare; but when it does appear it is almost always followed by the non-objective genitive In fact one could argue that it was inappropriate to the Hellenistic Jewish mentality to express

⁴⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 183.

⁴⁵Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 309. See also, Dunn, *Theology*, 380.

the object of faith by means of the objective genitive. Though a textbook case can be made for it, in actual practice it does not appear.⁴⁶

He adds that πίστις in the Hellenistic Jewish Literature means “faithfulness” far more than it means “trust.”⁴⁷ In light of this evidence, Howard goes on to note that the *onus probandi* is now on those who do not interpret the πίστις Χριστοῦ as subjective genitive.⁴⁸

Other scholars argue along similar lines as Howard. John Dunnill contends that, “the objective-genitive is very poorly attested in ancient sources, whether secular or Jewish.” He then adds, “Supporters of the traditional reading must show why Paul was in every instance using the phrase in a way contrary to the norm among his contemporaries.”⁴⁹ Keck, in agreement with Howard, maintains that the subjective genitive gains support consistently in the Hellenistic Jewish Greek Literature.⁵⁰ In his opinion,

If the ancients understood the phrase as a subjective genitive, Paul would have departed from customary usage in writing not only to his own churches (where he might assume that his peculiar usage is known) but also to readers in Rome, who were unfamiliar with his idiosyncratic way of referring to the believers’ relation to Christ.⁵¹

⁴⁶Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 213. Howard points out that πίστις is found 23 times in the OT Apocrypha. It is followed by the subjective genitive two times, and never by objective personal genitive. Πίστις followed by a genitive does not occur at all in the Greek Pseudepigrapha. There are 116 occurrences of πίστις in Philo. Two are followed by the subjective genitive and none by the objective genitive. In Josephus, there are 93 instances of πίστις. Four are used with the subjective genitive and one is followed by the objective genitive (*Ant.* 19:16). Howard raises the possibility that this one occurrence is an exception.

⁴⁷Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 230.

⁴⁸Howard, “The Faith of Christ,” 213; cf. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 453.

⁴⁹John Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith? – The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology,” *Colloquium* 30 (1998): 5.

⁵⁰Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 453; cf. Howard, “Faith of Christ,” 212-13.

⁵¹Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 453.

Robinson also appeals to the Greek context and finds the “normal meaning” of πίστις in ordinary Greek to be “fidelity” or “reliability” and not “faith” or “trust.”⁵² Howard agrees with Robinson and says, “Indeed if we follow the example of *pistis* in Hellenistic Jewish Literature in general we should look for the meaning of ‘faithfulness’ to appear most often in the New Testament.”⁵³

Taken at face value, these arguments strongly support the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Yet, missing from this line of reasoning is the rationale for choosing the Hellenistic Jewish Literature context over the NT context. There is an implicit assumption that the use of πίστις in the NT could not deviate from that of the Hellenistic Jewish context. But such is not the case.⁵⁴ Even if we accept that the “normal meaning” of πίστις in the Hellenistic Jewish context was predominantly “faithfulness,” the fact remains that the NT writers use it predominantly in the active sense of trust or belief. Howard acknowledges this, but still concludes that the meaning “faithfulness” fits the context of Romans 3:26 better. He contends, “Though Christianity has traditionally preferred the idea of ‘trust,’ [for πίστις] there is no a priori reason for

⁵²Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 76. According to Robinson, πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ’s “firmness, exhibited in his self-giving and his passion” (ibid. 78). He offers the following reasons based on general Greek usage for his view: First, the ninth edition of Liddell and Scott do not give any example of πίστις with an objective genitive (cf. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 453). Second, Moulton and Milligan’s “Vocabulary” does not cite any case of πίστις with an objective genitive. Third, πίστις with a genitive of object is not found in the LXX. Fourth, we do not find any use of πιστεύω in its transitive form with an objective genitive. In light of this evidence, Robinson concludes that, “All in all, a non-objective genitive for *pistis Christou* is at least a live option” (Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 78).

⁵³Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” 214.

⁵⁴In chap. 2 we saw that the NT writers use πίστις differently than the writers of the LXX. If they could deviate from the LXX usage, there is no reason why this could not be true with reference to the Hellenistic Jewish Greek context.

doing so” in Romans 3:26.⁵⁵ In the final analysis, when the arguments from the Greek context are evaluated against the NT evidence, they lack supporting evidence since the NT uses πίστις mainly in the active sense.⁵⁶

Howard is also careful to note the absences of πίστις with objective genitive in his Greek sources, but he is silent on the fact that the NT does have examples of πίστις with the objective genitive (see Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Col 2:12; Phil 1:27; 2 Thess 2:13; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12). This alone should caution against drawing broad conclusions based on usage outside of the NT context.⁵⁷

The evidence from the Hellenistic Jewish context that Howard sets forth is not comprehensive. Matlock has pointed to the use of πίστις in Plutarch, a younger contemporary of Paul and shows that in “13 instances, the object [of πίστις] is in the genitive - the ‘objective genitive,’ as we have come to call it.”⁵⁸ Although Howard points to one exception of πίστις with objective genitive in Josephus (*Ant.* 19.16),⁵⁹ David M.

⁵⁵Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 230.

⁵⁶See also Matlock, who in response to Howard, writes, “Indeed, one wonders how Howard construes the supposedly ‘normal’ sense of ‘faithfulness/pledge’ to make it appear as anything other than marginal to NT usage” (Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 303).

⁵⁷A couple of scholars, in arguing for the subjective genitive position, deny the presence of πίστις with an objective genitive of Christ or God outside of Paul in the NT. Wallis writes, “Apart from Paul, there are no unambiguous cases in the New Testament where πίστις followed by Christ or God in the genitive case must be interpreted objectively.” He explains the genitive constructions in Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12 as non-objective genitive constructions (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 71). Cf. Robinson, who says, “None of them [referring to examples of πίστις with objective genitive] is so unequivocally objective as to provide certain evidence for the usage we are looking for” (Robinson, “Faith of Christ,” 78-79).

⁵⁸Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 304. Idem, “Detheologizing the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from Lexical Semantic Perspective,” *NovT* 62 (2000):19 n. 59, where Matlock lists more examples of πίστις with the objective genitive in secular Greek literature.

⁵⁹Howard, “Faith of Christ,” 213.

Hay adds two more of which he says Howard was unaware (*Ant.* 17.6.5; 17.10.7).⁶⁰

These examples are significant given that in Hellenistic Greek, there was hesitancy to express a relationship with a case that could be expressed by the use of a preposition.⁶¹

Methodologically, it is probably better to give priority to the context of Paul's letters and the rest of the NT. To the extent that Howard and others do not give reasons for preferring the Hellenistic Jewish Greek context over that of the NT, their arguments are not very helpful in the debate. The investigation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Apostolic Fathers (see chap. 3) shows that they did not understand the phrase as a subjective genitive. Their own use of πίστις demonstrates that its object could be stated in the genitive case. Moisés Silva remarks, "I am not aware of any ancient Greek father who even raised the possibility of understanding it [πίστις Χριστοῦ] as subjective."⁶²

In the final analysis, the grammatical arguments summarized above in favor of the subjective genitive are reasonably answered. Although this does not prove the case for the objective genitive view, it raises questions and weakens the force of such arguments on the subjective genitive side.

Grammatical Arguments for the Objective Genitive Interpretation

The force of the genitive construction. Dunn says that there is "something seductively attractive about taking the phrase in its most literal English translation – "the

⁶⁰David M. Hay, "Pistis as 'Ground for Faith,'" *JBL* 108 (1989): 469 n. 28.

⁶¹See discussion of this phenomenon in J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), 1:60-62.

⁶²Moisés Silva, *God, Language and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*, in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, 6 vols. in one, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 257.

faith of Christ.”⁶³ But as he argues, the literal English translation (“faith of Christ”) simply does not reflect the ambiguity of the phrase.⁶⁴ In support of the objective genitive view, Dunn points to related phrases such as ἡ γνῶσις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ “knowledge of Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:8) and ζῆλος θεοῦ “zeal for God” (Rom 10:2). In these two cases, “the English form allows the objective genitive force which seems to be excluded from ‘the faith of Christ.’”⁶⁵ Dunn also refers to the phrase ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ (Mark 11:22). Here too, the literal English translation is “have faith of God” and “no one would think to take the ‘faith of God’ as anything other than an objective genitive.”⁶⁶ It is also important for Dunn that in Philippians 3:9, the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ “faith of Christ” occurs in close proximity to ἡ γνῶσις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ “knowledge of Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:8). He argues that “No one would think to take ‘the knowledge of Christ Jesus’ as any other than an objective genitive.”⁶⁷ Schreiner, commenting on the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Philippians 3:9, adds that “since the genitive Χριστοῦ is objective in verse 8, there is no grammatical reason for declaring such to be impossible in verse 9.”⁶⁸ While Dunn limits his example of πίστις with an objective genitive outside of Paul to Mark 11:22 and Acts 3:16, John Murray adds James 2:1; Revelation 2:13; and 14:12 as clear

⁶³Dunn, “Once More,” 251.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 252. For similar construction of πίστις with objective genitive, Dunn points to Acts 3:16 and 2 Thess 2:13.

⁶⁷Ibid., 251. Dunn warns, “We must therefore not be misled by the inflexibility of the literal English translation of our phrase, the ‘faith of Christ’” (ibid.).

⁶⁸Schreiner, *Romans*, 183.

examples of πίστις with an objective genitive.⁶⁹ For Dunn and Murray, these parallel examples favor the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. According to Schreiner, “grammatically equivalent constructions in Paul reveal that an objective genitive sense for πίστις Χριστοῦ is plausible” (cf. 1 Thess 1:3; Phil 3:8; 2 Thess 2:13; Col 2:12).⁷⁰

In light of this argument, the form of the genitive construction “faith of Christ” by itself does not automatically mean that it is a subjective genitive construction. One has to consider the force of the genitive case and parallel constructions. Few scholars have endeavored to explain these parallel constructions. Wallis and Robinson reject the objective genitive reading of Mark 11:22, Acts 3:16; Colossians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; James 2:1; Revelation 2:13; 14:12. In their view these are all instances of πίστις with the subjective genitive.⁷¹ Wallis even suggests a different understanding for ἡ γνῶσις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Phil 3:8) where for him, the knowledge of Christ is the ground and not the goal of Paul’s action.⁷²

Wallis and Robinson are in the minority in their argument that there are no examples of πίστις with an objective genitive outside of Paul in the NT. Supporters of the subjective genitive agree to at least two instances of πίστις with the objective genitive (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16).⁷³ The other instances (Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12) might

⁶⁹John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; reprint, 1973), 1:369. See below.

⁷⁰Schreiner, *Romans*, 183.

⁷¹Robinson, “Faith of Christ,” 78; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 71 n. 35.

⁷²Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 123.

⁷³Hays, *Faith*, 149 n. 113; Wallace, *Grammar*, 116. Wallace does not include Acts 3:16 but includes Col 2:12; 2 Thess 2:13; Jas 2:1; and Rev 2:13.

be debated, but a good case for the objective genitive construction can be made.⁷⁴ Also, Wallis' attempt to argue that knowledge in Philippians 3:8 is Jesus' subjective knowledge seems strained.⁷⁵

It seems that the parallel examples of πίστις with objective genitives in the NT pose the biggest challenge for the subjective genitive interpretation grammatically. With the exceptions of Wallis and Robinson, very little is offered in explaining how these examples fit with the subjective genitive view. While the argument from parallel examples does not disprove the subjective genitive reading, it shows that the objective genitive view is plausible.

Absence of the definite article with πίστις. Dunn finds significance in the absence of the definite article with πίστις in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.⁷⁶ He is influenced by E. D. Burton who contends that when πίστις is used with a subjective genitive, “the article is . . . almost invariably present.”⁷⁷ Dunn applies Burton's argument to the following examples of πίστις with a genitive: ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυριοῦ ἡμῶν, “you hold the faith which our Lord Jesus Christ himself displayed”⁷⁸ (Jas 2:1); οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου, “you do not deny my faith” (Rev 2:13); “those who keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus (τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ)” (Rev 14:12); τὴν πίστιν

⁷⁴See discussion in chap. 2.

⁷⁵We will discuss this verse in chap. 7.

⁷⁶Dunn, “Once More,” 252. Dunn asks, “What is the significance of the lack of the definite article in the phrase—πίστις Χριστοῦ rather than ἡ πίστις Χριστοῦ” (ibid.).

⁷⁷E. D. Burton, *Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), 482.

⁷⁸English translations are those given by Dunn.

τοῦ θεοῦ, “the faithfulness of God” (Rom 3:3); and διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ, “through the faithfulness of the working of God” (Col 2:12). All of these are clear examples of πίστις with the definite article used in a subjective genitive construction.⁷⁹

In Dunn’s view, the disputed πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases lack the definite article which suggests that these are objective genitive constructions.⁸⁰

There are two exceptions to the rule, according to Dunn. Ephesians 3:12 has πίστις with the definite article, διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ, but it is not a subjective genitive construction.⁸¹ A more problematic example which Dunn recognizes is the phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ where πίστις is anarthrous and is not an objective genitive. He solves this by allowing for Burton’s qualification that the article “almost invariably” illustrates the subjective genitive.⁸² Thus Romans 4:16 is an exception to the rule.⁸³

Dunn argues nobly, but in the end his case is not compelling. First, by starting with the assumption that πίστις with the definite article in a genitive construction indicates a subjective genitive construction, Dunn is forced to argue, solely on the basis of the presence of the definite article, for a subjective genitive construction with πίστις in James 2:1; Revelation 2:13; 14:12; and Colossians 2:12. Interestingly, Burton does not draw this conclusion and Dunn may have gone further than Burton intended. The

⁷⁹Dunn, “Once More,” 253.

⁸⁰Dunn writes, “It is probably more significant than at first appears that *all* the phrases which come into dispute in Paul *lack* the definite article. The fact that it is *all* the disputed cases does suggest that we are confronted by a regular pattern of speech, where the lack of the definite article is in itself almost sufficient to indicate that what is in view is *faith* (i.e., faith as exercised by believers in general), rather than the *faith* (i.e., the particular faith of Jesus himself)” (“Once More,” 253). His italics.

⁸¹Ibid., 254 n. 24 for his rationale.

⁸²Ibid., 254.

⁸³Ibid.

examples that Burton gives involves πίστις with a personal pronoun with the object of faith indicated by the context (Luke 22:32; Rom 1:8, 12; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 1:24a; 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 2 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 2:18; Phlm 5, 6; Heb 13:7; Jas 1:3; 1 Pet 1:7, 21; 2 Pet 1:5; 1 John 5:4; Jude 20; Rev 2:19; 13:10).⁸⁴ In some instances the examples Dunn lists as subjective genitives (Col 2:12; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12) are considered to be examples of the objective genitive construction by Burton.⁸⁵

Dunn fails to explain why this role of the definite article only applies to the use of πίστις and not to other verbal nouns with a genitive construction. Just a quick glance in Paul shows that the article does not play a significant role in determining whether a genitive is objective or subjective. There are instances of verbal nouns with the definite article in an objective genitive construction, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου (Rom 2:23); τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ⁸⁶ (1 Cor 1:6); τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου (2 Cor 5:11); τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor 10:5); εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 10:5); τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 4:13, cf. Col 1:10). At the same time, there are also cases where the definite article is absent but one still has an objective genitive construction, φόβος θεοῦ (Rom 3:18, cf. 2 Cor 5:11); ζῆλον θεοῦ (Rom 10:2); ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ (Eph 5:21); ἐπιγνωσιν ἀληθείας (Titus 1:1). What this shows us is that the decision for objective or subjective genitive does not rest with the presence or absence of the definite article but with context. This evidence significantly weakens Dunn

⁸⁴Burton, *Galatians*, 482.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Possibly ambiguous.

argument.

We have summarized thus far some of the grammatical arguments made in favor of the subjective and objective genitive views. It has been shown that the arguments (in support of the subjective genitive interpretation) from the use of πίστις followed by a genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun, the parallel between ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26) and ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16), and the use of πίστις in the hellenistic Jewish literature, are reasonably answered and in the end are inconclusive. Also, the argument in favor of the objective genitive view based on the presence of the definite article is quite weak (for reasons stated above) and the parallel constructions which seem to favor the objective genitive side are called into question by some scholars. Yet, from the facts themselves, it is doubtful that the subjective genitive proponents have adequately explained why other uses of πίστις with the objective genitive in the NT should not inform the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. This might be the one argument that tips the scale slightly in favor of the objective genitive understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ, but is in no way conclusive. What the grammatical arguments have shown is that context/exegesis is the only way forward.

Paul's Use of the Genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ with πίστις and other Verbal Nouns

Additional evidence that is often left out in the debate is Paul's use of πίστις and other verbal nouns with the genitives of Christ or God. An overview of this usage might add something to our understanding of the phrase in question. A simple search of verbal nouns with genitives in Paul reveal that the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ are used with subjective and objective genitives.

Objective Genitives with Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ

We note the following examples: ζῆλον θεοῦ (Rom 10:2); θεοῦ. . . διάκονός (Rom 13:4);⁸⁷ τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor 1:6);⁸⁸ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 2:1);⁸⁹ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor 9:12);⁹⁰ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 15:15); ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν (1 Cor 15:34); τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου (2 Cor 5:11); τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor 10:5); εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 10:5); τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 4:13);⁹¹ ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ (Eph 5:21); τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Phil 3:8); τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ (Col 1:10); τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Thess 1:3); τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Thess 3:5).⁹²

The above eighteen examples (not intended to be exhaustive) indicate a common practice in the Pauline writings (as well as the rest of the NT⁹³) of expressing the object of a verbal noun with a genitive of God or Christ. Though the literal English translation is rendered with “of,” e. g. “obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:5); “knowledge of Christ” (Col 1:10), “zeal of God” (Rom 10:2), it is clear that these are instances of

⁸⁷Wallace notes that context supports objective genitive reading (*ibid.*, 117).

⁸⁸“Witness concerning Christ.” So Robertson, *Grammar*, 500, or “witness toward Christ” so Porter, *Idioms*, 94.

⁸⁹Georg Benedikt Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, Prepared as a Solid Basis for the Interpretation of the New Testament* (Andover, MA: W. F. Draper, 1869), 184.

⁹⁰Turner, *Grammar*, 211.

⁹¹Wallace, *Grammar*, 117.

⁹²Debated.

⁹³See appendix 2.

objective genitives. Theoretically, these examples could be either subjective or objective genitive construction but context dictates the meaning.

Subjective Genitives with Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ

The following examples are noted: ὀργή θεοῦ (Rom 1:18);⁹⁴ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 2:3);⁹⁵ τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 3:3); ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 5:5);⁹⁶ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 8:35); τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 8:39); ἡ . . . πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 9:11); τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ (Rom 13:2); ἀληθείας θεοῦ (Rom 15:8, cf. 3:4); ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 5:14); δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 1:12);⁹⁷ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 6:6).

In these fourteen examples, one is debated (Rom 1:17), three could be either subjective or objective genitive (Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 1:12), two could be possessive or genitive of origin (Rom 1:18; 2:3). Thus eight are subjective genitive constructions.

What this analysis shows is that the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ with πίστις and other verbal nouns are both present in Paul. Yet, Paul seems to use the objective genitive construction with these genitives more freely than he does with the subjective genitives. Although not conclusive, it would seem that stylistically, the use of verbal nouns with a genitive of object is common in Paul. This analysis shows a Pauline style where the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ are used more freely with the

⁹⁴Could be source or origin.

⁹⁵Possibly source or origin.

⁹⁶Either objective, subjective, or plenary will make sense.

⁹⁷Debated.

objective genitive, a possible support for reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ.”

Theological Considerations⁹⁸

What is the theological meaning of πίστις as it relates to Χριστοῦ? When Paul says that God’s righteousness is revealed through faith, is the emphasis on Jesus’ faith or on the faith of the believer? Do we make faith a work when faith is seen as a condition for justification? What is the relationship of faith to obedience? These are serious theological questions raised by supporters of the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. The goal here is simply to summarize and evaluate some of these arguments since they are important for the debate.

Theological Concerns as the Starting Point

Scholars agree that exegesis alone can resolve the debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. Yet, it seems that theological questions inform exegesis and play a significant role in the debate. It is therefore not uncommon to find theological questions becoming the starting point for exegesis. Ardel B. Caneday, although he accepts that contextual usage alone should determine the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, argues that theological concerns cannot be excluded. He writes,

In the final analysis, one’s grammatical and syntactical decision concerning the meaning of the phrase must be determined by contextual usage alone. However, to defer one’s choice to the dictates of context hardly guarantees that the choice is objective or beyond correction This is true because one’s theological understanding of any given context will color how one reads the phrase.⁹⁹

⁹⁸The theological concerns are raised mainly by the proponents of the subjective genitive and caution the supporters of the objective genitive against drawing too quick a conclusion on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ without fully looking at the theological implications that might result. This section then affords the opportunity to address these matters in some detail and in one place so that they can be referred to in future chapters without having to summarize the views all over.

⁹⁹Ardel B. Caneday, “Galatians 3:22ff. – A Crux Interpretum for πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul’s Thought,” *Evangelical Theological Seminar Papers* (1999): 8.

Caneday begins his exegesis by adopting the passive meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις, which he argues “may readily be linked with Paul’s ‘obedience’ theme in Romans 5:19 and Philippians 3 [2]:8.”¹⁰⁰

Hays, who pays very close attention to contextual analysis, in the end seems to be influenced more by theological issues. In his judgment,

The theological issue is this: what would it mean for Paul to speak of Jesus Christ’s own faith as the basis upon which ‘the promise’ is given to those who believe? Does such a conception make sense and does it fit intelligibly into the overall structure of Paul’s thought? . . . *We would do well to begin by asking whether it is more intelligible to suppose that “believing in Jesus Christ” is the basis upon which the “promise” is given to those who believe.*¹⁰¹

Wallis’ exegesis of the relevant text for πίστις Χριστοῦ is accompanied also by what he calls “detailed theological discussion.” His discussion is framed by three theological questions which he argues are central to the debate: (1) “Could Paul have made reference to the faith of Jesus Christ?” (2) “What is the relationship between God’s faithfulness and Jesus’ faith?” (3) “What is the relationship between Jesus’ faith and the faith of Christians?”¹⁰²

In sum, these scholars, though giving attention to exegesis, have as their starting point theological questions which inform how the text is analyzed. It is true that one cannot approach the text without theological presuppositions as Caneday has rightly indicated. The challenge is to subject one’s theological presuppositions to the dictates of context. If one’s theological understanding is the starting point for exegesis, the

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 10.

¹⁰¹Hays, *Faith*, 150. My italics.

¹⁰²Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 67-68.

questions raised will ultimately favor the conclusions one seeks to draw. While it is true that “to defer one’s choice to the dictates of context hardly guarantees that the choice is objective or beyond correction,”¹⁰³ context still remains the most objective ground for judging one’s conclusions.

Faith and Obedience

The single most important theological argument in favor of the subjective genitive reading is that πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to the obedience of Christ in going to the cross. Hays contends that the phrase ὑπακοή πίστεως “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5) is an “exegetical construction virtually equating the two nouns.”¹⁰⁴ In this regard he holds that ὑπακοή (Rom 5:19) is Christ’s πίστις “in light of the virtual synonymy established in 1:5 between πίστις and ὑπακοή.”¹⁰⁵ Commenting on Romans 5:19, Hays writes, “If Paul can speak so compellingly in Romans 5:19 of the soteriological consequences of Christ’s ὑπακοή, there is no a priori reason to deny that Paul could intend the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ to refer to Christ’s soteriologically efficacious faith(fulness).”¹⁰⁶

The link between faith and obedience is also important for Johnson who sees in Romans 5:19 a clear explanation of the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:21-26. He writes,

The obedience of Jesus is explicitly said to be the basis for the righteousness of others And by this obedience of Jesus, I suggest, Paul means, simply, Jesus’

¹⁰³Caneday, “Galatians 3:22,” 8.

¹⁰⁴Hays, “Pauline Christology,” 278.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 286; cf. Barth, “Faith of the Messiah,” 366.

¹⁰⁶Hays, *Faith*, 152.

faith . . . The human faith of Jesus is . . . essentially obedience . . . Rom 5:19 is the plain explication of Rom 3:21-26.¹⁰⁷

These arguments sound very appealing especially because faith or unbelief is linked with obedience or disobedience in Romans (cf. 1:5 and 15:18; 1:8 and 16:19; 10:16a and 10:16b; 11:23 and 11:30, 31).¹⁰⁸ It is also an attractive argument because justification is said to come through the “faith of Christ” (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9) as well as through the “obedience of Christ” (Rom 5:19). This would seem to favor the argument that faith and obedience mean the same thing.

Despite the attractiveness of this interpretation it is not necessarily compelling. It is not clear that πίστις and ὑπακοή are virtually synonymous terms. For instance, it is doubtful that Romans 1:5 establishes a connection between πίστις and ὑπακοή so that πίστις is as good as ὑπακοή.¹⁰⁹ The meaning of ὑπακοή πίστεως “obedience of faith” in Romans 1:5 is debated and cannot be the basis for establishing the meaning of πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ.¹¹⁰ Additionally, accepting ὑπακοή πίστεως as an exegetical construction does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that πίστις is obedience.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 89. See also Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 67; Keck, “Jesus’ in Romans,” 457.

¹⁰⁸See also Don B. Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 16.

¹⁰⁹Matlock questions that Rom 1:5 “can establish such an identity of meaning that, for Paul, writing ὑπακοή is as good as writing πίστις” (Matlock, “Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 308).

¹¹⁰Garlington remarks that the importance of the “obedience of faith” phrase is not exhausted by the genitive of apposition view. There seems to be more to the genitive πίστεως than the idea of apposition (Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 16-17).

¹¹¹Some scholars who see ὑπακοή πίστεως as exegetical or appositional construction do not draw the conclusion that Jesus’ πίστις is his obedience. See, for example, C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 8; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 237; Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 11; Murray, *Romans*, 1:13.

Second, there are other constructions with πίστις in Romans similar to the “obedience of faith” construction that would not make sense if taken as exegetical. For example, νόμου πίστεως “law of faith” (Rom 3:27), τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως “the righteousness of faith” (Rom 4:11, 13), τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως “the word of faith” (Rom 10:8), τὴν ἀναλογίαν πίστεως “proportion of faith” (Rom 12:6).¹¹² Third, the meaning “obedience” for πίστις (faithfulness) in Romans 3:22, 26 lacks contextual support. Little in this section (Rom 3:21-26) points to Christ’s obedience as the reason for our justification. According to Moo, πίστις in Paul almost always means “faith.” In this light, strong contextual evidence must be present to suggest a different meaning (such as “obedience) for πίστις.”¹¹³ Moreover, although the concept of Christ’s obedience is present in Paul’s letters (cf. Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8), he never speaks unambiguously of the obedience of Christ as his πίστις.¹¹⁴

Fourth, the equating of πίστις with obedience, even if it worked in Romans, would not work in Galatians and Philippians. One would have to argue that the readers of Galatians already understood (from another context) this “virtual synonymy” between πίστις and ὑπακοή as Hays suggests in Romans 1:5¹¹⁵ since nothing in Galatians suggests this connection. Furthermore, also absent from Galatians is any reference to justification “through obedience” (διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς) of Christ as we have in Romans 5:19. This means that in Galatians there is no contextual clue to indicate that

¹¹²Many more examples are found in Paul (2 Cor 4:13; Gal 3:2, 5; 6:10; Eph 4:13; 6:16; Phil 1:25; 2:17; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8; 2 Thess 1:11).

¹¹³Moo, *Romans*, 225.

¹¹⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 185.

¹¹⁵Hays, “Pauline Christology,” 278.

πίστις Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:16; 3:22) refers to Jesus' obedience.¹¹⁶ Similarly, in Philippians Paul does not equate Jesus' obedience (Phil 2:8) with his "faith" (Phil 3:9). Hooker and O'Brien see this connection, but it is doubtful that the original readers saw it this way.¹¹⁷ Also absent from Philippians is a clear link between justification and obedience, as in Romans 5:19.

Although faith and obedience are linked in Romans, Davies is correct in arguing that they are not identical.¹¹⁸ To the extent that "virtual synonymy" between "faith" and "obedience" has not been adequately established, the argument that πίστις Χριστοῦ is Jesus' faithfulness understood as his obedience in going to the cross is inconclusive. Without the equating of faith and obedience, this argument in support of the subjective genitive interpretation is weakened.¹¹⁹

The Danger of Making Faith a Work that Merits Salvation

The argument is put forth that in Galatians 2:16, Paul rejects ἔργων νόμου "works of the law" as a means of justification. To turn around and advocate "faith in Christ" (πίστις Χριστοῦ) as the means of justification is unlikely since it makes faith

¹¹⁶Rom 1:5 and 5:19 are necessary for equating faith and obedience. In the absence of these constructions in Galatians and Philippians, the argument is weakened for it depends on Romans.

¹¹⁷Interestingly, O'Brien in his commentary on Philippians, does not say that in 2:8 Jesus' obedience is his faith, but when he comes to 3:9, he argues that Christ's πίστις is his obedience and he supports it with Phil 2:8 and Rom 5:18-19. See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 228-29 and 399-400. Hooker's only explanation is that ἡγέομαι in Phil 3:7-8 is echoed in chap. 2 (Hooker, "πίστις Χριστοῦ," 332). This does not prove that πίστις means "obedience." See our discussion in chap. 7.

¹¹⁸Glenn N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1-4*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 39 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 28.

¹¹⁹This does not nullify the arguments supporting the subjective genitive reading, but it seriously calls into question an argument that is foundational for the subjective genitive view.

another work.¹²⁰ Keck maintains that the contrast between ἔργων νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ is not our work or our believing. Rather, “the real alternative is our ‘work’ or Christ’s πίστις, not our deeds or our faith.”¹²¹ Also arguing against the objective genitive view on the ground that it makes faith a work, G. M. Taylor writes,

I believe the substance of that teaching [Paul’s teaching in Galatians] to be that man is saved by Christ’s work and by Christ’s work alone, and circumcision or any other work of the law is theologically objectionable because it implies that Christ’s work is insufficient and needs to be complemented Justification simply by faith in Christ . . . [assigns] to man too much of a function and to Christ too little: it simply substitutes the mental act of having faith for the bodily one of being circumcised as a precondition of salvation, and (so far as the mechanism of justification is concerned) leaves Christ in the passive role of being the object of our justifying faith.¹²²

As indicated by Howard, “Paul’s argument distinguishes justification by man (including his works, faith, and any other conceivable human act) from justification by God.”¹²³ Keck contends that the objective genitive reading of Galatians 2:16 “separates Christ from justification, which now depends solely on human believing.” It is argued that the subjective genitive reading frees us “from a subjectivist reading of justification, according to which its basis is either our ‘work’ or our believing.”¹²⁴ Implying that the objective genitive reading makes faith a work, Martyn writes,

The result of the [subjective genitive] interpretation of *pistis Christou* is crucial to an understanding not only of Galatians but also of the whole of Paul’s theology. God has set things right without laying down a prior condition of any sort. God’s rectifying act, that is to say, is no more God’s response to human faith in Christ than

¹²⁰Thus Hays, *Faith*, 120, 150 n. 118; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 455 n. 39; John O’Rourke, “*Pistis* in Romans,” *CBQ* 34 (1973): 191.

¹²¹Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 454.

¹²²G. M. Taylor, “The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians,” *JBL* 85 (1966): 75.

¹²³Howard, *Paul, Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 35, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 65.

¹²⁴Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 454.

it is God's response to human observance of the Law. God's rectification is not God's response at all. It is the *first* move; it is God's initiative, carried out by him in Christ's faithful death.¹²⁵

These are legitimate concerns and we should be aware of the danger of thinking of faith as a work which merits salvation. Yet, such a strong argument rests on the assumption that if πίστις Χριστοῦ means "faith in Christ," then faith is necessarily a work. This is not inevitably the case. There are several reasons why the objective genitive interpretation does not make faith a work. First, outside of the πίστις Χριστοῦ passages, Paul links human believing with justification (cf. Rom 3:28, 30; 5:1) without making faith a work. Human faith is indeed necessary in justification. Second, one is justified by faith without making faith a work because faith itself is a work of grace and has as its content all that God has accomplished in Christ.¹²⁶ According to Dunn, since salvation is by grace, any sense of faith as a work is diffused.¹²⁷ G. W. Bromiley carefully remarks that faith is not a work that avails salvation. It is not the ground of our justification. Rather, "behind faith is grace (Rom 4:16; Eph 2:8). The power of faith is the power of its object Faith is justifying faith, not because it justifies, but because it grasps the justification God Himself has effected."¹²⁸ To this we may add Philippians 1:29 and Ephesians 6:23. Cranfield is correct when he argues that

¹²⁵J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 271.

¹²⁶According to Seifrid, faith for Paul goes beyond "mere human disposition or a general sense of dependence upon God. It is rather directed to God's promise to Abraham which has come to fulfillment in Christ (Gal 3:6-8; Rom 4:20-21)." Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 130.

¹²⁷Dunn, "Once More πίστις," 263. Dunn charges that "grace" is missing from Hays' treatment of the subject in Galatians, a point which weakens the charge of faith as a work. See also Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Waco: Word, 1983), 141.

¹²⁸G. W. Bromiley, "Faith," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:271.

Faith then excludes everything by which one might think to establish for oneself a claim on God, to put him under an obligation. To believe in Christ Jesus . . . is to put all one's trust in God's grace in him, to the exclusion of all self-trust and all attempts to justify oneself. It is the attitude of one who knows and confesses that he is a sinner.¹²⁹

Third, the example of Abraham in Romans 4 shows the necessity of faith in justification. Abraham believed God, and his faith was reckoned for righteousness (Rom 4:3, 5, 9). This does not assign to Abraham too much a function and to God too little, since God is the object of Abraham's faith. Taylor's argument is then unconvincing. On the contrary, faith is not a work but an acknowledgement that one cannot work to earn God's favor. According to Hawthorne,

Faith is not an alternative way of earning God's favor; faith is the opposite of merit, an admission that I cannot earn God's approval, but can only accept his free offer of forgiveness, grace and love. And since the offer is made in the life and above all in the death of Christ, true righteousness, the condition of being truly right with God, must come through faith in Christ.¹³⁰

Hawthorne's argument is supported by examples where faith and works are clearly opposed in the same text (Rom 3:20, 28; 4:2-3, 5). If faith is a work, then these texts make no sense. For these reasons, the contention that the objective genitive makes faith a work is false.

Christological versus Anthropological Interpretation of Πίστις Χριστοῦ

The objective genitive view, it is argued, puts less emphasis on Christ and too much on our faith, if one is justified by faith in Christ. The subjective genitive view, it is claimed, avoids this problem by making a clear distinction between "christological and

¹²⁹Cranfield, *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 97.

¹³⁰Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141.

anthropological interpretations of πίστις Χριστοῦ.”¹³¹ The christological reading emphasizes the “salvific efficacy of Jesus Christ’s faith(fulness) for God’s people” while the anthropological reading emphasizes the “salvific efficacy of the human act of faith directed toward Christ.”¹³² According to Campbell, if πίστις Χριστοῦ is “faith in Christ” then faith becomes the means of the revelation of God’s righteousness. As he comments, there is a danger of making “the coming of the eschaton dependent on individual faith, and this is theologically (and practically) ludicrous.”¹³³ Hays makes a similar point when he asks,

What would it mean to say that God’s justice has been made manifest through our act of believing in Jesus Christ? This, if it means anything at all, verges on blasphemous absorption in our own religious subjectivity. God’s eschatological justice can only have been shown forth by an act of God: Paul’s claim is that the death of Jesus is just such an apocalyptic event.¹³⁴

Wallis, noting the use of πίστις in Galatians 2:16 and the presence of the verb ἐπιστεύσαμεν, believes that, if πίστις Χριστοῦ is “faith in Christ” then “the emphasis within this key verse for Paul’s soteriology falls rather awkwardly upon the believer rather than Christ.”¹³⁵ He then asks,

Upon what, then, does Paul encourage the Galatian Christians to base their standing before God? Belief in Christ or works of the law? Or the more

¹³¹Hays, “Pauline Christology,” 277.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³D. A. Campbell, “Rom 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum for the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 273.

¹³⁴Hays, “Pauline Christology,” 283. Hays’ comment assumes that the other side argues that God’s justice is manifested through faith. But is this really the case? One could agree with Hays that the death of Jesus is central in the revelation of God’s righteousness but this does not prove that Jesus’ death is therefore his πίστις.

¹³⁵Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 105.

fundamental reality of the faith of Christ himself . . . through which God's righteousness and covenantal blessings are extended to Jew and Gentile alike?¹³⁶

In response, one should note that these scholars rightly argue for emphasizing the role of Christ in the process of justification, but one wonders if such a dichotomy between christological and anthropological interpretations is necessary. First, the contention that the revelation of God's righteousness (Rom 3:22) does not depend on faith is correct but this is only a serious objection if πίστις is connected with the verb πεφανέρωται, "has been revealed" and not with the noun δικαιοσύνη, "righteousness."¹³⁷ Cranfield explains,

To take the personal genitive in διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as objective does not mean that one is suggesting that the human response "qualifies" the revelation of God's righteousness or that that revelation is "dependent upon or mediated by" the faith of those who hear. The structure of the sentence clearly associates the phrase not with πεφανέρωται but with δικαιοσύνη. It is added surely in order to indicate that the only appropriate response to God's δικαιοσύνη is simply to accept it as his altogether undeserved gift given in Jesus Christ.¹³⁸

By connecting διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ with δικαιοσύνη the argument that too much emphasis is given to human response of faith and "distracts . . . from the sufficiency of God's grace manifested in Christ" is answered.¹³⁹ It does not distract from the sufficiency of God's grace but shows the fitting human response to the revelation of God's righteousness.¹⁴⁰

Second, Wallis' concern that the objective genitive view places the emphasis on

¹³⁶Ibid., 106.

¹³⁷See Schlatter, *The Righteousness of God*, 94.

¹³⁸Cranfield, *On Romans*, 86.

¹³⁹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ See also Cranfield, *On Romans*, 86.

the response of faith and not on Christ assumes, as Cranfield points out, “that faith in Christ, as understood by Paul, is something very different from what a great many students of Paul have understood it to be.”¹⁴¹ According to Cranfield, when Paul speaks of faith in Christ, the emphasis is not on the believer or on the believer’s faith. The emphasis is on the object of faith, which is Christ himself.¹⁴²

Third, the distinction between christological and anthropological interpretations may be unnecessary because it still does not explain instances where justification is said to be through the faith of the believer (Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 5:1; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; Gal 3:8, 11, 24 [cf. Rom 4:5; 10:10]).¹⁴³ As Williams has noted, πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul seems to function in the same way as πίστις used absolutely to designate the believer’s faith (cf. Rom 3:21-22 and 1:17; Gal 2:16 and Rom 3:28; Gal 3:14 and 22). Williams then asks, “How can Paul use *pistis* and *pistis Christou* in such similar ways if *pistis Christou* designates specifically and exclusively Christ’s own personal faith?”¹⁴⁴ This question remains unanswered by those who argue against the objective genitive reading.

The discussion above has focused on the more important theological arguments made in support of the subjective genitive interpretation. There are other theological concerns which we only mention here summarily. It is argued that “The emphasis in Paul’s theology lies less on the question of how we should dispose ourselves

¹⁴¹Ibid., 92.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation,” 258.

¹⁴⁴S. K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 437.

towards God than on the question of how God has acted in Christ to effect our deliverance.”¹⁴⁵ Martyn asks, “Is the faith that God has chosen as the means of setting things right that of Christ himself or that of human being?”¹⁴⁶ According to Campbell,

Paul and Second Temple Judaism now share the principle of individual faith, since it exists at the heart of the covenant relationship. Consequently, it no longer seems necessary for Paul to state to a Jewish or Jewish-taught audience, that God requires a response of faith. This would be not merely superfluous, but banal and perhaps even insulting.¹⁴⁷

The above quotations show again that theological concerns play an important role in the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ for the subjective genitive view. But, as has been shown, there are reasonable answers to these objections thus making them inconclusive. We must be careful that we do not risk emphasizing the primacy of Christ’s work (which must not be denied) at the expense of the necessity of responding faith in justification. In the attempt to have Jesus as the only means by which God’s righteousness is revealed, one must not minimize human faith which is closely connected with justification in Paul.¹⁴⁸

The Way Forward

Thus far, we have argued that the arguments against the objective genitive are generally inconclusive, thus emphasizing the need for contextual analysis. In this light

¹⁴⁵Hooker, Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 337; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 456-57.

¹⁴⁶Martyn, *Galatians*, 251.

¹⁴⁷Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 61-62. Even if Campbell’s assessment is correct, it does not follow that personal faith in Christ should not be emphasized as Paul rightly does in many instances.

¹⁴⁸Cf. Matlock, “Detheologizing the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” 22-23. Cf. As Moule who argues that, “To throw so much weight upon what God in Christ has done is . . . seriously to reduce necessary reference to man’s act of will in response to God’s approach” (Moule, “The Biblical Conception of ‘Faith,’” *ExpTim* 68 [1956-57]: 157

the way forward does not lie with more grammatical analysis (since both sides have grammatical evidence in support of their view) or with theological questions serving as the starting point for the debate (since these are asked in such a way that favors one side). The way forward lies with exegesis where the meaning of πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ is sought in its various contexts. The driving question in this contextual analysis is, “What were Paul’s readers most likely to understand in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ in the context of Romans, Galatians, and Philippians?” The grammatical and theological concerns are not unimportant, but they must be subjected to the dictates of context. In this light we are forced to move from text to theology and not the other way around.

CHAPTER 5

FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST IN ROMANS 3:22, 26

Statement of the Problem in Romans

The Pauline genitival construction διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ¹ (Rom 3:22) and its equivalent (3:26) poses interpretive difficulties for scholars. The phrase could be interpreted as “through faith in Jesus Christ” (objective genitive interpretation), or “through the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ” (subjective genitive reading).² This is because πίστις (“faith”) in the active sense means “trust” or “belief” but in the passive sense, it means “faithfulness,” “trustworthiness,” “fidelity.”³ The phrase is potentially ambiguous and strong arguments are made for the subjective and objective genitive interpretations. Most commentators on Romans hold to the objective genitive reading,

¹πίστις Χριστοῦ henceforth.

²Another option would be genitive of source, “faith from Christ” (Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, New Studies in Biblical Theology [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 42). The genitive of source view still leaves πίστις being the believer’s faith. Seifrid does not explicitly state that he rejects the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ and appears to allow for this interpretation when he translates τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in 3:26 as “the one who believes in Jesus” (ibid., 66). Also, commenting on Rom 1:16-17, he makes the point that the main theme in vv. 16-17 is the “demand for faith.” Faith alone “is the exclusive means of salvation, of the revelation of God’s righteousness, and of life” (ibid., 37). When he indicates that faith is “the exclusive means of the revelation of God’s righteousness” (ibid., 37), it suggests that he sees a necessary link between the human subjective faith and the manifestation of God’s righteousness. One might conclude from this that for Seifrid, πίστις Χριστοῦ is both a genitive of source and objective genitive, but he does not take this next step. In the final analysis, the objective genitive position is not far off from Seifrid’s view.

³Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, ed. and trans. Frederick William Danker et al. [BDAG], 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “πίστις”; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957; reprint, 1974), 154.

“faith in Christ”⁴ but a growing number of scholars now support the subjective genitive interpretation, “faith/faithfulness of Christ.”⁵ Herein lies the problem: in the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction (Rom 3:22, 26), did Paul intend “faith in Christ” or “faith/faithfulness of Christ.” This is the question we seek to answer in this chapter.

Our approach is first to summarize some of the main arguments for the subjective genitive reading in Romans. This will be followed by an investigation of the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in its immediate context of 3:21-4:25. Then, we shall probe

⁴For example, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 184; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 1:166; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 226; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 346; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 203; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; reprint, 1973), 1:110; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 94; Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 101; Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1973), 65; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Frieberg: Herder, 1977), 102, 105; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer, teilband 1: Röm 1-5*. Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 6 (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 1:88-89, 184-88; Karl Kertelge, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Patmos: Verlag Düsseldorf, 1971), 174-75; M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul Épître aux Romains* (Paris: Gabalda, 1950), 72-73.

⁵R. B. Hays, Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 152; idem, “Pauline Christology,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 283; L. T. Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 77-90; L. E. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 443-60; D. A. Campbell, *Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 65 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 58-69; Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 201; G. Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 212-15; M. Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 366; John Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith?: The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology,” *Colloquium* 30 (1998): 6, 7, 11, 12; D. A. Campbell, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum for the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 267; B. W. Longenecker, “Πίστις in Rom. 3:25: Neglected Evidence for the ‘Faithfulness of Christ?’” *NTS* 39 (1993): 478-80; S. K. Williams, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 273; G. Kittel, “Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,” *TSK* 79 (1906): 424; John O’Rourke, “Pistis in Romans,” *CBQ* 34 (1973): 191; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72-102; G. N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study of Romans 1-4*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 39 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 36-38.

the broader contexts of 1:1-3:20 and 5-11 to see how Paul uses πίστις and what light it might cast on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.

Arguments for the Subjective Genitive Interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans⁶

Romans 1:5 and 5:19

Based on Romans 1:5 and 5:19, πίστις is interpreted as “the faithfulness of Christ” which is further explained as his obedience to the Father. It is argued that Paul equates faith with obedience (Rom 1:5) and 5:19 clearly shows that justification is by the obedience of Christ. On the basis of these two verses (cf. Phil 2:8), it is concluded that “faith of Christ” in 3:22 is Christ’s obedience understood as his death on the cross.⁷

Romans 1:17

The observation is made that Romans 1:17 provides a strong argument for the subjective genitive interpretation. According to this view, ὁ . . . δίκαιος “the righteous man” is Christ and ἐκ πίστεως is his faithfulness by which he shall live (be justified).⁸ The claim is that 1:17 provides an early reference in Romans to the faithfulness of Christ and serves as an interpretive key for 3:22.⁹

⁶These arguments were summarized and evaluated in chap. 4. We only note some of them here to facilitate interaction throughout the chapter.

⁷As a matter of fact, 5:19 is found to be an explanation of 3:21-26. See Hays, *Faith*, 152; idem, “Pauline Christology,” 278, 286; Barth, “Faith of the Messiah,” 366; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 89; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 67; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 457.

⁸Hays, *Faith*, 278-79; Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith?” 6, 7, 11, 12; Campbell, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum,” 267; Johnson, “Rom 3:21-26,” 79. We shall come back to this topic later. An exception is Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans*, 36-38. Although he argues for the subjective genitive interpretation in Rom 3:22, he rejects a Christological reading of Hab 2:4.

⁹See Campbell, “Romans 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 247. For a critical response to Campbell from a semantic point of view, see Brian Dodd, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum for the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 471. We shall cover Rom 1:17 later on in the chapter.

Grammatical Argument

Grammatically, it is pointed out that whenever Paul uses πίστις followed by a genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun, “in all cases the phrase refers to the faith *of* the individual, never faith *in* the individual.”¹⁰ “Faith of Christ” fits this pattern and should not be interpreted differently. For example, Paul makes use of πίστις with a subjective genitive in Romans 3:3, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (“the faithfulness of God”). In Romans 4:16, πίστεως Ἀβραάμ is Abraham’s subjective faith and not “faith in Abraham.” Therefore, it makes sense that πίστις Χριστοῦ, which fits this genitive construction, should be read as a subjective genitive construction, “the faithfulness of Christ.”¹¹

The Immediate Context of 3:21-26

The righteousness of God. The definition of “the righteousness of God” as God’s covenant faithfulness is found to favor the subjective genitive interpretation.¹² According to Hays, “the righteousness of God” in 3:21-22 is God’s covenant faithfulness. This, he claims, is beyond dispute and makes the objective genitive reading “unintelligible.”¹³ From the standpoint of Hays, the meaning of the righteousness of God

¹⁰Howard, “Romans 3:21-31 and the Inclusion of the Gentiles,” *HTR* 63 (1970), 229; idem, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *HTR* 60 (1967): 459-60. His italics. A number of scholars follow this argument and find it in favor of the subjective genitive view. See, for example, Hays, *Faith*, 150; idem, “Pauline Christology,” 276; Williams, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” 273; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 69.

¹¹Hays, *Faith*, 157, 159; cf. Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 229; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 80; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 68; Kittel, “Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,” 424.

¹²Hays concedes that if the righteousness of God in 3:21-22 means a status before God where he imputes righteousness, then the objective genitive reading would make sense. Thus, “the status of righteousness is conferred through the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ” (Hays, *Faith*, 283).

¹³Hays, *Faith*, 283; cf. Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 75 n. 52.

in verse 22 as God's covenantal faithfulness is necessary for the view he advocates.¹⁴

The problem of redundancy. The objective genitive reading is also found to create a redundancy in 3:22. The argument is made that if πίστις Χριστοῦ means “faith in Christ” then Paul is redundant when he adds εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας “for all those who believe” (3:22b).¹⁵ The subjective genitive reading removes the redundancy and produces a neat progression: “the righteousness of God has been revealed through the faithfulness of Christ, with the goal of faith in all.”¹⁶

The “problem of causality.” In his analysis of Romans 3:21-26, Campbell warns that πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” creates a “problem of causality” where the believer's faith is both the goal and means of faith. This, he notes, is “nonsense.” He holds that εἰς in verse 22c is purposive, in which case the goal of the revelation of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ is so that “everyone might believe.” With the subjective genitive reading, the faith of Jesus clearly precedes the faith of the believer. In this case, the means appropriately precedes the goal. Campbell concludes, “Once again it would seem that a subjective genitive reading allows a smooth progression to replace nonsense.”¹⁷

¹⁴We should point out that understanding the righteousness of God as his covenantal faithfulness does not necessarily lead to the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Dunn defines the righteousness of God as his covenantal faithfulness but argues for the objective genitive interpretation in 3:22, 26 (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:165-66).

¹⁵Hays, *Faith*, 283; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 25, 62-63; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 75, 77; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 454; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 79.

¹⁶According to Campbell, it is unlikely that Paul repeats himself here since the “surrounding text is compact and carefully crafted” and as a result, any “oscillation between prosaic brevity and verbose repetition in the same section is an embarrassment for an objective genitive reading” (Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 62, 63).

¹⁷Ibid.

Related to Campbell's argument is the view that the faith of believers cannot be said to reveal the righteousness of God.¹⁸ Alternatively, the righteousness of God is mediated by the faithfulness of Christ. In this way the emphasis in justification is rightly placed on God's initiative rather than on the human response of faith.¹⁹ Adding to the problem is the perfect tense of the verb *πεφανερώται*, "has been manifested." The question is raised that if our faith is something that takes place in the present, a decision on the part of the believer, how is it supposed to have revealed God's righteousness in the immediate past? Campbell notes, "This temporal sequence is not merely difficult: it is incoherent" if one accepts the objective genitive interpretation.²⁰

Danger of making faith a work. Some proponents of the subjective interpretation argue that Paul rejects works of the law as a means of justification (3:20, 21). To turn around and advocate faith as the means for justification is unlikely because it makes faith a human work.²¹ According to Keck, the antithesis between *ἔργα νόμου* and *πίστις Χριστοῦ* is not a contrast between our work or our believing. Rather, "the real alternative is our 'work' or Christ's *πίστις*, not our deeds or our faith."²²

¹⁸Ibid. Cf. Wallis, "There can be little doubt that Paul understands the origin of the revelation to be in the redemptive death of Christ" (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 74).

¹⁹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 76.

²⁰Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 64 explains, "The faithfulness of Christ clearly does reveal the righteousness of God . . . in the sense that it is the point at which God's final salvation becomes objectively apparent in history. And this revelation within the life and death of Jesus clearly took place in the immediate past, hence the appropriateness of the perfect tense" (ibid., 64). Hays concurs noting that any connection between *πίστις* as human faith and *πεφανερώται* is puzzling (Hays, *Faith*, 283). In their view, the subjective genitive reading avoids this problem.

²¹Thus Hays, *Faith*, 120, 150 n. 118; Keck, "Jesus' in Romans," 455 n. 39.

²²Keck, "Jesus' in Romans," 454. Cf. G. M. Taylor, "The Function of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* in Galatians," *JBL* 85 (1966): 75; J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 271; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 67.

In view of the above arguments the subjective genitive interpretation is considered to have an advantage over the objective genitive reading.²³ But is this the case? Have these arguments been effectively made, so that the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” is precluded? These arguments are indeed appealing and the theology behind the subjective genitive interpretation is “powerful, important, and attractive.”²⁴ Yet, they lack enough swaying power to discredit the objective genitive reading.²⁵ The issue is not whether the theology behind the subjective genitive reading is consistent with Paul’s theology or not. The question we are concerned with is whether in the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction contains all that the subjective genitive view claims. We maintain that there are compelling reasons from within Romans 3:21-4:25 and the broader context of Romans in favor of objective genitive, “faith in Christ.”²⁶

An Objective Genitive Interpretation of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Context of 3:21-4:25

Romans 3:21-26

Scholars rightly note the importance of Romans 3:21-26 in this epistle.²⁷ In stark contrast to 1:18-3:20, 3:21-26 provides God’s solution to the human plight

²³Again, see chap. 4 for more detailed summaries and evaluations of these arguments.

²⁴J. D. G. Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 268.

²⁵Schreiner, *Romans*, 182.

²⁶It should be noted that we are not denying that “the obedience of Christ,” a key concept in the subjective genitive interpretation, is an important element in Pauline theology. It remains doubtful that Paul communicates this concept with πίστις Χριστοῦ.

²⁷John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville, Broadman, 1999), 287; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:163; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 341; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:199; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 72; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 11; W. Schrage, “Römer 3:21-26 und die Bedeutung des Todes Jesu Christi bei Paulus,” in *Das Kreuz Jesu: Theologische Überlegungen*, ed. P. Rieger, Forum 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 65.

described.²⁸ Romans 1:18-3:20 paints a gloomy picture of the human condition before God.²⁹ It is one of sin and deserved wrath. In 3:21-26, the good news comes forth (picking up from 1:16-17). God has provided a solution to the human condition, a solution by which one can be made right with God. Now, instead of deserved wrath (1:18) due to sin (3:9), there is salvation through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross (3:24). While unbelief leads to sin and exclusion from the presence of God (1:18-32), now faith leads to justification before God (3:21-26, 28-30), the consequence of which (justification) is peace with God (5:1). This is indeed the good news which was introduced in 1:16-17. The theme of the righteousness of God, by faith, for Jews and Gentiles (1:16-17) was developed negatively in 1:18-3:20 and is now further developed in a more positive light (3:21-26).³⁰

The introductory words, νυνὶ δὲ³¹ “But now” (v. 21) signify a shift in Paul’s

²⁸Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 180.

²⁹Contra Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 73 who argues that the opening chapters of Romans are mainly concerned with vindicating God and not with establishing the universality of human sin. Cf. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 41-57.

³⁰Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:181; Lagrange, *Romains*, 72. The link between 3:21-26 and 1:16-17 is readily acknowledged by scholars (see Moo, *Romans*, 219; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 341-42; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 21; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 72; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 181). There are certain words and phrases from 1:16-17 that appear also in 3:21-26. E. g. δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, “righteousness of God” (1:17; cf. 3:21, 22, 25, 26), πεφανέρωται “manifested” (ἀποκαλύπτεται, 1:17; cf. 3:21), πίστεως, “faith” (1:17; cf. 3:22, 25, 26), and εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας “for all those who believe” (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, 1:16; cf. 3:22). The difference in 3:21-26 is that Paul connects God’s righteousness with the OT Scriptures (3:21, cf. Moo, *Romans*, 219), contrasts faith with works of the law (3:20, 21, 22), and modifies πίστις with the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

³¹Νυνὶ δὲ may simply indicate a logical conclusion from a preceding argument (cf. 7:17). It may also be used in a temporal sense (cf. Rom 6:22; 7:6; 1 Cor 15:20; Eph 2:13; Col 1:22). A temporal sense is seen here by Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 103; Schreiner, *Romans*, 180; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 341; Dunn, *Romans* 1:164; Moo, *Romans*, 221; Lagrange, *Romains*, 73. It is possible that νυνὶ δὲ has both a logical and temporal importance in 3:21. So A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. C. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1949), 144.

argument.³² The main point in 3:21-26 is found in verses 21-22, and centers on the manifestation of the righteousness of God apart from the law, even the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ)³³ through faith in/of Jesus Christ for all those who believe.³⁴ The rest of the passage (vv. 22c-26) is subordinate to this main thought, the manifestation of God's righteousness through faith for all who believe. The flow of thought in 3:21-26 shows that the main point is in verses 21-22, the availability of the righteousness of God to faith for everyone who believes.³⁵ The question remains, whose faith is in view, our

³²Commentators acknowledge this shift though they vary in their understanding of its exact nature. See, Schreiner, *Romans*, 180; Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:184; Dunn, *Romans* 1:164; Moo, *Romans*, 221. Hays argues against any major shift in vv. 21-26 on the ground that 3:21-26 continues the discussion of the covenantal faithfulness of God begun in 3:1-8 (Hays, "Psalm 143 and the Logic of Romans 3," *JBL* 99 [1980]: 115). Hays' argument depends on the view that the righteousness of God is his "covenant faithfulness" in 3:1-8 and 3:21-26. This is doubtful (cf. Moo, *Romans*, 221).

³³The word δέ is explicative. It explains the "righteousness of God" which is repeated in v. 22 for emphasis (cf. 9:30). See Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105; Lagrange, *Romains*, 73; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 1184; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 232; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994; reprint, 1999), 208.

³⁴Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 1996), 124. Contra Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 74. Wallis understands the main point to be the origin of the revelation of God's righteousness in the redemptive death of Christ (3:24-25) and not the human response of faith. He assumes that the objective genitive interpretation makes the human subjective faith the main point of the passage. This is simply not true. We agree that the redemptive work of Christ is fundamental in the passage as the basis for justification. We maintain that the main point is the manifestation of God's righteousness through faith for all who believe. In this case, the human response of faith is a necessary part of the argument in 3:21-26.

³⁵Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 218; Byrne, *Romans*, 122, 124. We can summarize the flow of Paul's argument in 3:21-26 as follows: (1) His main concern is to explain that "now" at this point in salvation history, God's righteousness has been manifested and is made effective through faith in/of Christ (see later on for our interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ, vv. 21-22b). (2) Verse 22c "for there is no distinction" explains why the righteousness of God is for all (Jews and Gentiles) who have faith (v. 22b). (3) Verse 23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" supports v. 22c "for there is no distinction" and explains why God shows no partiality in justification. (4) The participle δικαιούμενοι, "being justified" that begins v. 24 links vv. 24-26 to v. 23. The relation of this participle to what precedes is debated, but Cranfield is probably correct in saying that it depends on v. 23 (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:205). Verse 24 states the basis for justification, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (5) All of vv. 25-26 represents a single relative sentence that begins with ὃν (v. 25) and depends on Christ Jesus (v. 24). Moo, *Romans*, 230 sees only a loose connection between ὃν in v. 25a and Christ Jesus in v. 24. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:205 argues for a more close connection between v. 24 and v. 25a. In this relative sentence from v. 25a-26, we find the

faith in Christ or Christ's faith/faithfulness? The position advanced here is that the traditional reading "faith in Christ" for πίστις Χριστοῦ is the correct interpretation. There are helpful clues in 3:21-26 in support of this interpretation. Our investigation of the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:21-26 focuses on (1) πίστις in 3:21-22³⁶ and (2) πίστις in 3:25-26.³⁷

The righteousness of God, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (3:21, 22). Much discussion surrounds the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans 3:21-22. We cannot begin to address it here except to note summarily the different positions.³⁸ Three main interpretations of "the righteousness of God" are offered. First, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is God's saving power by which he both declares and makes one righteous. In this sense, righteousness is both forensic (one is declared "not guilty") and ethical (one is made

purpose for Christ redemptive work, the demonstration of the righteousness of God (vv. 25b, 26a) and the justification of those who have faith (v. 26b).

³⁶Here the focus will be on (1) the meaning of "the righteousness of God," and (2) phrases such as "apart from the law," "for all those who believe," "the law and the prophets," and finally, "through faith in/of Christ."

³⁷Attention will be given to διὰ πίστεως in 3:25a and τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in 3:26b.

³⁸One can consult the following for a detailed treatment of the topic: Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:202-33; Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 189-217; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 35-66; idem, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism, vol 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 415-42; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 340-46; Scott Hafemann, "The 'Righteousness of God': An Introduction to the Theological and Historical Foundation of Peter Stuhlmacher's Biblical Theology of the New Testament," in *How to Do Biblical Theology* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1995), xv-xli; M. T. Brauch, "Perspectives on 'God's Righteousness' in Recent German Discussion," in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 523-42; K. L. Onesti and M. T. Brauch, "Righteousness of God," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 827-37; K. Kertelge, "Δικαιοσύνη," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978-80; reprint, 1999), 1:325-30; Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God,'" 241-90; Murray, *Romans*, 1:336-62. N. T. Wright provides a helpful table comparing the different positions on this subject. See N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 101.

righteous). Another aspect of this view is that the righteousness of God includes his rule over all creation such that his righteousness is manifested when the whole creation is restored to his lordship.³⁹ The second option is that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ refers to God's covenant faithfulness. That is, his faithfulness to the covenant he made with Abraham.⁴⁰ A third option holds that "the righteousness of God" is a gift from God. It refers to the believer's status before God. In this view, righteousness is only forensic (God declares us "not guilty") and the genitive θεοῦ is taken as source, "righteousness from God."⁴¹ Thus, in 3:21-22, righteousness is understood as God's act of justification (cf. 3:20, 24 and 3:21; 3:21-22 and 3:28-30).⁴²

Of these three options, the third (righteousness as a gift from God) is the most likely in Romans 3:21-22. For example, (1) Paul often puts together the term δικαιοσύνη, "righteousness" with faith or believing (Rom 1:17; 3:21-22; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 22; 9:30-31; 10:3, 4, 6, 10; cf. Gal 2:20-21; 3:6, 21-22; 5:5; Phil 3:9). In these instances, faith functions as the means (ἐκ/διὰ πίστεως) by which one receives the gift of righteousness.⁴³ (2) Abraham's πίστις ("faith") was reckoned (λογίζειν) to him as

³⁹Käsemann, "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 168-82; Schlatter, *Romans*, 20-22; Kertelge, "Δικαιοσύνη," 1:328; Don B. Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 44-49.

⁴⁰N. T. Wright, *What St. Paul Really Said*, 113-33; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 75; Williams, "The Righteousness of God," 255-89; Dunn, *Theology*, 340-46; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 36-37.

⁴¹Schreiner, *Paul*, 200, 202, 204; Polhill, *Paul*, 187; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 167; cf. Moo, *Romans*, 65-70, 75-86; R. H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 36-39, 72-73; Bruce, *Romans*, 102; Nygren, *Romans*, 146; John Piper, *Counted Righteous: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 41-51, 53-119.

⁴²Polhill, *Paul*, 287; Moo, *Romans*, 219; Bruce, *Romans*, 102.

⁴³Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 64; Schreiner, *Paul*, 205.

righteousness (Rom 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11; cf. Gal 3:6). To say that righteousness is reckoned or credited (λογίζειν) suggests that it comes to us from an external source and is received by faith (cf. 4:3, 4, 24).⁴⁴ (3) Paul refers to the “gift of righteousness” τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης (Rom 5:17) or to justification as a gift (3:24) clearly portraying righteousness as a gift and faith as the means by which we receive the gift (cf. Rom 1:17; 4:3, 5, 9, 13; 9:30; 10:4, 6, 10).⁴⁵ These reasons lend support to the view that “the righteousness of God” in 3:21-22 is a gift from God.

Understanding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as a gift from God is important for the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Paul often associates righteousness or justification with faith (in the active sense of belief) as the means of appropriating the gift (Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 4:11, 13; 5:1; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; cf. Gal 3:8, 11, 24). This provides us with a clue towards deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁴⁶ The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel “from faith to faith,” ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (Rom 1:17; cf. 3:21-22). Righteousness comes from faith, δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως (Rom 4:11, 13).⁴⁷ In this case, faith is Abraham’s belief (see 4:5, 11).⁴⁸ Gentiles attained righteousness by faith, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως (9:30; cf. 3:28-30) but Israel failed to attain

⁴⁴Cf. Schreiner, *Paul*, 205.

⁴⁵Added support for this interpretation of “the righteousness of God” in 3:21-22 as a gift from God is found in First Corinthians 1:30 where “righteousness” is said to be “from God” (ἀπὸ θεοῦ). Here θεοῦ is clearly a genitive of source. The gift nature of righteousness is also evident in Phil 3:9. There Paul draws a contrast between his own righteousness that comes from the law (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου) with the righteousness that is from God (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην).

⁴⁶Hultgren notes these instances and comments that πίστις (absolute) and πίστις Χριστοῦ “are equivalents within the context of justification” (A. J. Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul,” *NovT* 32 (1980): 258.

⁴⁷We take πίστεως as genitive of means. Cf. Wallace, *Grammar*, 125.

⁴⁸Cf. BDAG, s.v. “πίστις”; Schreiner, *Romans*, 225.

righteousness because it did not pursue it “by faith,” ἐκ πίστεως but as if it were “by works” ἐξ ἔργων (9:32). Righteousness comes “to everyone who believes,” παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (10:4, cf. 10:10; 3:22) and it is “based on faith,” ἐκ πίστεως (10:6). There are also instances where the believer’s faith is closely linked with justification (Rom 3:26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1; cf. Gal 3:8, 24). These examples show an interchange between the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω. Both function as the means by which the righteousness/justification of God is appropriated by the believer (cf. 4:3 and 4:5; 4:11; 10:4, 10 and 10:6; 9:30, 32).⁴⁹

The evidence, based on contextual usage in Romans, demonstrates that πίστις in the context of justification (excluding 3:22) is always used in the active sense of belief. In such contexts it is the believer’s faith. The meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις does not fit these examples. Outside of 3:22, there is no explicit use of πίστις in connection with righteousness, as faithfulness meaning Christ’s obedience. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that πίστις is the human trust that leads to justification.⁵⁰ It is an unlikely scenario (though theoretically possible) that faith in relation to righteousness/justification is consistently the believer’s faith in Romans except for 3:22.⁵¹

⁴⁹Dodd comments, based on his analysis of πιστ- word group in Romans, that there are 20 examples in Romans where πιστ- can only be taken as the believer’s faith. On the basis of this lexical observation, he concludes that “there is no compelling reason why πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot be read anthropologically as an objective genitive (the believer’s faith in Christ)” (Brian Dodd, “Rom 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 471). We should point out that Dodd makes this observation even though he takes πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive construction (ibid., 471).

⁵⁰Cf. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 171-72. He writes, “For in all the pronouncements in which faith is spoken of in connection with righteousness, justification, etc., it has the significance of the means, instrument, way, foundation, channel by which, along which, or on which man participates in the righteousness of God” (ibid.).

⁵¹Linking “faith” in these instances with the righteousness of God highlights the important role of faith in justification. God’s righteousness or his justification of sinners is now realized or appropriated

Overwhelming evidence is needed to overlook all the uses of πίστις as belief in the context of justification. By analyzing how Paul makes use of righteousness/justification in connection with πίστις the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 gains greater support.

Apart from the law, χωρὶς νόμου (3:21). There is consensus that νόμου, (“law,” 3:21) is synonymous with ἔργων νόμου, “works of the law” (3:20, 28).⁵² God’s righteousness, the justification of sinners, is not obtained by keeping the law (cf. 3:20).⁵³ If justification were obtained by works, one may boast (3:27; 4:2) and it ceases to be a gift but rather a wage for what is due (cf. 4:4). If the behavior of works is excluded, what kind of behavior is able to bring one into a right relationship with God?⁵⁴ In other words, how does one stand justified before God? The answer is, “not by works of the law” (χωρὶς νόμου) but “through faith in/of Jesus Christ,” διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:21, 22; cf. Gal 2:16).⁵⁵ It stands to reason that here, two human actions, faith versus

by the individual through faith in Jesus Christ. (Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:167; Moo, *Romans*, 224; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105).

⁵²χωρὶς νόμου is understood here as works of the law (3:28; 4:6; cf. Gal 2:16; 3:5 [so Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105]) or doing the law or “deeds prescribed by the law” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 180; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 344; Murray, *Romans*, 1:110; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:201; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:165). Dunn defines “works of the Law” as boundary markers “where ‘works of the law’ is the distinctive pattern of religion and lifestyle demanded of those marked out by the law” (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:165). Even with Dunn’s definition, works of the law is still something that Israel seeks to carry out and that is excluded (cf. Rom 9:32).

⁵³Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 344; Murray, *Romans*, 1:110; Schreiner, *Romans*, 179. This is consistent with the context of 2:1-3:20 where Paul shows that the law cannot lead to a right standing before God because no one can keep it perfectly (Moo, *Romans*, 222).

⁵⁴Cf. Schlatter, *Romans*, 94.

⁵⁵While Paul excludes “works of the law” in justification (3:21-22), he does say in 2:13 that “the doers of the law will be justified.” It seems from 2:13 that Paul advocates justification by works but in 3:21-22 this is the very thing that he rejects. Sanders believes that this is a contradiction in Paul’s thinking (E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 123-35; cf. H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 106-7). Schreiner does not see a contradiction

works, are contrasted in the process of justification.⁵⁶ In other words, faith is the “condition or attitude which is set in contrast to the ‘works of the law’ (vv. 20-22, 27-28).”⁵⁷ Faith alone is the appropriate response to God’s justifying activity through what Christ has accomplished on the cross.⁵⁸

Some scholars understand the faith/works contrast differently. It is argued that Paul draws a contrast not between our work and our faith but between our work and Christ’s faithfulness.⁵⁹ This is a doubtful interpretation. There are no examples in Romans (outside of 3:21-22) where the contrast is made between our work and Christ’s faithfulness in the context of justification. Instead, Paul often contrasts works of the law and the human response of faith. Justification is by faith apart from works of the law (3:28). Abraham was justified not by works of the law but because of his faith (4:2-3, 5). Gentiles attained righteousness by faith, but Israel because it pursued the righteousness of works did not attain it (9:30-32). In 10:4-6 Paul indicates that righteousness comes to the one who believes and then he distinguishes between righteousness based on law, τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ (τοῦ) νόμου (10:5) and righteousness based on faith, ἡ . . . ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη (10:6).

here. See his detailed treatment of the subject in Thomas R. Schreiner, “Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2,” *BBR* 3 (1993): 131-58.

⁵⁶Cf. Schlatter, *Romans*, 94; Hultgren, *Pistis Christou* Formulation,” 259.

⁵⁷Dunn, *Romans*, 1:166; Schlatter, *Romans*, 94. Schreiner makes the helpful distinction that faith is not a condition that one must meet in order to be saved. It is a condition in the sense that one cannot be saved without it (Schreiner, *Romans*, 61).

⁵⁸Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles*, trans. Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 235.

⁵⁹Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 454. Cf. Taylor, “The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians,” 75; Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

There is no doubt that in these examples (3:28; 4:2-3, 5; 9:30-32; 10:4-6) works of the law and faith are two human activities standing in contrast to each other. In these occurrences, the faith of the believer is in view. It would be a stretch in these instances to argue for the faithfulness/obedience of Christ.⁶⁰ We conclude that in 3:21-22 “apart from the law” (or works of the law) stands in contrast to “through faith” and describes two human actions. Justification before God is not by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.⁶¹ This interpretation is consistent with the faith versus works contrast that is found throughout Romans. The subjective genitive interpretation has the difficulty of explaining why Paul often contrasts works and faith as two human activities throughout Romans except in 3:22.⁶²

For all those who believe, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (3:22). At first glance, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας following πίστις Χριστοῦ (3:22) appears to be redundant if the objective genitive view of πίστις Χριστοῦ is accepted. But, on closer analysis, it seems that εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας is added for emphasis with a particular focus on πάντας, “all.”⁶³ The phrase demonstrates the universal availability of the righteousness of God. In 1:18-3:20, Paul has established that all human beings are under sin (3:9). Now Paul explains that God’s act of making people right with him

⁶⁰Byrne, *Romans*, 130, explains that πίστις as Jesus’ obedience does not fit the context where Paul contrasts faith and works.

⁶¹So Dunn, *Romans*, 1:167. Paul makes it very clear in Gal 2:16b that human faith is closely linked to justification. See discussion in the next chapter.

⁶²While supporters of the subjective genitive reading argue that in the πίστις Χριστοῦ context, Paul contrasts our works and Christ’s faithfulness, no attempt is made to explain how this relates to the examples we have pointed out here.

⁶³Schreiner, *Romans*, 184; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:167; Moo, *Romans*, 226; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 346; Schlatter, *Romans*, 95; Byrne, *Romans*, 125; Nygren, *Romans*, 151; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 106.

extends to “all” peoples (Jews and Gentiles) who have faith. In other words, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας is added “to emphasize the universal outreach of God’s saving purpose and action (as in 1:5, 16; 2:10; 4:11-13).”⁶⁴ The righteousness of God, apart from the works of the law, through faith in Christ is available to “all” (Jews and Gentiles) who believe.⁶⁵

The two clauses following “for all those who believe” (v. 22b) make this emphasis on “all” more apparent. The righteousness of God reaches “all” who have faith because (γάρ) “there is no distinction” (v. 22c, cf. 1:14, 2:9-11; 10:12) and because (γάρ) “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (v. 23). Paul has shown in 1:18-3:20 that Jews cannot lay special claims on God since both Jews and Gentiles are under sin (3:9). That means that there is only one way, without distinction, for receiving the righteousness of God, faith.⁶⁶ This statement reinforces verse 16 where Paul notes that the gospel is the “power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Hence, the gospel itself demonstrates that where there is faith, God shows no distinction in justification.⁶⁷ The reason God shows no distinction (v. 22c) is because (γάρ) “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23, cf. 3:9).⁶⁸ The

⁶⁴Dunn, *Romans*, 1:167. In another place, Dunn argues that “students of Romans will not need to be reminded that this ‘all’ is a thematic word in the letter, being used again and again, often with varying degrees of redundancy . . . (see particularly 1:5, 16; 2:10; 4:11, 16; 10:4, 11-13). The usage in 3:22 is simply part of a sustained motif” (Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 264).

⁶⁵Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 106; cf. Kertelge, *Römer*, 74. Murray also makes this point when he writes that the most reasonable interpretation of “for all those who believe” “would appear to be that not only is the righteousness of God brought into effectual relation to men through faith in Christ but it is brought into this effectual relation to *all* believers” (Murray, *Romans*, 1:111). His italics.

⁶⁶Dunn, *Romans*, 1:167; Moo, *Romans*, 226.

⁶⁷Cf. Murray, *Romans*, 1:112.

⁶⁸The meaning of “fall short of the glory of God” in v. 23 is not clear. Different possibilities are put forward such as failure to give God the glory due him (Schreiner, *Romans*, 187; Fitzmyer, *Romans*,

emphasis here again is on πάντες, “all” to show that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin (cf. 3:4, 9, 10, 12) and by implication, both need the righteousness that comes from God (3:21-22) and both must exercise faith in receiving this righteousness.

For these reasons, we reckon that the addition of “for all those who believe,” εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας to “through faith in Jesus Christ,” διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is to emphasize “all.” According to Moo, “God’s righteousness is available only through faith in Christ – but it is available to *anyone* who has faith in Christ.”⁶⁹ Therefore, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας is meant to emphasize the equality of Jews and Gentiles before God in justification.

Another possible reason for the addition of εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας to διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is for clarification. Seeing that πίστις Χριστοῦ could be interpreted in different ways, “faith in Christ” or “faith/faithfulness of Christ,” it is likely that Paul added εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας to avert any misunderstanding. In this case, right after an ambiguous phrase, Paul provides a helpful clue to his intended meaning. There is no reason why this could not be the case.⁷⁰

347); failure to be in the image of God, (Moo, *Romans*, 226); or failure to share the divine glory (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:204). In light of 1:21, failing to give God glory may be the idea here in v. 23.

⁶⁹Moo, *Romans*, 226. His italics.

⁷⁰As long as εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας serves to show the extent of the righteousness of God to all people, the issue of redundancy becomes less significant. In this case, the redundancy serves a purpose in Paul’s argument. Campbell’s argument that it is unlikely that Paul repeats himself here since the “surrounding text is compact and carefully crafted” and as a result, any “oscillation between prosaic brevity and verbose repetition in the same section is an embarrassment for an objective genitive reading” (Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 62, 63) fails to explain why the explanation offered here is not valid. One should also note that the text Campbell describes as “compact and carefully crafted” contains an ambiguous phrase (πίστις Χριστοῦ) whose meaning rest in that same context. In our judgment, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας, while emphasizing the universal extent of God’s righteousness, also clarifies what is meant in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. In this case, the “oscillation between prosaic brevity and verbose repetition in the same section” helps the reader make sense of the passage.

The Law and the Prophets, τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν (3:21). Paul argues that the Law and the Prophets bear witness to the manifestation of the righteousness of God.⁷¹ The sense here would be that the OT itself testifies to the righteousness of God as it is now revealed.⁷² It is not clear which specific OT text is alluded to, though different possibilities are suggested.⁷³ It is most plausible that Paul has in mind the whole OT as a witness to the righteousness of God. Still, we should take note of Habakkuk 2:4 and the example of Abraham in chapter 4 which appears to provide OT support for the argument that justification is by faith.⁷⁴

What is the specific content of the OT witness with reference to the righteousness of God? The answer to this question would cast some light on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. In verses 21-22, it seems that the OT bears witness to the way in which God justifies sinners. Thus, what has been made manifest and witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets is that God justifies all (Jews and Gentiles) the same way, by faith (cf. Gal 3:8).⁷⁵ This is the point of chapter 4 (see especially 4:1-8) and arguably of the Habakkuk 2:4 quotation in 1:17 (see discussion below). Accordingly, the witness of the

⁷¹“The Law and the Prophets” is meant to refer to the whole OT Scripture (cf. Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23). Cf. Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105.

⁷²Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 223; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:165-66; Schreiner, *Romans*, 179; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105.

⁷³One possibility is the OT promise of a new covenant (salvation) apart from the covenant with Moses as in Jer 31:31-34; Eze 36:26-27; Deut 28-30 (Schreiner, *Romans*, 180). Another option points to texts in Isaiah where the righteousness of God is tied with the future deliverance of his people (Is 46:13; 51:5, 6, 8 [cf. Moo, *Romans*, 223 n. 21]). Others see a reference to Hab 2:4, which Paul quoted in 1:17 (Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 343-44). Schlier believes that Rom 4; 10:5ff.; Gal 3 and 4 provide the OT references to which Paul alludes (Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 105).

⁷⁴Also, the emphasis on the universal extent of God’s righteousness leads one to wonder if Paul does not have Gen 12:3 in mind as well.

⁷⁵The only thing new in Paul’s argument is that he specifies the object of faith as Jesus Christ.

Law and the Prophets places the emphasis on the human act of faith as the means of justification before God. Habakkuk 2:4 and the justification of Abraham illustrate this point well.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22). Thus far, we have approached the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 by focusing on the meaning of the righteousness of God and four other phrases in verses 21-22. It has been shown that (1) the righteousness of God, understood as God's gift of justification, is often linked to human faith as the means of receiving this gift. This supports interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 as faith in Christ.⁷⁶ (2) We pointed out that χωρὶς νόμου "apart from the law" stand in contrast to διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "through faith in Jesus Christ." With this contrast, Paul describes two human activities in the process of justification. A person does not work, but believes, in order to be justified. (3) We argued that the phrase "for all those who believe" is used by Paul to emphasize the universal availability of the righteousness of God to "all" (Jews and Gentiles) who have faith. The phrase also clarifies what is meant by the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. (4) The appeal to the Law and the Prophets shows that in the OT Scripture itself justification is not by works but through faith, and it reaches "all" who believe as the example of Abraham shows.

In view of these arguments, we deduce that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 is best taken as "faith in Christ." By linking faith to Jesus Christ at this point Paul shows that

Faith in relation to justification is not general faith in God; far less is it faith without well-defined and intelligible content. It is faith directed to Christ It is Jesus

⁷⁶Hays, "Pauline Christology," 283 concedes that if this definition of righteousness were granted the objective genitive interpretation would be acceptable.

Christ . . . who is the object of justifying faith. In terms of verses 21, 22, it is this faith that places us in effectual relation to the righteousness of God.⁷⁷

What makes Jesus the appropriate object of faith? As the discussion progresses, Paul will show that Jesus is appropriately the object of faith because of what he has accomplished for us on the cross. As Murray puts it, “faith is focused upon him as Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord.”⁷⁸ Faith in Jesus Christ is the only means by which one receives the righteousness of God.⁷⁹

The centrality of the response of faith in justification does not in anyway diminish the centrality of the death of Jesus for our justification (cf. 3:24 and 5:9, 19).⁸⁰ Both are critical. There is no contradiction in saying that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (3:22, 26, 28, 30) and we are justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (3:24) or through his obedience (5:19). Both are taught by Paul. Both are necessary for justification to take place.⁸¹

The focus thus far has been on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 but there are two other occurrences of πίστις in the rest of this section (vv. 24-26), διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως (3:25a) and ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (3:26). Naturally for both sides, the arguments

⁷⁷Murray, *Romans*, 1:111.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Bruce, *Romans*, 107; Moo, *Romans*, 224. According to Moo, Paul prefers ἐκ/διὰ with πίστις to indicate the means by which justification takes place (Rom 1:17; 3:25, 30; 2 Cor 5:7; Gal 2:16; 3:14; Eph 2:8; 3:12, 17; Phil 3:9; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 3:7; 2 Tim 3:15).

⁸⁰Polhill comments, “Certainly the obedience of Christ is central in his death on the cross (cf. Phil 2:8), but the appropriation of Christ’s work in the faith of the believer is also central” (Polhill, *Paul*, 287).

⁸¹John Stott makes a similar point. He says that faith is the means of our justification and that “grace and faith belong indissolubly to one another, since faith’s only function is to receive what grace freely offers” (John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986], 190). So too Schlatter, who writes, “Man’s justification thus occurs through God’s sending of the Christ and by God’s

made in the interpretation of “faith” in verse 22 also apply in these two remaining cases.

Still, a few comments need to be made specific to these two instances.

Πίστις in Romans 3:25a and 26b

Propitiation through faith, ἰλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως (3:25a). We begin our analysis of πίστις in 3:25a and 26b by examining 3:24 first. Paul makes it clear in verse 24 that justification is a work of God alone. Justification is a gift by God’s grace.⁸² Also, verse 24 explains that Christ Jesus is the ground for justification. Paul writes that we are justified “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v. 24).⁸³ One is made right with God on the basis of the death of Christ on the cross.⁸⁴ In this sense, the righteousness of God (vv. 21, 22) is explained as justification which is a gift and by God’s grace (v. 24). The gift nature of justification excludes any notion of works, in keeping with 3:20, 21. It is

surrendering him to death, and further by man’s believing in him (Rom 3:21-26; Gal 2:16-21)” (Schlatter, *Theology*, 233).

⁸²The subject of the participle δικαιοῦμενοι, “being justified” is God (cf. 3:20, 26, 28; 4:5; 8:33; Gal 3:11).

⁸³ἀπολυτρόσεως is interpreted differently. The argument is whether it simply refers to deliverance or liberation (Byrne, *Romans*, 126) or whether it includes the idea of a price paid (Moo, *Romans*, 229; Schreiner, *Romans*, 189; Lagrange, *Romains*, 74). For further discussion, see Leon Morris, “The Meaning of ‘ἸΛΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ’ in Romans 3:25,” *NTS* 2 (1956): 33-43; Schreiner, *Romans*, 189; Moo, *Romans*, 229; Murray, *Romans*, 1:115-16. We follow the reading “redemption” since it could go either way (cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:207). It does not serve our purpose here to try to treat this in detail.

⁸⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 189. There can be no justification without Christ having died on the cross and there can be no justification without faith. The subjective genitive interpretation would require taking “faith of Christ” to be synonymous with “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” in 3:24, such that διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “through the faith of Jesus Christ” (v. 22) would be the same as διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ, “through the redemption which is in Christ” (v. 24). Yet, supporters of the subjective genitive view do not make this connection. Instead, appeal is made to 5:19 to argue that the faithfulness of Christ is his obedience which is understood as his dying on the cross. If πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 were the faithfulness of Christ meaning his death on the cross and therefore the basis for justification, one would have expected the phrase to be repeated in 3:24. Only here (3:24) is Christ as the basis for justification stated and in so doing Paul does not use “faithfulness of Christ” language.

“completely unmerited” as the combination of “as a gift” and “by his grace” indicates.⁸⁵

In light of Paul’s use of faith with justification throughout Romans (see earlier discussion) faith is implied in verse 24 as the means by which the gift of justification is received. Only those who believe in Jesus Christ can be in the right relationship with God.⁸⁶ Justification as a gift and by grace emphasizes the absolute role of God in justification. At the same time, faith is necessary if one is to be justified before God. In 4:4 (cf. 4:16), Paul is going to make it clear that faith shows that justification is by grace.

Understanding justification as a gift received by faith sets the stage for interpreting διὰ πίστεως, “through faith” (v. 25a) and ἐκ πίστεως “by faith” (v. 26b). Verses 25-26 form a single relative sentence introduced by ὃν, “whom” (3:25a).⁸⁷ This establishes a close connection between verse 24 and verses 25-26.⁸⁸ Christ Jesus (v. 24) is explained as the one whom God displayed publicly (προέθετο) as a propitiation, (ἰλαστήριον)⁸⁹ through faith (διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως) in his blood” (3:25a). The placement of διὰ πίστεως, “through faith” is awkward because it comes between two phrases that

⁸⁵Thus Murray, *Romans*, 1:115.

⁸⁶Schreiner, *Romans*, 189.

⁸⁷See John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 136-47, for an in depth discussion and evaluation of the use of tradition in Romans 3:24-26.

⁸⁸So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:205.

⁸⁹The meaning of ἰλαστήριον is debated. The word may refer to the lid of the ark of the covenant, i.e., “mercy seat” (Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 350; Byrne, *Romans*, 126-27; Polhill, *Paul*, 287). This view is strongly refuted by Morris, “The Meaning of ‘ΙΛΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ’ in Romans 3:25,” 33-43. Other options include “propitiation,” “expiation,” or “means of atonement.” Here we adopt the view that ἰλαστήριον means propitiation understood as the sacrifice that appeases God’s wrath (Richard N. Longenecker, “The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church,” In *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Moris on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 144. For further discussion, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 191-94; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 349-50; Moo, *Romans*, 232-36; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:171-72. Murray, *Romans*, 1:116-17.

most likely belong together, “whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation” and “in his blood.”⁹⁰

We are concerned here with διὰ πίστεως, “through faith.” At issue is whose faith is in view and how does it function in the sentence? Opinions vary and any decision here is influenced in part by the conclusion drawn on the meaning of “faith” in 3:22. One view is that “through faith” is the faithfulness of Christ⁹¹ or God.⁹² In this interpretation, ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, “in his blood” modifies διὰ πίστεως but not as the object of faith since it is theologically unlikely that the efficacy of the sacrificial death of Christ is dependent on the human response of faith.⁹³ B. Longenecker argues that 3:25 provides a clue to understanding πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22. He disagrees with the view that διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως is a Pauline insertion.⁹⁴ He focuses on 3:25a: ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αἵματι and maintains that διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως as part of the traditional material Paul was quoting. As such, ἰλαστήριον, διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως, and ἐν τῷ αἵματι all refers to Christ’s death on the cross. Thus, Paul’s source had reference to faith being a characteristic of Jesus.⁹⁵ Against B. Longenecker’s analysis is the fact that he relies on πίστις in verse 25a being part of the traditional material quoted by Paul.

⁹⁰B. Longenecker, “Πίστις in Romans,” 479. According to Käsemann, *Romans*, 97-98, Paul inserted the phrase into traditional material in order to emphasize faith. See also, Dunn, *Romans*, 1:172.

⁹¹Hays, *Faith*, 284.

⁹²Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 231.

⁹³Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 82-83.

⁹⁴Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 98.

⁹⁵B. Longenecker, “Πίστις in Romans 3:25,” 479. From his understanding of πίστις in 3:25a, B. Longenecker believes that it resolves the dilemma of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation. It seems to him that Paul included the early Christian formula into his argument because it speaks both to God’s righteousness and to the faithfulness of Christ (ibid.). For a response to B. Longenecker, see Barry Matlock, “Πίστις in Galatians 3:26: Neglected Evidence for ‘Faith in Christ?’” *NTS* 49 (2003): 433-39.

There is no consensus among scholars on the nature of this traditional material, not to mention πίστις being part of this material.

Another view is to take “through faith” as the believer’s faith which is the appropriate response to what God has done in Christ.⁹⁶ In this view, διὰ πίστεως, “through faith” modifies the noun ἰλαστηριον, “propitiation” and “indicates the means by which individuals appropriate the benefits of the sacrifice.”⁹⁷ According to Fitzmyer, διὰ πίστεως points out that Jesus’ death and resurrection only benefit those who have faith.⁹⁸ For Dunn, “through faith” here is another indication that “God reaches out to faith.”⁹⁹ Given that 3:24-25a is again dealing with justification and the fact that Paul often links our faith with justification (see earlier discussion), διὰ πίστεως as the believer’s faith is the most likely view in 3:25a.¹⁰⁰

The one who has faith in Jesus, τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (3:26b). Verse 25a is followed by a string of clauses indicating the purpose for the propitiatory work of Christ (25b -26). God’s purpose in displaying Christ publicly as a propitiation was “to

⁹⁶Cf. Cranfield, *On Romans*, 1:210.

⁹⁷Moo, *Romans*, 236.

⁹⁸Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 350; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:172; Cranfield, *On Romans*, 1:210.

⁹⁹Dunn, *Romans*, 1:172-73; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 348; Byrne, *Romans*, 133; Bruce, *Romans*, 107.

¹⁰⁰Scholars who see here a reference to the believer’s faith do not agree whether διὰ πίστεως is connected to “in his blood” or not. There are reasons why διὰ πίστεως should not be linked with “in his blood.” For example, it is argued that “through faith” should be taken as a parenthesis and not with “in his blood” because there is no parallel in the NT and Paul does not speak of the blood of Jesus as the object of faith (Dunn, *Romans* 172). Although word order favors “in his blood” as the object of “faith,” “in his blood” is best connected with “propitiation” meaning that it is the blood of Jesus that appeases God’s wrath (Schreiner, *Romans*, 194; Lagrange, *Romains*, 76). This would suggest that faith is the mode by which a person can share in the benefits of Christ’s propitiating work (Moo, *Romans*, 236). Seifrid argues that although interpreters tend to read “in his blood” with “propitiation,” it is most natural to accept the text as it stands, “through faith in his blood” (Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness*, 134 n. 13).

demonstrate his righteousness,” εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ (vv. 25b, 26a)¹⁰¹ and to show that he is just and that he justifies τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, “the one who has faith in Jesus.”¹⁰² The issues surrounding the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 apply here as well since ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ could be a subjective or objective genitive construction. Some have taken Ἰησοῦ as a subjective genitive and translate τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ variously: “the one who lives because of the faithfulness of Jesus,”¹⁰³ “the one who shares the faith of Jesus” or “the one who has faith as Jesus had faith,”¹⁰⁴ or as Wallis understands it, “the one [who lives] from Jesus’ faith [or the one participating in Jesus’ faith].”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹It is debated whether righteousness here in 3:25b and 26 is the same as righteousness in 3:21-22 or whether it has a different meaning here. There are those who argue that it is the same as in 3:21-22 and refers to God’s saving righteousness (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:173). Another view is that righteousness in vv. 25-26 is God’s “inviolable allegiance to act always for his own name’s sake – to maintain and display his own divine glory (Piper, *Justification*, 135). Others see a distinction in the use of righteousness in 3:21-22 and 3:25-26. It seems that righteousness in vv. 25-26 is God’s judging righteousness (see Schreiner, *Romans*, 197-98; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 167). Thus, the purpose for the demonstration of God’s righteousness (3:25b, 26a) is “because in the forbearance (διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν) of God, he passed over the sins previously committed.” Such a passing over of sins without punishing them brings into question God’s righteous character (Schreiner, *Romans*, 195). What the death of Jesus now demonstrates is that God is indeed just and that the passing over of sins did not compromise his justice. Putting together this sense of God’s judging righteousness as demonstrated by the sacrifice of Christ with the righteousness of God (3:22) we see that God’s saving and judging righteousness converge on the person of Christ (See Schreiner, *Romans*, 198; cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 351).

¹⁰²καὶ in v. 26b could be construed as concessive, “just even in justifying” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 198; Piper, *Justification*, 150; Moo, *Romans*, 242) or as explicative (or intensive), “just precisely in justifying” (Byrne, *Romans*, 134; Käsemann, *Romans*, 101). It might not be necessary to take καὶ in v. 26b as concessive or explicative. A connective function of καὶ here is possible (Porter, *Idioms*, 211-12) and captures the two things accomplished by the death of Christ, our justification (v. 24) and the demonstration of the righteousness of God (vv. 25b-26).

¹⁰³New English Translation (NET).

¹⁰⁴Hays, *Faith*, 284; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 80.

¹⁰⁵Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 72. Commenting on Wallis’ view that τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ is “the one [who lives] from Jesus’ faith [or the one participating in Jesus’ faith]” Cranfield asks, “is this not justification by works with a vengeance? For to say that someone ‘lives from Jesus’ faith’ or participates in Jesus’ faith is surely to say much more than to say that someone believes in, trusts, Jesus Christ” (Cranfield, *On Romans*, 90).

According to Hays, τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, “the one who shares the faith of Jesus” parallels τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, “the one who shares the faith of Abraham” (4:16). He concludes that “The parallelism between 3:26 and 4:16 is a fatal embarrassment for all interpreters who seek to treat Ἰησοῦ as an objective genitive.”¹⁰⁶ It is insisted that since one cannot read τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ as “faith in Abraham” (4:16) it is unlikely that τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in 3:26 means “faith in Jesus.”¹⁰⁷

This is not a compelling argument since similarity in construction does not always lead to identical meaning. Just because the genitive in 4:16 is subjective it does not follow that the genitive in 3:26 should be subjective. One has to pay attention to context. It is clear that Abraham’s faith is an example of a subjective genitive construction, and yet at the same time Abraham’s faith is his trust in God (cf. 4:3-5). Thus, while one might argue for the faithfulness of Jesus in 3:26b, it does not follow that Abraham’s faith in 4:16 refers to his faithfulness. That would contradict the point of Romans 4. Abraham believed God and his faith was credited to him as righteousness (4:3). He was not justified because of his faithfulness.

In the end, the case has not been convincingly made against the objective genitive interpretation in verse 26b. God justifies “the one who has faith in Jesus.”¹⁰⁸ The fact that Paul links justification with the human response of faith in the very next verses (3:27-31) makes it unlikely that by πίστις in verse 26 he means something different.

¹⁰⁶Hays, *Faith*, 284.

¹⁰⁷See for example, Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 66-67; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 88; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 456; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 80.

¹⁰⁸Schreiner, *Romans*, 198; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 66; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:176; Moo, *Romans*, 242; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 353; Käsemann, *Romans*, 101; Schlatter, *Romans*, 101.

Wallis' argument that faith in verse 26b as the human response of faith distracts and even contradicts the centrality of the cross is unconvincing.¹⁰⁹ This argument could be made in every instance where faith is linked to justification. The fact is that the cross remains central and faith is necessary in order for justification to take effect.

After this analysis of 3:21-26, we conclude that πίστις Χριστοῦ as faith in Christ is the better reading in context. Further confirmation for the view espoused here comes in 3:27-4:25 where Paul further develops his argument on justification by faith.

Justification by Faith for Jews and Gentiles (3:27-31)

This section functions both as an inference and a conclusion to 3:21-26.¹¹⁰ The topic of justification by faith apart from works of the law (3:20, 21-22) is now expanded.¹¹¹ As such, it would seem reasonable to assume that Paul's use of πίστις in connection with justification here (3:27-31) would be consistent with how he has used the two (faith and justification) in 3:21-26.¹¹² There would have to be overwhelming evidence to call for a different interpretation of πίστις in 3:27-31.

¹⁰⁹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 88.

¹¹⁰Cf. Murray, *Romans*, 1:122. Ποῦ οὖν, "where then" (v. 27) indicates an inference from what precedes. Verses 28-30 are basically a summary of 3:21-22. There are key words and phrases that connect 3:27-31 to 3:21-26. For example, justification (3:28, 30; cf. 3:20, 21, 22, 24, 26), faith (3:27, 28, 30, 31, cf. 3:22, 25, 26), works of the law (3:28, cf. 3:20, 21). Also present in 3:27-31 is the emphasis on the equality of Jews and Gentiles before God (3:28, 29, 30; cf. v. 22b, c). Similar constructions in 3:20-26 resurface in 3:27-31. For example, the dative πίστει, "by faith" (3:28) is equivalent to ἐκ πίστεως or διὰ πίστεως, "by/through faith" (3:30, 31, cf. 3:22, 25, 26). The contrast between faith and works in connection with justification is also present in 3:27-31 (3:28, cf. 3:21-22).

¹¹¹Cf. Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 115.

¹¹²Three points are evident in 3:27-31. First, boasting is excluded from justification (v. 27). Second, there is one God who justifies both Jews and Gentiles by faith (vv. 28-30). Third, faith does not nullify the law but establishes it (v. 31). The prominence of faith in this section is obvious. Faith excludes boasting (v. 27), faith is the means by which one is justified (vv. 28, 30), and faith establishes the law (v. 31).

In view of the argument in verses 21-26, Paul asks, “Where then is boasting?”¹¹³ He answers that it is excluded not by “the law of works” but by “the law of faith” (v. 27b).¹¹⁴ The exclusion of boasting from justification naturally follows from the logic of verses 21-26. The gift nature of justification (3:24) means that one cannot claim to have worked for it. Faith is the means by which the gift is received (cf. 3:22). While works might encourage boasting (cf. 4:2), faith excludes it totally. According to Schreiner,

If righteousness were based on human works, boasting would naturally follow. Yet boasting is ruled out if righteousness cannot be obtained or gained through a person’s works. Righteousness with God depends on faith alone, and is received as a gift, not achieved as a work.¹¹⁵

Now, whose faith is it that excludes boasting? Is it our faith in Christ or the faithfulness of Christ? Verses 28-30 answer this question. Whereas verse 27 is an inference from 3:21-26, verses 28-30 restates the basic argument in 3:21-22.

Boasting is excluded in justification because (γὰρ) one is “justified by faith apart from works of the law” (v. 28). There are two thoughts here that lead back to 3:20-22. Justification is “by faith apart from works of the law” (cf. 3:20, 21-22a) and a person

¹¹³It is not clear whether the question, “Where then is boasting?” is addressed to the Jew or more generally to both Jews and Gentiles. It is possible that Paul is addressing the Jew (cf. 2:17-25) in order to emphasize again the equality of Jews and Gentiles in justification (cf. Polhill, *Paul*, 288; Byrne, *Romans*, 136; Murray, *Romans*, 1:122; Wright, *Paul*, 129).

¹¹⁴What is the meaning of “law” here? Scholars understand it differently as “principle,” “system,” “method” (cf. 7:21, 23; 8:2). So Murray, *Romans*, 1:122-23; J. A. Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 118; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 172. Others believe that “law” here is the Mosaic law that demands obedience. For example, Schreiner, *Romans*, 201; Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:245; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 183. A dogmatic decision is not possible here though good contextual arguments are made for “law” being the Mosaic law. This does not affect Paul’s point that boasting is excluded. The “Law of faith” could mean that if the law is correctly understood, it teaches that righteousness is by faith (Schreiner, *Romans*, 202).

¹¹⁵Schreiner, *Romans*, 203-04. Schreiner offers more detailed discussion on why boasting is excluded in justification, and interaction with different views on works of the law and boasting (Schreiner, *Romans*, 202-05).

(Jew or Gentile) “is justified by faith” (cf. 3:22b). Faith here (v. 28) is unmistakably the human response of faith in contrast to the action of works (v. 28, cf. 3:21-22).¹¹⁶ Verses 29-30 make it even clearer that the faith here is belief or trust.¹¹⁷ God is not the God of Jews only. He is also the God of Gentiles (v. 29). The same God “will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”¹¹⁸ The oneness of God which according to Murray, “was a first article of Jewish faith (Deut 6:4; cf. Isa 45:5)” is appealed to as support that Jews and Gentiles are justified the same way, by faith.¹¹⁹ Thus, there is no distinction (cf. v. 22b).

The absence of a genitive modifying πίστις in verses 28-30 is consistent with Paul use of πίστις in the context of justification throughout Romans. In these situations, the emphasis is on the personal faith of the Jew or Gentile resulting in justification (cf. 1:17; 4:2-3, 5; 9:30-32; 10:4-6, 9). Verse 31 provides added support for taking πίστις as the human act of believing in verses 27-30. The argument that justification is by faith, excluding works, raises the question, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith?” Paul answers emphatically, “May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” by faith

¹¹⁶Ibid., 206.

¹¹⁷There is no clear logical connection between vv. 29-30 and vv. 27-28. The introductory word, ἢ “or” appears to introduce a new argument.

¹¹⁸The prepositions “by,” ἐκ and “through,” διὰ with the genitive πίστεως should not be taken to have different meanings. A change in preposition does not always indicate a change in meaning (Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek* [Nashville: Broadman, 1994], 86); cf. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 195. Contra Turner, *Grammatical Insights*, 108-09. He argues that the change in preposition shows that Jews are saved by their own faith (ἐκ πίστεως) and Gentiles are saved by the faith of the Jews (διὰ πίστεως). Stowers makes a similar argument. See Stanley Stowers, “Ἐκ πίστεως and διὰ τῆς πίστεως in Romans 3:30,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 665-74. Campbell has observed that in Rom 3:21-26, 30, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that ἐκ πίστεως and διὰ πίστεως are used interchangeably (D. A. Campbell, “The Meaning of Πίστις and Νόμος in Paul: A Linguistic and Structural Perspective,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 94-96.

¹¹⁹Murray, *Romans*, 1:123. So too, Schreiner, *Romans*, 205; Polhill, *Paul*, 288.

(understood, v. 31).¹²⁰ Regardless of how one understands the manner in which faith establishes the law, it appears that faith is definitely that of the believer.¹²¹

We conclude that in further developing his argument in verses 27-31 Paul provides more clues for our understanding of his use of πίστις. It appears that he consistently uses πίστις in connection with justification to mean belief and not faithfulness. Verses 27-31 establish a close connection between faith (in contrast to works) and justification. The issue in 3:21-26 and 3:27-31 is the same, the justification of Jews and Gentiles by faith and not by works of the law. Faith is what both must have and 3:22 specifies the object of this faith to be Jesus Christ.

The presence of 3:27-31 in Paul's line of thought is a major obstacle for the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ (3:22, 26). According to the objective genitive interpretation, references of "faith" in verses 28, 30 are but an

¹²⁰Paul has time and again portrayed the law negatively as contrary to faith (cf. vv. 20, 21, 27, 28). This would appear to indicate that the law is of no value. Paul corrects this possible misconception by emphatically denying that we nullify the law by faith. "On the contrary, we establish the law."

¹²¹The difficulty here is deciding the meaning of the statement that faith establishes the law. Three different explanations are put forward. First, faith establishes the law in that the law convicts and condemns sinners thus clearing the way for faith (W. Grundmann, "ἵσθημι," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley [TDNT] [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 7:649). Second, the law is established in that it testifies to faith (Käsemann, *Romans*, 105; Byrne, *Romans*, 138). Third, faith establishes the commands of the law (Schreiner, *Romans*, 207; Moo, *Romans*, 257; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 366; Stott, *Romans*, 121; Murray, *Romans*, 1:126). Law, in this last view, refers to the things commanded by the law, things which one may seek to keep in attempt to gain justification. When Paul rejects works of the law, it does not follow that he rejects the commands of the law themselves. Rather, he rejects the mindset that seeks to gain justification by doing the law. The doctrine of justification by faith does not mean that the commands of the law are done away with (cf. 2:13). This seems to be the point he wants to establish in v. 31. In a way, he anticipates the argument in chap. 6 where he argues that the doctrine of grace does not mean that we continue to live in sin (cf. Murray, *Romans*, 1:126). This view has more merit than the other two. It fits the normal way Paul talks about the law as something one does (cf. 2:26-27). It is also consistent with Paul's positive comments on keeping the law (see Schreiner, *Romans*, 207, cf. 8:2-4; 13:8-10). With the third view, there are two ways to explain how faith establishes the law. The idea could be that the law is fulfilled by faith in Christ or that those who have faith in Christ will keep the law (the former is held by Moo, *Romans*, 257; the latter held by Schreiner, *Romans*, 208). The point here, though, is that the faith in view is that of the believer that somehow establishes the law.

abbreviation of “faith in Jesus Christ” found in 3:22 and 26.¹²² Attempts to explain these verses to fit the subjective genitive interpretation appear forced and in the end are unconvincing.¹²³ Although the subjective genitive interpretation makes sense in 3:21-22, it begins to lose support in 3:27-31. With the objective genitive interpretation, there is a consistent use of faith throughout 3:21-31.

The Faith of Abraham (4:1-25)

Paul’s argument in 3:27-28, 30 and 3:21-22 has focused on two things: (1) righteousness/ justification by faith, not by works of the law and (2) justification of Jews and Gentiles. The example of Abraham in Romans 4 serves two purposes: (1) to provide support for Paul’s argument on justification by faith apart from works of the law¹²⁴ and (2) to show that Jews and Gentiles receive justification the same way that Abraham did,

¹²²Thus Moo, *Romans*, 225.

¹²³For example, Hays agrees that in 3:27-28, the point is that “Jews and Gentiles alike are justified through faith” (Richard B. Hays “Have We Found Abraham to be Our Forefather According to the Flesh? A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1,” *NovT* 27 [1985]: 84-85). Hays does not explain whose faith is meant here or how justification by faith in 3:27-28 fits with Paul’s argument in 3:21-26. Howard holds that the statement, “a man is justified by faith” (3:28) is a reference to the inclusion of Gentiles. He argues that “the modern understanding of justification by faith does not” make this point clear (Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 232). Secondly, Howard denies that the emphasis in 3:27-31 is on justification and faith. In his view, the emphasis is on the word *ἄνθρωπον* meaning everyone. In response to Howard, it is not necessary to distinguish between the inclusion of Gentiles and justification by faith. Both points are important. It seems that Paul is emphasizing the point that everyone is justified equally before God, by faith and not by works of the Law. As such, the inclusion of Gentiles among the people of God presupposes justification by faith. Howard’s position lacks substantial support both from the context of Rom 3:21-31 and the rest of Romans. In another article, Howard holds that *πίστις* in 3:28-30 is God’s faithfulness by which he saves Jews and Gentiles. In other words, *πίστις* is the loyalty of God to the promise that all nations will be blessed (Howard, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” 461). O’Rourke, “*Pistis* in Romans,” 191 also argues for *πίστις* in 3:27-31 as God’s fidelity. He acknowledges that this is a stretch. Dunnill’s only comment in in 3:27-31 is that faith is used here in an allusive and formulaic way and adds little to the discussion of 3:21-26 (Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith,” 15).

To be fair, there are some proponents of the subjective genitive interpretation who see a reference to the human response of faith in 3:28-30. Interestingly, it is not explained how this relates to 3:21-26 (as well as 5:1; 10:9f.). Davies, in a footnote, indicates that the omitted object of faith in vv. 28-30 is Jesus Christ (Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 138 n. 3). Yet, he says nothing about how this human response of faith in justification fits with Paul’s argument in 3:21-26.

¹²⁴Bruce, *Romans*, 110; Polhill, *Paul*, 288; Byrne, *Romans*, 124.

by faith.¹²⁵ Two points from 3:27-30 are applied to Abraham: justification by faith apart from works of the law (4:1-8; cf. 3:27-28; 3:21-22a) and the justification of Gentiles (4:9-16; cf. 3:29-30; 3:22b).¹²⁶ In sum, Paul introduces Abraham in chapter 4 to provide an OT example of justification by faith apart from works of the law (4:1-8; cf. 3:27-28) and to provide support for the inclusion of Gentiles, by faith, among the people of God (4:9-16; cf. 3:29-30).¹²⁷ In other words, Abraham's example shows that it has always been God's plan to justify all peoples (Jews and Gentiles) by faith.¹²⁸

Justification of Abraham by faith, not by works (4:1-8). Verses 1-8 argue that Abraham was justified by faith (his trust in God), not by works. The opening question, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?" (v. 1) is answered in verses 2-5.¹²⁹ The nature of the question is such that the answer will either confirm or disprove Paul's argument in 3:27-31 (cf. 3:21-22) that justification is by faith, not by works of the law. The focus of the question in 4:1 is on

¹²⁵We cannot be detailed in our treatment of the example of Abraham in Rom 4. For works that deal with issues surrounding the place of Abraham in Paul's argument, see Hays "A Reconsideration of Romans 4:1," 76-98; M. Cranford, "Abraham in Romans 4: The Father of All Who Believe," *NTStud* 41 (1995): 71-88; R. Holst, "The Meaning of 'Abraham Believed God' in Romans 4:3," *WTJ* 59 (1997): 319-26.

¹²⁶One could argue that it is implied in 4:1-25 that Abraham kept the law by his faith. In this case, 3:31 also applies to Abraham. Bruce, *Romans*, 110, notes that Abraham's good works came from his faith.

¹²⁷Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 209.

¹²⁸Wallis unconvincingly argues that the significance of Abraham is that he is an example of the dispensation of faith. Abraham's faith is his participation in God's salvific blessing. Thus Rom 4 is not about how one is justified before God (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 94). This seems to be denying the obvious. We will show that the thrust of chap. 4 is that Abraham was justified by faith and not works and the same holds for those who are his children.

¹²⁹Hays restructures v. 1 so that it contains two questions: "What then shall we say?" and "Have we found Abraham (to be) our forefather according to the flesh?" He goes on to argue that the issue is whether Abraham is the ethnic forefather of the Jews (Hays, "A Reconsideration of Romans 4:1," 81-82).

what Abraham “found,” εὐρηκέναι. The answer begins with “for” (γάρ) (v. 2). If Abraham was justified by works, then he has a legitimate reason for boasting, but he cannot boast before God (4:2a; cf. 3:27). Abraham simply could not perform the works that would make boasting before God possible. This is supported in verse 5 where Abraham is portrayed as ungodly, which necessarily excludes any possibility of good works on his part.¹³⁰ On the contrary, Scripture (Gen. 15:6) says that it was because Abraham “believed God,” ἐπίστευσεν . . . Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ that “it (his faith) was credited to him as righteousness,” ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην (v. 3; cf. 3:28, 30). Abraham’s act of believing in God is explained as his “faith” πίστις. The noun πίστις and verb πιστεύω are used interchangeably in 4:5 (cf. 4:11) making it unambiguous that the faith by which Abraham was justified is his belief in God. What we see here is that it was Abraham’s personal faith, his trust in God that resulted in his justification before God.¹³¹

This example of Abraham is useful for deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22. First, righteousness is by faith, specifically, belief in God (in the case of Abraham) or Christ (as in 3:22). Second, faith versus works are two human actions standing in opposition to each other when it comes to justification. Works are contrasted with Abraham’s belief in God (4:2-3, 5). This suggests that in 3:21-22 the contrast is

Most commentators are not convinced with Hays’ reconstruction. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 213; Moo, 262; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:199.

¹³⁰So Schreiner, *Romans*, 214. One who is ungodly cannot do any good works to please God (cf. Rom 8:7-8). It is only through faith that God justifies the ungodly (cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37).

¹³¹The testimony of David in 4:6-8 from Ps 32:1-2 supports the exclusion of works in justification. David pronounces a blessing on the person whose sins are forgiven, covered, and not taken

between works of the law and the human act of believing in Jesus Christ for justification (see earlier discussion). Third, the justification of Abraham serves as an example of the witness of the Law and Prophets to the manner in which God's righteousness operates (3:21). In this example, there is no trace of πίστις being the faithfulness of Christ or his death on the cross. It seems that Romans 4:1-8 makes a persuasive case for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.

Abraham, the father of Jews and Gentiles (4:9-16). In 4:9-16, a connection is made between the justification of Abraham and the inclusion of Gentiles among the people of God. The concern in verses 9-16 is whether the blessing that David pronounces (vv. 7-8; cf. Ps 32:1, 2), the forgiveness of sins, is only upon the circumcised (Jews) or whether it is also on the uncircumcised (Gentiles).¹³² Paul answers the question by appealing again to Genesis 15:6, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." He explains that Abraham was counted righteous by faith while he was still uncircumcised (v. 10). This proves that Gentiles do not need to be circumcised in order to belong to the people of God. What they need is faith like Abraham's. The justification of Abraham before his circumcision (v. 10), which only came later on as a seal of the righteousness which comes from faith, τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως (v. 11), emphasizes the inclusion of Gentiles in the family of Abraham.¹³³ Gentiles, as well as Jews, must have

into account (vv. 6-8). Accordingly, to be counted righteous is to have sins forgiven, covered, not counted against us (vv. 6-8). This gives us another perspective on justification as the forgiveness of sins.

¹³² Ὅν in v. 9 indicates a logical connection with vv. 7-8.

¹³³ Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 225; Polhill, *Paul*, 288.

faith just as Abraham in order to be counted righteous before God (vv. 11-12).¹³⁴ In light of verses 9-12, it is through faith not race that one is counted righteous before God and considered as a child of Abraham. Even Jews must have faith to be real children of Abraham (v. 12).¹³⁵ In these verses (4:9-12), the theme from 3:21-4:12 is clear. One (Jew or Gentile) is made right with God not by keeping the law (in this case, circumcision) but through faith. Again, the emphasis on the response of faith in contrast to works is clear.

Verses 13-16 further explain Abraham as the father of all peoples from the angle of promise and inheritance.¹³⁶ A promise made to Abraham was not based on keeping the law but on “the righteousness that is by faith,” διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως (v. 13). Obtaining the promise by faith demonstrates that it (promise) is by grace and therefore extends to all. Not only to “the one who is of the law,” τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου but also to “the one who is of the faith of Abraham,” τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (v. 16). The issue in verse 16 is on believing versus doing.¹³⁷ Receiving the promise by faith so that it might be in accordance with grace recalls 4:4-5 where faith also demonstrates that justification is by grace. One must believe as Abraham believed in order to be justified as Abraham was justified. Once again the emphasis on the role of faith as belief is obvious.

¹³⁴Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 225.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 226.

¹³⁶The content of the promise is debatable but it is probable that it refers to the “universal fatherhood of Abraham.” Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in Jesus become members of Abraham’s family. For a discussion on the content of the promise and in what sense Abraham inherited the world, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 227.

¹³⁷Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 384; Schreiner, *Romans*, 229.

The nature of Abraham's faith (4:17-22). After stating that those who are of the faith of Abraham are children of Abraham, Paul describes in verses 17-22 the nature of Abraham's faith. It appears that he wants the readers to understand the nature of the faith that resulted in Abraham's justification before God. As such verses 17-22 probably explain the phrase *πίστεως Ἀβραάμ* (v. 16). To believe as Abraham believed is to have the type of faith that Abraham had as described in verses 17-22. Abraham believed in God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that are not (v. 17). He did not grow weak in his faith no matter the circumstances (v. 19). He did not doubt God's promises. On the contrary, he grew strong in his faith (v. 20). Such faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness (v. 22).¹³⁸

Implication of Abraham's faith for the readers (4:23-25). The closing verses, 23-25, state the relevance of the example of Abraham's faith for the believers. That Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6) was not written for his account only but also for those to whom faith will be credited as righteousness (v. 23-24). Abraham believed God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that are not (4:17) and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. At this point in salvation history, in order for faith to be credited as righteousness, one must believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (4:24). Such faith is essentially belief in the resurrection of Jesus (cf. Rom 7:4; 8:11; 10:9). This would suggest that the content of

¹³⁸If we are correct that vv. 17-22 explains Abraham's faith, it would mean that *πίστεως Ἀβραάμ*, though a subjective genitive construction, cannot be his faithfulness since vv. 17-22 describes his faith in terms of believing (vv. 17-18), enduring in faith (vv. 19, 20), and not doubting God's promise (v. 20). In this case, the appeal made to "the faith of Abraham" as evidence that *πίστις* in 3:22 and 26 is Christ's faithfulness is not convincing (see Hays, *Faith*, 157, 159; Howard, "Romans 3:21-31," 229; Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26," 80; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 68; Kittel, "Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,"

faith in 3:22 is the atoning work of Christ (3:24-25). To believe in Jesus is to believe in his accomplished work on the cross.

Conclusion. After this analysis, we have a better understanding why Paul uses Abraham as an example. Abraham is an OT example of justification by faith apart from works of the law.¹³⁹ It was his faith in God that was credited to him as righteousness. This proves the point of 3:27-31 that faith justifies apart from works of the law.

Conclusion

The main theme from 3:21-26, the righteousness/justification of God by faith apart from works of the law (3:21-22), is summarized in 3:28-30 and applied specifically to Abraham in chapter 4. We have argued that in 3:27-31 faith is contrasted with works of the law in connection with justification and refers to the human act of believing. The faithfulness of Christ for πίστις would not fit the context of 3:27-31 and chapter 4. This is made more explicit in the example of Abraham. The way Paul develops his argument

424. Cf. discussion earlier on 3:26). For one reason, Abraham's faith is his "believing" but there is no evidence that Jesus' πίστις has this meaning.

¹³⁹Our conclusion differs from Hays who sees the purpose of chap. 4 differently. He argues that the issue here is not how Abraham was justified but rather "whose father he is and in what way his children are related to him" (Hays, "A Reconsideration of Romans 4:1," 97). In an attempt to explain how Rom 4 relates to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, Hays argues that Abraham's faith is not a paradigm for the faith of Christians but a "prefiguration of the faith of Jesus Christ" (ibid., 97). In Hays' view, it was Abraham's faithfulness (obedience) that brought God's blessing on "many" (ibid., 98). Hays essentially limits Abraham's faith to "faithfulness/obedience" but as we have shown, Abraham's faith in the context of Rom 4 is his belief in God. He appears to be alone in this way of reasoning. Against Hays' understanding of Abraham's faith as his faithfulness/obedience, Dunn argues that it would not work to say that Abraham was chosen as an example of faithfulness. According to Dunn, Paul was "attacking the traditional Jewish understanding of Abraham which saw him as the *archetype of faithfulness*" ("Once More Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 265). Since Abraham was seen as the supreme example of faithfulness, for Paul to argue that πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ's faithfulness would "be to play into the hands of his Jewish-Christian opponents" (ibid.), who would have understood Abraham's faithfulness as a prototype of Christ's faithfulness. In Dunn's view, such a conclusion "could continue to serve as a model of Jewish-Christian covenant faithfulness" (ibid.). In sharp contrast Paul insists that Abraham was a model of faith (= trust). See also, Williams, "Righteousness of God," 275; Richard N. Longenecker's excursus on "Abraham's

in 3:27-31 and 4:1-25 supports the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22, 26. Reading πίστις as “faith in Christ” provides a consistent use of πίστις in connection with justification throughout Romans 3:21-4:25. This fact, according to Moo, is most damaging to the subjective genitive view.¹⁴⁰

While the subjective genitive reading “the faithfulness of Christ” for πίστις Χριστοῦ is grammatically possible in 3:22 and 26, it begins to run into problems in 3:27-31 and 4:1-25. In fact, Paul’s argument in 3:27-4:25 makes this interpretation virtually impossible. Schreiner has persuasively argued that “the reading ‘faith in Christ’ makes the best sense of the flow of thought in Rom. 3:21-4:12.” He points out that if one assumes that πίστις in this context is a reference to the faithfulness of Christ, it would make good sense in 3:21-31. But in chapter 4, this reading would not work since Paul is clearly speaking of the faith of Abraham being his belief.¹⁴¹ We conclude that both 3:27-31 and 4:1-25 solidify the argument for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in its immediate context of 3:21-4:25. At this point we want to see how Paul uses πίστις in the rest of Romans and how that might support or challenge our interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

Faith in the Preceding Context of 1:1-3:20

Romans 1:1-15

There are three instances of faith in this opening section of Romans (1:5, 8,

Faith and Faithfulness in Jewish Writings and in Paul,” in Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 110-12.

¹⁴⁰Moo, *Romans*, 225.

¹⁴¹See discussion in Schreiner, *Romans*, 187.

12). Paul announces that the goal of his apostleship is “to bring about the obedience of faith (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως) among all the Gentiles” (1:5; cf. 16:26). Scholars debate the relationship of ὑπακοὴν (“obedience”) to the genitive πίστεως (“of faith,”). Among the various possible meanings, there are two that are most likely.¹⁴² The first option takes πίστεως as genitive of source or subjective genitive, “obedience that flows from faith.”¹⁴³ In the second option, πίστεως is genitive of apposition, “obedience which is faith.”¹⁴⁴ It is feasible that both options are intended. In this case, obedience flows from faith and the acceptance of the gospel by faith can be seen as an act of obedience.¹⁴⁵ Schreiner rightly cautions against limiting the phrase to one single meaning.¹⁴⁶ No matter what position one takes here, there is no doubt that faith is that of the believer who responds to the preaching of the gospel.

In 1:8 Paul gives thanks for the faith (πίστις) of the Romans which is proclaimed throughout the world (Rom 1:8).¹⁴⁷ Their faith is in all probability a

¹⁴²See Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 26 n. 1.

¹⁴³Bruce, *Romans*, 74; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 29-30; Robertson, *Grammar*, 500; BDAG, s.v. “ὑπακοή.”

¹⁴⁴Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:66; Käsemann, *Romans*, 14; Murray, *Romans*, 1:13; Nygren, *Romans*, 55; Schlatter, *Romans*, 11; Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:67.

¹⁴⁵This view appeals to texts such as Rom 10:16; 1:8 and 16:19; 11:23 and 11:30-31. For further discussion, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 35; Stott, *Romans*, 52. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:17; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 237.

¹⁴⁶Schreiner, *Romans*, 35 argues against a single meaning for “obedience of faith” and against separating the two as if one could have one without the other. He notes that a changed life necessarily occurs when one embraces the gospel (cf. Rom 15:18). Also, according to Romans 6 and 8, grace given in Christ involves a transformation in one’s everyday life (cf. also 12:1-13:14). In the end, it appears that the faith that is first evidenced at conversion is validated as one continues to believe and obey (11:20-22). Thus, faith cannot be separated from obedience and at the same time, all obedience flows from faith (see Schreiner, *Romans*, 35). See also Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 98, 164.

¹⁴⁷For other instances where Paul gives thanks for the faith of his readers, see Eph 1:15-16; Col 1:3-4; 1 Thess 1:2-3; 2 Thess 1:3; Phil 4-5.

reference to their faith towards God (cf. 1 Thess 1:8).¹⁴⁸ Again, faith as belief in God is the sense here.¹⁴⁹ The reference to πίστις as personal faith is also evident in 1:12 where faith is the medium for mutual encouragement (cf. Phlm 6).¹⁵⁰

Romans 1:16-17

Romans 1:16-17 is understandably the theme of the whole epistle.¹⁵¹ The theme of the gospel and faith from 1:5 reappears here and is explained further. It is impossible for us to deal with the issues surrounding the interpretation of these verses. We shall limit our discussion to the three occurrences of πίστις, “faith” in verse 17. Paul writes in verse 16 that he is not ashamed of the gospel because (γὰρ) “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” We understand from this that the act of believing is necessary for one to be saved. Also evident here is the emphasis on the equality of Jews and Gentiles before God. Both must exercise faith to be saved (v. 16). The object of this saving faith is not stated at this point.

Verse 17 supports verse 16 with the word “for” (γὰρ) and gives the reason why the gospel is the power of God for everyone who believes.¹⁵² The gospel is the power of God “for” or “because” (γὰρ) in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed “from

¹⁴⁸Moo notes, “That people in the Roman capital had bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus is something that would be widely known, and perhaps highlighted, by the early missionaries” (Moo, *Romans*, 57; cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 49; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 31).

¹⁴⁹Cf. Murray, *Romans*, 1:19; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:75; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:28; Dodd, “Rom 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 471 n. 9.

¹⁵⁰How does faith encourage believers? Schreiner explains, “What inspires and fortifies other believers is when they perceive faith in other Christians. Seeing other believers trust God in the course of everyday life reminds us that God is indeed faithful and encourages us to trust him as well” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 52).

¹⁵¹So Nygren, *Romans*, 65; Polhill, *Paul*, 284.

¹⁵²Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:86.

faith to faith,” ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (v. 17a). Verse 17a is in turn supported by an appeal to the OT. The righteousness of God is revealed “from faith to faith” “just as,” καθὼς Scripture says, “But the righteous by faith shall live,” ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (v. 17b, quoting Hab 2:4). The question now is, “whose faith is referred to in the three instances of πίστις in verse 17 and are we to understand πίστις here as belief or faithfulness?¹⁵³

From faith to faith, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (1:17a). The interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν varies.¹⁵⁴ Different translations have been suggested such as, (1) “from the faithfulness of God to the faith of believers,”¹⁵⁵ (2) “from the faithfulness of Christ to the faith of believers.”¹⁵⁶ In these two examples, ἐκ πίστις means faithfulness but εἰς πίστιν is faith as belief. A third and most likely option is that both instances of πίστις has the same meaning “belief” and emphasize the importance of faith in receiving

¹⁵³Naturally, the decision on the meaning of πίστις in 1:17 has an impact on how πίστις Χριστοῦ is interpreted in 3:22. Hence, deciding the meaning of πίστις here is important for the debate.

¹⁵⁴For a history of the interpretation of this phrase, see Charles L. Quarles, “From Faith to Faith: A Fresh Examination of the Prepositional Series in Romans 1:17,” *NovT* 45 (2003): 2-5.

¹⁵⁵Dunn, *Romans*, 1:43-44 defends this option arguing that πίστις has different meanings in the phrase. The first is faithfulness and the second is faith as belief. He contends that ἐκ denotes the source of righteousness and that it is odd to take both ἐκ and εἰς as referring to the faith that appropriates the righteousness of God. Dunn’s view is also influenced by his definition of the righteousness of God as his (God’s) covenantal faithfulness. Others who interpret “from faith to faith” as “from God’s faithfulness to the believer’s faith,” see K. Barth, *Romans*, 41; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 43; M. Barth, “Faith of the Messiah,” 368. This interpretation is strongly refuted by Murray in an appendix to his commentary on Romans. See Murray, *Romans*, 1:363-74.

¹⁵⁶Hays, *Faith*, 278-79; Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith?” 6, 7, 11, 12; Campbell, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum,” 267; Johnson, “Rom 3:21-26,” 79; Wright has a slightly different view. The righteousness of God is God’s covenant faithfulness which operates through the faithfulness of Christ and benefits those who are in turn faithful (“from faith to faith”). See Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 109. Wallis contends that ἐκ πίστεως is Jesus’ “life of faith which provides the basis for the righteousness and faith (εἰς πίστιν) of all people” (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 82).

the righteousness of God.¹⁵⁷ Hence, “faith and ‘nothing but faith’ can put us into a right relationship with God.”¹⁵⁸

There are several reasons supporting this third view. First, Paul often talks of righteousness “by faith,” ἐκ πίστεως (3:28, 30; 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 20-22; 5:1; 9:30; 10:4, 6, 10) in which case the believer’s faith is intended. This at the least suggests that “from faith” ἐκ πίστεως in verse 17a is the believer’s faith as well.¹⁵⁹ Second, so far in the letter, he has made reference to the faith of believers in relation to the gospel message (1:5) and as faith toward God (1:8; cf. 1 Thess 1:8). Also, a clear reference to the human faith is made in verse 16. Salvation comes to the one who believes, τῷ πιστεύοντι.¹⁶⁰ If πίστις in verse 17 is the faithfulness of God or Christ, it would create confusion since nothing thus far has indicated that faith is God’s or Christ’s faithfulness. It does not help to appeal to 3:3 here since the context is dealing with a different subject, not justification and faith. Third, though the structure of the sentence favors taking ἐκ πίστεως with the verb ἀποκαλύπτεται, “has been revealed” it is possible that “from faith” goes with “the righteousness of God.” In this sense, what has been revealed is “the righteousness of God

¹⁵⁷The following scholars agree that “from faith to faith” is used for emphasis though they may differ as to the exact nature of the emphasis: Schreiner, *Romans*, 73-74; Moo, *Romans*, 76-77; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 263; Murray, *Romans*, 1:31; Schlatter, *Romans*, 24-25; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 45; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:100; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 28; Byrne, *Romans*, 1996, 54; Polhill, *Paul*, 285; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37; Bruce, *Romans*, 79; Lagrange, *Épître aux Romains*, 20.

¹⁵⁸Moo, *Romans*, 76. So too Ridderbos who insists that “from faith to faith” means that righteousness is, “from A to Z a matter of faith and nothing else, righteousness *sola fide* (Ridderbos, *Paul*, 172).

¹⁵⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 73. These are references (excepting 3:22) that one would like to see addressed in the arguments for the subjective genitive view.

¹⁶⁰Wilckens argues that παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (v. 16) parallels ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:88). Also, Murray, *Romans*, 1:31 suggests that ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, “from faith to faith” has the same effect as παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, “to everyone who believes.” This is attractive though not conclusive.

by faith only.”¹⁶¹ We have already argued that in Romans Paul uses ἐκ πίστεω to modify righteousness/justification (see 3:28, 30; 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 20-22; 5:1; 9:30; 10:4, 6, 10). Fourth, the construction ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, “from faith to faith” has parallel examples that indicate emphasis. This is evident in expressions such as ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θανάτον, “from death to death” and ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν, “from life to life” (2 Cor 2:16), ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, “from glory to glory.”¹⁶² It would not make sense to suggest two different meanings for each of these words. These examples make a case for “from faith to faith” being used for emphasis.¹⁶³ It indicates emphasis or progression where ἐκ denotes the starting point and εἰς the end point.¹⁶⁴

In light of these four reasons, one is inclined to accept the view that ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is intended to emphasize the role of faith in relation to the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel. This is consistent with how Paul uses the ἐκ/διὰ πίστεως expressions in the epistle (cf. 3:22, 25, 26, 30; 5:1; 9:30, 32; 10:6).

¹⁶¹Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37 n. 6. According to Nygren, *Romans*, 80, “from faith to faith” probably does not modify the verb “has been revealed.” But he concludes that the phrase is used for emphasis and “stands in relative independence” (ibid.).

¹⁶²Moo, *Romans*, 76, notes this parallel also. Cf. Lagrange, *Romains*, 20; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 263. This comparison is often ignored in arguments that ἐκ πίστεως is God’s or Christ’s faithfulness. To our knowledge, there is not one instance where this parallel is addressed in arguments made for the subjective genitive view.

¹⁶³Dunn, *Romans*, 1:43 acknowledges this, but does not give any compelling reason for rejecting it.

¹⁶⁴Quarles rejects the argument that “from faith to faith” is used for emphasis mainly on linguistic grounds. He agrees that “from faith to faith” as an emphasis on “faith” fits the context of Rom 1:16-17, is consistent with Paul’s use of πίστις and the Habakkuk 2:4 quotation in v. 17. Yet, he rejects it on the ground that linguistically, ἐκ . . . εἰς indicates source and result. This is based on his survey of the use of similar constructions of ἐκ . . . εἰς in Extra-biblical greek sources, the LXX (Ps 83:8) and Paul’s letters (2 Cor 2:16 and 3:18). See Quarles, “From Faith to Faith,” 5-18. At the end of the day, Quarles argues that “from faith to faith” means that “the revelation of the righteousness of God extends from the faith of the Old Testament believer to the faith of the New Testament believer” (ibid., 21). Quarles is not able to point to any modern scholar who holds this view.

The righteous by faith shall live, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (1:17b).

Paul supports verse 17a “the righteousness of God from faith to faith” with a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, “But the righteous by faith shall live” (1:17b) suggesting that the interpretation of πίστις, in verse 17b would cast light on whose faith is in view in verse 17a.¹⁶⁵ There are two possible ways to interpret ἐκ πίστεως in verse 17b. First, it could be taken as the faithfulness of Christ. This depends on taking “the righteous” ὁ δίκαιος as a messianic title referring to Christ who will live by his faithfulness. Much is made of this Christological interpretation.¹⁶⁶ Wallis argues that πίστις in verse 17b is not the human response of faith; otherwise too much emphasis is placed on the role of faith and not on God’s initiative. Also, he states that it encourages a meritorious view of faith.¹⁶⁷ Another problem, according to Wallis, in seeing our faith

¹⁶⁵It is noted that Paul’s rendering of the text differs both from the Hebrew text and from the LXX. For example the MT has הַיְהוָה יְצַדִּיק אֶת הַיְהוָה בְּאֵמָנוֹתָיו “but the righteous by his faith/faithfulness shall live.” The LXX has, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται, “But the righteous shall live by my faith/faithfulness.” The rendering in Rom 1:17 also appears in Gal 3:11, ὁ . . . δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, “But the righteous by faith shall live.” Hebrews quotes this text as well with yet a different rendering, ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, “But my righteous one by faith shall live” (Heb 10:38). The difference here is Paul’s exclusion of the pronouns “his” (MT) and “my” (LXX). For a discussion of these differences and whether Paul’s use corresponds to the original meaning, see Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37-38; Schreiner, *Romans*, 73-76; Moo, *Romans*, 74-75.

Much has been written on the place of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17. For a discussion of this subject, see Rikki E. Watts, “For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel: Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4,” in *Romans and the People of God*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 3-25; H. C. C. Cavallin, “The Righteous Shall Live by Faith,” *ST* 32 (1978): 33-43; P. J. M. Southwell, “A Note on Habakkuk 2:4,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 614-17; J. Fitzmyer, “Habakkuk 2:3-4 and the New Testament,” in *De La Torah au Messie*, ed. J. Doré and P. Grelot (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 447-57; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 39-46.

¹⁶⁶According to Campbell, Hab 2:4 is decisive in deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. He writes that “it is to the interpretation of Hab 2:4 that scholars must turn in their attempt to resolve the troublesome phrases that combine πίστις with Χριστός in Paul” (Campbell, “Πίστις and Νόμος in Paul,” 102; idem, “Romans 1:17 - A Crux Interpretum,” 267). Cf. Hays, *Faith*, 278-79; Dunnill, “Save by Whose Faith?,” 6, 7, 11, 12; Johnson, “Rom 3:21-26,” 79.

¹⁶⁷Such a charge could be labeled against any instance where Paul makes faith a necessary part of justification. Wallis says nothing about these instances.

here is that it is unlikely for Paul to call believers “righteous.” There is only one besides God who is righteous, Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁸

Several points argue against this option. Having concluded that “from faith to faith” in the first part of the verse is the believer’s faith, a reference in verse 17b to the faithfulness of Christ is necessarily excluded. Verse 17b supports the claim of verse 17a. Wallis is correct in observing that Paul does not refer to believers as righteous. This is not necessarily a strong argument for his position since it is also true that Paul does not apply the word “righteous” to Christ. Nowhere does Paul use ὁ δίκαιος “the righteous one” as a messianic title. Wallis has to appeal to contexts outside of Paul in support of his claim. The charge that faith takes the emphasis away from God is simply not true. Justification is totally of God, but without faith there can be no justification. The two go together and to speak of one is not to deny the other.

The second option is to see in the Habakkuk 2:4 quotation a reference to the believer who will live by his or her faith. Thus, Habakkuk 2:4 proves the point of verse 17a. Seifrid writes, “In interpreting this Scripture [Hab 2:4] as speaking of the faith of the righteous one, Paul underscores the way in which Habakkuk’s vision contains a call to faith.” Seifrid goes on to explain that “The prophetic call for faith is the same as the call of the gospel, in which the vision of salvation has come to fulfillment.”¹⁶⁹ Given that (1) verse 17b supports Paul’s point in verse 17a, (2) that in verse 17a he talks about the righteousness of God given to faith, and (3) the context of verses 16-17 emphasize the

¹⁶⁸Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 80-81.

¹⁶⁹Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 38.

importance of believing for Jews and Gentiles, it is highly unlikely that πίστις in verse 17b is the faithfulness of Christ.

We conclude that “by faith” ἐκ πίστεως (v. 17b) is used in the same way it is used in verse 17a: one is made right with God by faith, the point being to emphasize the centrality of faith.¹⁷⁰ In this case, “the righteous man” is not Christ but the believer (in keeping with the context of Habakkuk 2:4)¹⁷¹ and “by faith” is the means by which one is justified or will gain eschatological life.¹⁷²

The importance of 1:16-17 for the interpretation of 3:21-26 means that the conclusions drawn here would have an impact on how 3:22 is interpreted. If the faithfulness of God or Christ is in view, then it supports the subjective genitive interpretation of 3:22 and 26.¹⁷³ But, if as we have argued, the faith of the individual is present all through 1:16-17 as well as 1:1-15, it lends support to the objective genitive

¹⁷⁰For those who see here a reference to the believer’s faith, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 73-74; Moo, *Romans*, 76-77; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 263; Murray, *Romans*, 1:31; Bruce, *Romans*, 80; Nygren, *Romans*, 84; Byrne, *Romans*, 54.

¹⁷¹See Lagrange, *Romains*, 20; cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 38.

¹⁷²There is debate as to where “ἐκ πίστεως belongs in the sentence. There are different possibilities. “*The righteous by faith shall live*” (Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:90; Moo, *Romans*, 72), “*The righteous shall live by faith*” (Murray, *Romans*, 1:33). Both are possible. According to Schreiner, “‘to be righteous by faith’ and ‘to live by faith’ are alternative ways of communicating the same reality” (Schreiner, 74; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:46; Barrett, *Romans*, 31).

¹⁷³According to Campbell, Rom 1:17 “clearly deploys the critical phrase ἐκ πίστεως as an intertextually motivated allusion to the faithful death of Christ – a deployment that includes, perhaps surprisingly, Hab 2:4. Needless to say, such a christological reading of Rom 1:17 has powerful implications for Paul’s repeated use of this phrase – and πίστις itself – in the famous arguments that follow” (Campbell, “Rom 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 247). Dodd, who argues from semantic grounds against Campbell, challenges this argument and accuses him of “illegitimate totality transfer,” where the meaning of πίστις in one context (Hab 2:4) determines the use of that word in every context (Dodd, “Rom 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum,” 471). Johnson sees two close parallels between Rom 1:17 and 3:22. First, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (“for all those who believe,” 3:22) parallels εἰς πίστιν (“to faith,” 1:17). Second, πίστις Χριστοῦ (“faith/faithfulness of Christ,” 3:22) parallels ἐκ πίστεως (“from faith,” 1:17). This parallel allows Johnson to argue that Paul distinguishes between the believer’s faith and Jesus’ faith/faithfulness (Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 79). This parallel is not as clear as Johnson assumes it to

interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 where the similar expression is present, the righteousness of God through faith (3:22a; cf. 1:17a) to everyone who believes (3:22b; cf. 1:16, 17b).

Romans 1:18-3:20

The faithfulness of God, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (3:3). The word “faith,” πίστις occurs once in this section (1:18-3:20), τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (3:3). It is beyond dispute that πίστις means faithfulness in this construction. Some find in this example support for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 as the faithfulness of Christ. It is argued that just as the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ (3:3) is subjective, it makes sense to take πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive construction as well.¹⁷⁴ It is doubtful that this one example is sufficient evidence for deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22, but it does show that πίστις may legitimately be translated “faithfulness.” Yet, it does not follow from this example in 3:3 that a similarly constructed phrase will have the same meaning. The context in 3:3 makes it clear that πίστις here is “faithfulness.” God’s faithfulness is contrasted with Israel’s lack of it.¹⁷⁵ The context of Romans 3:1-8 determines the meaning of πίστις as “faithfulness.” Though faith as belief is one meaning of πίστις, this meaning is excluded by context. It follows that in 3:22, context should be the determining factor on which meaning of πίστις is intended by Paul. The

be. It assumes that ἐκ πίστεως in 1:17 should be read as “Christ’s faithfulness” but there is lack of consensus here.

¹⁷⁴For example, Hays, *Faith*, 157, 159; Howard, “Romans 3:21-31,” 229; Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 80; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 68.

¹⁷⁵Turner, *Insights*, 112.

importance of context in determining the meaning of a word is highlighted by the example of “the faithfulness of God” (3:3) and “the faith of Abraham (4:16). Both are subjective genitive constructions but with different meanings for “faith.”¹⁷⁶

The concept of faith in 1:18-3:20. While πίστις only appears in 3:3, the concept is implicitly present in this section (1:18-3:20). For example, the issue in 1:18-32 is unbelief expressed in the “ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” resulting in the wrath of God coming upon them (1:18). Unbelief here is a lack of trust in God who has made himself known in creation. Instead of giving glory to God in the face of such knowledge, people exchange his glory for that of images (cf. 1:18-23). What is implied in this section is that belief as opposed to unbelief would do the opposite. Faith expresses itself in obedience (1:5) and not in ungodliness (1:18). Faith receives the righteousness from God leading to eternal life (1:17). Unbelief brings wrath from God (1:18) and leads to eternal condemnation (2:5, 8-9). Thus even in this instance, the importance of faith or belief in God is present, though implicitly. In 2:4, we read that the kindness of God leads to repentance. Again, faith is implied here for repentance necessarily includes faith (cf. 10:9-10).

¹⁷⁶Williams recognizes the different meanings of πίστις in Rom 3:3 and 4:16. He writes, “When Paul speaks of the *pistis tou theou* (Rom 3:3), he means that God is trustworthy because he is true to his promises, the program and purpose announced to Abraham. But when he talks about the *pistis Abraam* (Rom 4:12, 16), he does not mean that Abraham was trustworthy, but that he trusted God, relying totally on him who was able to do what he had promised (4:21)” (Williams, “Righteousness of God,” 275). Hays agrees with Williams’s comment and says that it only serves to show that we cannot make a strict distinction between “faith” and “faithfulness” because this distinction is not “applicable to the Greek word πίστις, which contains both ideas” (Hays, *Faith*, 157 n. 133). Hays’ comment leaves one wondering whether one could ever distinguish between “faith” and “faithfulness” in the use of πίστις. It is true that the word contains both ideas but it does not follow that whenever it is used, it has both senses. This reasoning will not work for every use of πίστις in Romans, meaning that we have to find a way to decide which meaning of πίστις is intended by the author. Following Hays’ line of thought, Abraham’s πίστις could equally be his “faithfulness” a point that Williams denies.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the use of πίστις shows that in Romans 1:1-3:20 faith, with one exception (3:3), has the meaning “trust” or “belief” (1:5, 8, 12). We argued that πίστις in 1:17 is the faith of the believer. This makes good sense in context. We also suggested that faith is implied in some sections of 1:18-3:20. Lexically, 1:1-3:20 establishes that Paul predominantly uses πίστις in the active sense of belief and applies it to believers. In the one instance where this is not the case, there are clear contextual markers to indicate a different meaning. The references to the faith of the believer and the absence of any explicit and undisputed reference to the faithfulness of Jesus in 1:1-3:20 give added support to faith in 3:21-26 being the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ. The context of 1:1-3:20, especially 1:16-17 strongly support this reading.

The Subsequent Context of 5-16

We now turn to Paul’s use of πίστις in Romans 5-11. The main use of “faith” in this section appears in contexts dealing with justification or righteousness (5:1; 9:30-33; 10:4-6, 9-10).¹⁷⁷

Romans 5:1

In 5:1, justification is “by faith,” ἐκ πίστεως and the consequences of justification by faith are peace with God, access to his grace, and hope. The “therefore” οὖν in 5:1 connects back to (3:21-4:25) and shows a close link between this section and what precedes. The phrase, “having been justified by faith” δικαιοθέντες ἐκ πίστεως

¹⁷⁷There are other cases where faith is used in this section such as 5:2; 11:20; 12:3; 14:1, 2, 22-23.

should be construed along the lines of 3:26, 28, 30; 4:16.¹⁷⁸ Thus the human faith is in view. This point is hardly debated.¹⁷⁹

Romans 9:30-10:4 and 10:8-14.

These passages (9:30-10:4; 10:8-14) deal with the theme of righteousness/justification in relation to faith and works. This theme establishes a close connection between these text and 3:21-26. One exception is that the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ does not appear here. Since Paul addresses the same issues here as he did in 3:21-26 these passages may shed some light on the meaning of the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction.¹⁸⁰

In 9:30-33, we have a correlation between faith and righteousness. Paul writes that Gentiles attained righteousness that is by faith, δικαιοσύνην . . . τὴν ἐκ πίστεως (v. 30b). In this case, faith is their belief in God. The reference here to faith in attaining righteousness shows that faith is necessary in gaining a right standing before God.¹⁸¹ The righteousness which Gentiles attained by faith, Israel failed to attain because it pursued righteousness by works and not by faith (vv. 31-32).¹⁸² There is a faith/works contrast in

¹⁷⁸Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:246; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 395.

¹⁷⁹Dunn, *Romans*, 1:246; Moo, *Romans*, 298; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 138 n. 3; Cranfield, *On Romans*, 88. One wonders why Johnson and others do not allow the connection between the human subjective faith in 5:1 to cast light on “faith” in 3:21-26. Rather, he argues that the explanation for πίστις in 3:21-2 is found in 5:19 (Johnson, “Romans 3:21-26,” 89; cf. Hays, *Faith*, 152; idem, “Pauline Christology,” 278, 286; M. Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” 366; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 67; Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 457).

¹⁸⁰Cf. Veronica Koperski, “The Meaning of *Pistis Christou* in Philippians 3:9,” *Louvain Studies* 18 (1993): 211.

¹⁸¹Cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 577; Schreiner, *Romans*, 536; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37.

¹⁸²For a discussion on the issues surrounding Israel’s failure to attain righteousness in 9:30-10:3, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Israel’s Failure to Attain Righteousness in Romans 9:30-10:3,” *TrinJ* 12 (1991): 209-20.

9:32b (cf. 3:20, 21-22, 28, 30). Faith here is the personal faith which Israel lacked.

Fitzmyer suggests that “by faith” is meant faith in Christ.¹⁸³ Cranfield understands it to be faith in God.¹⁸⁴ The quotation from Isaiah 28:16 in 9:33 shows that faith here is belief in Jesus.¹⁸⁵ From these verses, faith that attains righteousness is belief in Jesus Christ. This would be in keeping with our understanding of 3:22, that the righteousness of God is attained not by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁶

Romans 10:4 states that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness “to everyone who believes,” *παντι τω πιστεύοντι*.¹⁸⁷ The phrase, “righteousness to everyone who believes” is almost identical to 3:22b, “the righteousness of God for all who believe.” Righteousness is here linked to the verb “believe” instead of the noun faith as in 9:30, 32 and *πίστις* does not have a genitive modifier. So, clearly, in 9:30-10:4, the reception of righteousness is tied to the human subjective faith. This would provide added support for faith being an act of believing in 3:22 as well.

In 10:10, believing results in justification (10:10) and this is supported by Scripture which says that “Whoever believes in him (Christ) will not be disappointed” (10:11; cf. Isa 28:16). Clearly, in these verses, the object of faith is Christ (10:9, 11, 13,

¹⁸³Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 579.

¹⁸⁴Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:509-10.

¹⁸⁵Cf. Dodd, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum,” 472, who sees the citation from Isaiah as proof from the Hebrew Scripture that “faith should be put in Jesus” (*ibid.*).

¹⁸⁶The subjective genitive interpretation fails to gain support in these verses and supporters of this view do not include 9:30-33 in their treatment of 3:21-26.

¹⁸⁷The interpretation of Rom 10:4 is difficult. We are only concerned here with the use of “faith” in this verse. A detailed treatment of this verse is found in Schreiner, “Paul’s View of the Law in Romans 10:4-5,” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 113-35; *idem*, *Romans*, 544-48.

14).¹⁸⁸ Without faith, one cannot attain the justification from God. Paul argues that the reasons why many Jews are being “cut off” is lack of faith¹⁸⁹ but Gentile Christians stand by means of their faith¹⁹⁰ (11:20).

In sum, Paul uses faith in connection with righteousness or justification in 5:1; 9:30-33; and 10:4-6, 9-10 specifically to refer to the response of faith on the part of the human being. The faithfulness of Christ would not fit these examples. The evidence for Paul’s use of πίστις in Romans 5-11 indicates that Paul uses πίστις mainly in the active sense of “belief.” Since the context where πίστις occurs is similar to that of 3:21-26 (dealing with justification), one can reasonably conclude that these instances provide further support that faith in 3:22, 26 is also the human faith by which one is justified before God. The subjective genitive reading lacks this added support. It advocates an interpretation that does not receive explicit support in the rest of Romans. The objective genitive reading both makes sense in the context of 3:21-4:25 and is consistent with the way Paul uses πίστις with righteousness or justification in the rest of Romans.

Conclusion on the Use of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans

Thus far, the case for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” has been made focusing on the evidence from the context of Romans. Through the analysis of the immediate context (3:21-4:25), the preceding context (1:1-3:20), and the subsequent

¹⁸⁸Cf. Koperski, “The Meaning of *Pistis Christou*,” 211. Williams’ argument that Paul “was not accustomed to thinking of Christ as the ‘object’ of faith” runs into problems in this passage (see Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 434).

¹⁸⁹Taking τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ as a causal dative. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 604; Moo, *Romans*, 705 n. 44.

¹⁹⁰Τῇ πίστει could also be causal dative but Moo argues that “since it relates to the Gentile Christian’s continuing relationship to God, it is probably instrumental.” See Moo, *Romans*, 705, n. 45. See

context (5-11), it was argued that “faith in Christ” is the more accurate reading for πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans 3:22 and 26. In light of the preceding arguments, we now make the following general observations: (1) although the reading “faithfulness of Christ” for πίστις Χριστοῦ is legitimate, it lacks additional support from the overall context of Romans. The arguments based on Romans 1:5, 17, 3:3, 4:16, 5:19 in support of the subjective genitive reading are inconclusive.¹⁹¹ (2) The view that πίστις Χριστοῦ means faith/faithfulness of Christ fails to account for the rest of Paul’s use of πίστις in Romans, especially in cases where he clearly links the human act of belief with justification. The subjective genitive interpretation needs to explain why Paul always uses πίστις as the faith of the believer in contexts dealing with justification except in 3:22 and 26. (3) The absence of any explicit reference in Romans to Jesus as exercising faith or being faithful (πιστὸς) and the many references to the faith of believers (Rom 1:5, 8, 12; 3:27, 28, 30, 31; 4:5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20; 5:1, 2,; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 14:23; 16:26) present a telling piece of evidence against the subjective genitive interpretation.

Schreiner rightly notes that “substantial evidence would be needed to overturn this emphasis on the faith of believers in order to sustain the notion of ‘the faithfulness of Christ.’”¹⁹² (4) Taking πίστις Χριστοῦ as the “faithfulness of Christ” requires a theological understanding of faith as “obedience” which is at the same time a reference to Christ’s death on the cross. Such a reading brings too much to the text and is not supported by the context. There is no dispute that the obedience of Christ is important for

also R. Bultman, “Πίστις,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley [TDNT] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 6:218; Schreiner, *Romans*, 607, n. 9.

¹⁹¹For a response to these arguments, see discussion in chap. 4.

¹⁹²Schreiner, *Romans*, 185; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 1:166; Moo, *Romans*, 225.

Paul. At the same time, there is no evidence that he refers to Christ's obedience with πίστις.¹⁹³ Romans 5:19 alone is not a compelling argument for this view. (5) Reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as objective genitive "faith in Christ" is consistent with Paul's use of πίστις in general (see appendix 3), especially in contexts of justification. (6) Paul's use of πίστις with objective genitive in other places provides further support for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ (see appendix 3). We conclude that there is greater contextual support for the view that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans 3:22 (cf. 3:26) is our faith in Christ, the faith by which we are justified before God.

¹⁹³Schreiner, *Romans*, 185.

CHAPTER 6

FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST IN GALATIANS 2:16, 20 AND 3:22

Summary of the Problem in Galatians

In Galatians 2:16, is Paul saying that a person is justified through faith in Jesus Christ or through the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ? This question arises from the phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ¹ (2:16, cf. 2:20; 3:22) which could be read as “through faith in Jesus Christ” or “through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.”² There are scholars who strongly argue for the latter (subjective genitive interpretation).³ Others

¹πίστις Χριστοῦ henceforth.

²In Gal 2:16 Christ is referred to as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2:16a; cf. 3:22; Rom 3:22), Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν (2:16b), and Χριστοῦ (2:16c; cf. Phil 3:9). The variation in names is most likely stylistic and, as Eckstein notes, should not be theologically overvalued (Hans Joachim Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Galater 2,15-4,7*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 86 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996), 18).

³For example, Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 83-98; Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 119-62; Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 134; J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 246-77; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 169; John Bligh, *Galatians* (London: St Paul Publications, 1969), 203-07; idem, “Did Jesus Live by Faith?” *HeyJ* 9 (1968): 414-19; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); 113-16; M. Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 363-70; G. Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 213; Morna Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 324; Ardel B. Caneday, “Galatians 3:22ff. – A Crux Interpretum for πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul's Thought,” *Evangelical Theological Seminar Papers* (1999): 2-22; S. K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 438; G. M. Taylor, “The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians,” *JBL* 85 (1966): 75; P. Vallotton, *Christ et la Foi* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960), 47-48; A. G. Hebert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith’,” *Theology* 58 (1955): 373; John Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith? – The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology,” *Colloquium* 30 (1998): 5.

equally, believe that the former is the correct interpretation (objective genitive reading).⁴

The question is which one did Paul intend to communicate to his readers? It is our goal in this chapter to investigate the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ within the context of Galatians 2 and 3.

The approach in this chapter is first, to summarize the subjective genitive arguments for the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians and second, to investigate the validity of the objective genitive view in the context of Galatians 2 and 3. At the end of the day, a decision is based on which reading is least disruptive to the flow of Paul's argument and is supported by the context of Galatians 2 and 3.

Subjective Genitive Arguments for the Interpretation of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians

Arguments from Contexts Outside of Galatians

Evidence is adduced from the LXX, ancient sources both secular and religious, and other Pauline letters, specifically Romans 3:3; 4:16; 5:19 and Philippians 2:6-11.⁵

⁴For example, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 138-40; J. D. G. Dunn, *Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 131-41; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 6th ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), 115; E. D. Burton, *Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), 121; Moisés Silva, "Faith versus Works of the Law in Galatians," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism, vol. 2: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming); Jürgen Becker und Ulrich Luz, *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser und Kolosser*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 37, 42; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 92-93; Joachim Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 110 n. 51; Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 18; Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 9 (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 170; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Galates* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1953), 53; André Viard, *Saint Paul Épître aux Galates* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1964), 55; R. Barry Matlock, "Even the Demons Believe: Paul and Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 300-18; T. David Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," *Int* 41 (1987): 37.

⁵We treated these in more detail in chap. 4. They are briefly summarized here to facilitate discussion in this chapter. Also, some aspects of the arguments specific to Galatians were not discussed in chap. 4. This affords us the opportunity to do so.

The use of πίστις from these contexts becomes the grid for interpreting πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22.

Evidence from the LXX. Longenecker contends that when πίστις is understood in terms of its Hebrew background of אֱמוּנָה (faith, faithfulness, trustworthiness, reliability), it is not difficult to see Paul using πίστις Χριστοῦ in the same way that he uses πίστις θεοῦ (Rom 3:3) and πίστις Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16).⁶ According to Longenecker, “While it is true that the apostle spoke and wrote Greek, his words were *always coloured by their Hebrew associations*. It is therefore likely that in certain instances in his letters the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be understood as ‘the faithfulness of Jesus Christ,’ the God-man.”⁷

Use of πίστις among Greco-Romans writers. Howard makes the case for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ, based on his survey of Hellenistic Jewish literature (OT Apocrypha, Greek Pseudepigrapha, Philo, and Josephus).⁸ He contends that πίστις in the Hellenistic Jewish literature means “faithfulness” far more than it means “trust.”⁹ Therefore, the *onus probandi* is now on those who do not interpret the πίστις Χριστοῦ as subjective genitive.¹⁰ Dunnill asserts

⁶See, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87; idem, “The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 146; cf. Hebert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith,’” 373; Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith?,” 5.

⁷Longenecker, “Obedience of Christ,” 146. My italics.

⁸See chap. 4 for a more detailed summary and evaluation of these arguments.

⁹Howard, “Romans 3:21-31 and the Inclusion of the Gentiles,” *HTR* 63 (1970): 230.

¹⁰Howard, “The Faith of Christ,” 213; cf. L. E. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 453.

that the objective genitive is poorly attested in ancient sources, both secular and Jewish. Therefore the objective genitive supporters must show why Paul was using the phrase in a way contrary to that of his contemporaries.¹¹ Robinson states that the “normal meaning” of πίστις in ordinary Greek is “fidelity” or “reliability” and not “faith” or “trust.”¹² All of these considerations are applied to the meaning of πίστις in Galatians. According to these scholars, the case for the subjective genitive interpretation is firmly supported by the general Greek context.

Evidence from Paul’s other letters. Two main arguments for πίστις Χριστοῦ being “the faithfulness of Christ” are gathered from Romans. First, that πίστις means “faithfulness” and not “belief” is supported by Romans 3:3, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (“the faithfulness of God”) and 4:16, πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (“faith of Abraham”). According to Longenecker, Romans 3:3 and 4:16 support the reading, “faith/faithfulness of Christ” in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22.¹³ Second, it is argued that πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to “the obedience of Christ” understood as his faithful death on the cross.¹⁴ The evidence for such a theological interpretation of πίστις is based on Romans 1:5; 5:19 and Philippians 2:8. Just as Paul says that justification comes through the obedience of Christ, he can say that justification comes through the faithfulness of Christ, meaning his obedience.¹⁵

¹¹Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith?,” 6.

¹²D. W. B. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’ – A New Testament Debate,” *RTR* 29 (1970): 76; cf. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 453.

¹³Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87. See also Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 324.

¹⁴Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87; Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 332; Martyn, *Galatians*, 251.

¹⁵For our evaluation of the foregoing arguments, see chap. 4.

Arguments from the Context of Galatians

The case for the subjective genitive interpretation from within Galatians focuses on specific verses that are found to hold the key to the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. We shall focus here on Hays' treatment of the use of "faith" in Galatians 3; Martyn and Matera's argument for πίστις as Christ's death on the cross, Hooker's argument based on the logic of Paul's flow of thought, Caneday's analysis based on Galatians 3:22-25, and finally the issue of redundancy.

Richard Hays. Hays argues for the "faithfulness of Christ" on three grounds: (1) the narrative substructure of Galatians 3:13-14 and 3:21-22, (2) the use of πίστις in the context of Galatians 3, and (3) the Habbakuk 2:4 quotation in 3:11. First, based on his understanding of the narrative structure of Galatians 3:13-14 and 3:21-22, Hays argues that in 3:13-14, πίστις plays the role of "Helper."¹⁶ In 3:22 he defines πίστις as "salvation-creating power" which enabled Jesus to carry out his "mandate" to communicate righteousness to believers.¹⁷ In this light, he concludes that Galatians 3:22 cannot be interpreted to mean that believers receive the promise by means of faith in Christ. Rather, it must mean that "Jesus Christ, by the power of faith, has performed an act which allows believers to receive the promise."¹⁸

¹⁶Hays, *Faith*, 105. In his words, "Christ's mission of delivering freedom, blessing, and the Spirit to humanity is achieved through the aid of πίστις; thus, πίστις fills the role of Helper" (ibid., 105).

¹⁷Ibid., 115. It is a bit confusing when Hays later on says that 3:22 shows πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as the source or ground of the promise that is given to believers (ibid., 148). Does this mean that Jesus is the giver of the promise and his faith is both the source of the gift as well as the means for Jesus to carry out his mandate? This argument needs to be explained.

¹⁸Ibid., 116.

Second, according to Hays, we cannot seek the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:15-21 since it is a summary of the thesis which is explained in chapters 3 and 4. Phrases such as ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in 2:16 are “formulaic summaries” with meanings to be sought in the exposition of the rest of the letter.¹⁹ He focuses on Paul’s usage of πίστις in chapter 3 and proposes two theses: (1) “In none of these passages does Paul’s emphasis lie upon the salvific efficacy of the individual activity of ‘believing.’” (2) “Nowhere in Galatians 3 does Paul speak of Jesus Christ as the object toward which human faith is to be directed.”²⁰ In Hays’ viewpoint πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot possibly be faith in Christ since there is no evidence that Paul emphasizes the human response of faith or speaks of Jesus as the object of faith.

Third, Hays’ finds the quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 in 3:11 to be decisive for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ. “The righteous one” is taken as a messianic title.²¹ The Messiah is the righteous one who shall live (be justified) by his faith.²² His faith becomes the means by which others may live (cf. 2:20).²³ After concluding that ὁ

¹⁹Ibid., 123. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ,’” 79, remarks that in Gal 2:16, we are introduced “to an already-formulated doctrine of justification in which *pistis Christou* has a thought-out place” (ibid., 79). Robinson fails to show how this is the case.

²⁰Hays, *Faith*, 124.

²¹Evidence is adduced from non-Pauline sources in support (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:1). Hays, *Faith*, 135; cf. D. A. Campbell, “The Meaning of πίστις and νομός in Paul: A Linguistic and Structural Perspective,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 100, who believes that Habakkuk 2:4 is “the peg on which everything hangs.”

²²According to Hays, the verb ζήσεται is used “as a virtual synonym of δικαιούται” (Hays, *Faith*, 133). In applying justification to Christ, Hays fails to explain what it means to say that Christ will be justified or will live by faith. This is a potential major weakness for his argument since the language of justification is regularly applied to believers and never to Christ by Paul.

²³See discussion of Hab 2:4 in Hays, *Faith*, 132-41. The view that ὁ δίκαιος is a messianic title is supported by Bligh, “Did Jesus Live by Faith?” 414-19; M. Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” 363-70.

δίκαιος is Christ and ἐκ πίστεως his faith, Hays sees every instance of ἐκ πίστεως in Galatians 3 is an allusion to Habakkuk 2:4.²⁴ In this sense, each instance of πίστις in chapter 3 refers not to the believer's justifying faith but to the faith of the Messiah.²⁵ For example, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (3:7, 9) are those "who 'live' on the basis of the faith of the Messiah, or perhaps those who share the faith of the Messiah."²⁶

Despite his arguments, Hays has not convincingly made the case against the objective genitive reading. His definition of πίστις as a salvation creating power which serves as an aid that enables Jesus to accomplish righteousness for believers comes from his view of the narrative structure of Galatians 3:13-14 and 3:21-22. Thus, the meaning of πίστις goes hand-in-hand with his method. The proof that Paul indeed applied this method and that his readers understood the text as Hays has proposed is lacking. Without his method, the case for πίστις being the faithfulness of Christ is weakened.²⁷

With reference to the use of πίστις in Galatians 3, Hays' proposed two theses are not sustainable in the context. Contrary to Hays, Paul does emphasize the human response of believing (see 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 14).²⁸ First he possibly speaks of the

²⁴Hays, *Faith*, 133 even suggests that ἐκ πίστεως in Gal 3 may be a "catchword" pointing to the full citation from Hab 2:4.

²⁵Hays, *Faith*, 138.

²⁶Ibid., 138. Campbell also finds Habakkuk 2:4 to be decisive for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. He interprets Paul's every use of ἐκ πίστεως in Galatians from the point of view of his interpretation of Hab 2:4. In his view, Hab 2:4 is the key to resolving the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ (Campbell, "The Meaning of πίστις and νομός," 102).

²⁷Hays admits that his analysis of the structure of the 3:21-22 would be wrong if 3:22 meant that believers receive the promise by placing their faith in Jesus as object. Thus, for his argument to work, πίστις Χριστοῦ must mean, "faith of Christ" (Hays, *Faith*, 116).

²⁸See our treatment of these verses later on in the chapter. Contra Hays, Williams, "Hearing of Faith," 88-89, argues that πίστις in 3:14 cannot be Christ's faith. It is the faith of Christians through which they receive the promise of the Spirit. Williams also takes πίστις in 3: 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 as the Christian belief (ibid., 89). Dunn finds Hays' denial of any reference to the human faith in Gal 3 to be "in danger of

human subjective faith in 3:14 and 3:26. Second, in 2:16b, Christ is the object of the verbal form of πίστις. Also, if we understand 2:16a as referring to Christ Jesus as the object of the noun πίστις (see discussion below), then it would be understandable why the object of faith is not stated with every occurrence of πίστις thereafter.²⁹ Hays' approach assumes that Paul's readers did not understand the meaning of πίστις in 2:16 until they read chapter 3. It is true that the development of Paul's argument in 3:1-29 helps clarify what he meant in 2:15-16 but it is hardly the case that without chapter 3 one cannot understand πίστις in 2:16.

J. L. Martyn and Frank Matera. Martyn and Matera argue that Galatians provides evidence for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as Christ's faithfulness which represents his death on the cross. According to Martyn, Galatians 2:21 supports the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 as Christ's faithfulness. In his judgment, 2:16 is an opening sentence in the first justification passage and 2:21 is the final sentence in this section. Here, the beginning (2:16) corresponds to the end (2:21). Thus, πίστις Χριστοῦ "faith of Christ" in 2:16 corresponds to Χριστὸς . . . ἀπέθανεν "Christ died" in 2:21. Therefore, the faith of Christ means the death of Christ.³⁰ Matera explains that in 2:20, the second phrase of the verse explains the first phrase. The phrase,

overkill" (J. G. D. Dunn, "Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ," in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002]: 256-60).

²⁹Eckstein makes a similar argument when he says that in 2:16, it is clear that justification is received only by faith and faith is specifically "faith in Christ." This means that in those instances where πίστις is used without a qualifying genitive, it is understood to be faith in Christ. Here Eckstein points to Gal 3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 23, 24, 25; 5:5, 6; Rom 3:28, 30; 5:1; 9:30; 10:6 (Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 18; cf. Gordon, "Problem at Galatia," 37).

³⁰Martyn, *Galatians*, 251-52.

“who loved me and gave himself for me” explains “faith of the Son of God” in 2:20 and “faith of Christ” in 2:16. In this way he makes a connection between πίστις and the death of Christ on the cross.³¹

Morna Hooker. Hooker argues from the logic of Paul’s flow of thought in Galatians 3:15-16 that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 is Christ’s faithfulness. According to Hooker, the argument in 3:15-16 “establishes that the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed.”³² Since σπέρμα (seed) is singular, it must refer to Christ. Thus, Christ is “the only true descendant of Abraham.”³³ Pointing to 3:7 where Paul says that the sons of Abraham have faith, she concludes, “It seems logically necessary to affirm that Christ also had faith.”³⁴ Christ, as Abraham’s seed also shares Abraham’s faith.³⁵ How do we know that Christ had faith? Hooker turns to 3:13-14 where we read that Christ “became a curse for us.” In these words, she sees a reference to Christ’s “obedient acceptance of death on a cross.”³⁶

³¹Matera, *Galatians*, 96.

³²Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 328.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., 329, 330. Hooker explains that the promise was made to Abraham and his seed (v. 16) but that it was made on the basis of Abraham’s faith and is fulfilled in Christ who also shares Abraham’s faith. Taking πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 as Christ’s faith, it would mean that the promise made to Abraham is now “ratified on the basis of Christ’s faith” (ibid.). This line of thought requires one to accept that Christ shared Abraham’s faith and had faith as the descendant of Abraham. She identifies the promise as justification (327), which would mean that Abraham received the promise (was justified) by his faith in God. She then draws the conclusion that we are justified on the basis of Christ’s faith. But if the comparison is between Abraham’s justification by his faith and our justification by faith, would not logic require that our justification be based on faith just as was Abraham’s?

³⁶Ibid., 331. Thus, 3:13-14 provides Hooker with a definition of Jesus’ faith as his death on the cross. Hooker’s argument requires one to accept that Jesus, as the true seed of Abraham, necessarily had faith and shared Abraham’s faith. It is unclear how Christ shared Abraham’s faith and how Abraham’s faith

Ardel B. Caneday. According to Caneday, Galatians 3:22 is decisive for the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. He begins with a theological definition of πίστις in relation to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “the faithfulness of Christ” which he links with the “obedience” theme in Paul (Rom 5:19).³⁷ According to Caneday, 3:23 holds the interpretive key to the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.³⁸ He points out that right after πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22, Paul speaks of the coming of faith. Faith is something that can be revealed, and points back to the “faith of Christ” just mentioned in 3:22. The coming of faith marks the end of the temporary function of the law (cf. 3:24).

Caneday argues that in the context of 3:22 Paul is concerned with redemptive history, and he uses redemptive-historical categories such as the relationship between the promise and the Mosaic law (with the promise taking priority). He finds significance in the temporal use of πίστις in verses 23-25 without a genitive modifier.³⁹ In his view, Paul has argued that the law functioned to lead us to Christ. Thus the reader expects in

is similar to or different from Christ’s faith. Are we to understand Abraham’s faith as his obedience to God on the basis of which he received the promise? This would imply that Abraham was justified by works and therefore contradicts Paul’s argument in Gal 3:1-9 and Rom 4:1-5. Hooker does not explain persuasively the relationship between Christ’s and Abraham’s faith. Dunn rejects Hooker’s argument that Jesus shared the faith of Abraham. Had it been so, according to Dunn, “Paul must surely have brought it out more clearly . . . by saying that Christ believed as Abraham believed” (Dunn, “Once More,” 260). Dunn continues, “In 3:26 in particular rather than the potentially confusing ‘You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,’ Paul could have said so much more clearly, ‘You are all sons of God in Christ Jesus who believed’” (ibid.). Dunn concludes that “the lack of a verbal equivalent to the noun phrase, ‘the faith of Christ,’ weakens Hooker’s case” (ibid.).

³⁷Caneday, “Galatians 3:22ff,” 10. He argues against appealing to 2:16 in defense of the objective genitive interpretation because it is Paul’s *propositio* with the meaning developed in 3:22 (ibid., 11-12). It appears that Caneday wants to read back from 3:22 to what πίστις Χριστοῦ means in 2:16. He writes that “within Galatians the issue cannot be settled by exegetical scrutiny of Galatians 2:16 alone; it must be determined by examining Galatians 3:22 within the context of Paul’s argument” (ibid., 12).

³⁸As he puts it, “Verse 23 seems to demand that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in verse 22 be understood as a subjective genitive” (ibid., 14; cf. Williams, “Again πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 438).

³⁹Caneday, Galatians 3:22ff,” 15.

verse 23 for Paul to say “When Christ came”⁴⁰ Thus, faith in verse 23 refers to the coming of Christ. In this case, Paul substitutes faith for Christ. In 3:24 the point is made even clearer. The law led to Christ = faith. Again in 3:25, faith = Christ.⁴¹

The issue of redundancy. One of the major arguments among subjective genitive supporters is that the objective genitive reading makes Paul redundant. Following the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, Paul adds καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν (“even we have believed in Christ Jesus” [2:16b]). Some take this phrase to be the evidence that by πίστις Χριστοῦ Paul meant, “the faithfulness of Christ.” It is argued that Paul clearly differentiates between the verb πιστεύω (“believe”) and the noun πίστις (“faith”) in 2:16. Since Christ is clearly the object of the verb ἐπιστεύσαμεν in verse 16b, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in the first part of the verse cannot be the object of πίστις.⁴² If the reference is to “faith in Christ” throughout verse 16, it would result in a redundancy.

Conclusion

The above summaries have shown the different approaches taken in making the case for the subjective genitive view of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22. Though on the surface these arguments appear to be strong and compelling, there are problems inherent in them. Supporters of the subjective genitive interpretation rely very

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid. See our discussion on 3:23 for interaction with Caneday.

⁴²Martyn, *Galatians*, 252; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 88. According to Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 435, Paul does draw a distinction between the human response of faith and the faith of Christ” at Gal 2:16. He argues that if at Gal 2:16 Paul intended to speak of faith in Christ, he would more likely have written ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως without the genitive Χριστοῦ. This would indicate the faith he just

much on evidence outside of Galatians (LXX, ancient sources, Romans and Philippians). The subjective genitive view would gain more strength if it were consistently made on the evidence of the context of Galatians.

There is also a failure to make a compelling case for the faithfulness of Christ being his obedience within the context of Galatians. It appears that the most important argument for the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians does not find support in Galatians itself. Longenecker does not even attempt to explain how it is that πίστις means “obedience” in Galatians. He simply states it as a fact. Based on the evidence from the LXX, Romans 3:3 and 4:16, he says,

In effect, then, Paul uses πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in his writings to signal the basis for the Christian gospel: that its objective basis is the *perfect response of obedience that Jesus rendered to God the Father, both actively in his life and passively in his death.*⁴³

While this argument is theologically sound, the proof is not there for understanding πίστις in the context of Galatians (an other Pauline epistles) as Christ’s death on the cross. We conclude that the case has not been effectively made for abandoning the traditional reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as faith in Christ. There are good reasons for maintaining the objective genitive position.

The Meaning of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Context of Galatians 2-3

Despite the arguments for the subjective genitive interpretation, there remain good reasons for retaining the traditional reading, “faith in Jesus Christ” in Galatians 2:16

referred to in the phrase “even we have believed.” The fact that he added the genitive modifier Χριστοῦ shows that Paul wanted to distinguish between our believing in Christ and the faith of Christ.

⁴³Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87. His italics.

and 3:22. There are contextual clues within the development of Paul's argument in Galatians 2 and 3 that support the reading "faith in Christ" for πίστις Χριστοῦ.

Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Context of Galatians 2

The truth of the gospel. At the heart of Paul's confrontation with Peter (Gal 2:11-14) is his concern to preserve the "truth of the gospel," ἡ ἀληθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2:5, 14) from compromise.⁴⁴ Peter and others (2:13) "were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (2:5, 14). In Paul's view (cf. 2:1-14) the true gospel excludes the requirement of circumcision (2:5) or any law practices that separate Jews and Gentiles or that require Gentiles to live like Jews (2:14).⁴⁵ Negatively defined, the truth of the gospel excludes any works of circumcision or dietary laws (2:5, 14a). In 2:16 Paul begins to explain what the truth of the gospel entails.⁴⁶ The true gospel teaches that justification is not by works of the law but by faith in/of Christ (2:16a), and that everyone who believes in Christ Jesus, Jew or Gentile, is justified (2:16b). According to Bruce, "The true gospel proclaimed that justification and the reception of the Spirit were gifts of God's grace, bestowed on all who believed in Jesus, Jews and Gentiles alike, regardless of legal

⁴⁴The expression ἡ ἀληθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου appears only in Gal 2:5 and 2:14. It is comparable to "the truth of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10), "the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col 1:5). It has the sense of "the Gospel in its integrity" (Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 107), "the truth contained in, and so belonging to the gospel" (Burton, *Galatians*, 86). Longenecker is helpful when he says that "the truth of the gospel" refers to "the true gospel proclaimed by Paul as opposed to the false gospel advocated by the Judaizers (cf. 1:6-9)— i.e., the gospel that has as its consequence Gentile freedom" (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 53).

⁴⁵Matera notes, "The truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for Gentile believers that does not require circumcision" (Matera, *Galatians*, 75).

⁴⁶Gal 2:15-16 is a long and complex sentence but as Schlier points out, the main point of the sentence is in v. 16b, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (Schlier, *Galater*, 88).

requirements.”⁴⁷ In other words, the “truth of the gospel” is “the central mystery that justification is offered to Jew and Gentile alike on the same terms: faith in Christ’s cross.”⁴⁸ Thus, the true gospel as proclaimed by Paul declares that Jews and Gentiles must believe in Christ Jesus in order to be justified (2:16b). Therefore works of the law are excluded since such works would undermine the truth of the gospel (2:5, 14). On the contrary, it is “faith” that results in justification (2:16; 3:2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 22, 24).⁴⁹

From Paul’s explanation of the truth of the gospel two things are made clear: (1) works of the law are excluded (2:16a, b) and (2) believing in Christ Jesus results in justification (2:16b). Implied in these two points is the truth that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to be justified. It appears that in the context of 2:16, the readers are aware that works of the law are excluded in the true gospel since what is required is faith in Christ Jesus (2:16b). This suggests that when the audience heard that justification takes place διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“through faith in Christ” or “through the faithfulness of Christ”) they understood them in light of what was already explicit, one does not work but believes in Jesus Christ justification (2:16b).⁵⁰ This does not take away from the important role of the death of Christ for our redemption since Paul has already established it in 1:4. Faith as the instrument for justification, contrary to being a work, rests on the truth that Christ died on the cross for our redemption (1:3-5).

⁴⁷Cf. (Bruce, *Galatians*, 115).

⁴⁸Bligh, *Galatians*, 189.

⁴⁹Rohde notes that in spite of the advantages of the Jews their only hope for righteousness before God is through faith in Christ (Rohde, *Galater*, 110).

⁵⁰Silva comments, “Ambiguous grammatical forms should be interpreted in the light of unambiguous ones” (Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary [Chicago: Moody Press, 1988], 187). If we accept Silva’s insight, then we can assume that Paul’s audience understood πίστις Χριστοῦ in light of what was unambiguous in context.

Paul and Peter's common knowledge about justification (2:16). Paul

makes his case to Peter by pointing to what both of them hold in common.

We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but [ἐὶν μὴ⁵¹] through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.⁵²

Paul's main point in verses 15-16 is "we, Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles, have believed in Christ Jesus (v. 16b).⁵³ This is grounded on their common knowledge about justification. "Because we know [εἶδοτες]⁵⁴ that a man is not justified

⁵¹ἐὶν μὴ is adversative and sets faith and works of the law as mutually exclusive. Against Dunn, who argues that ἐὶν μὴ is exceptive. It does not simply mean "but" but refers to "but only." By this he concludes that here "works of the law and faith in Jesus Christ are not necessarily being posed . . . as mutually exclusive antithesis" (Dunn, *Galatians*, 137).

⁵²In this verse (1) "Jews by nature" refers to Jews by birth (Schlier, *Galater*, 88; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 98; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 77; Matera, *Galatians*, 92). (2) "Sinners from among the Gentiles" is understood as a general reference to Gentiles (see Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 98; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 77 n. 7; Martyn, *Galatians*, 248). (3) "A man" is indefinite and simply means "a person," "someone," "anyone," etc. (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 83; cf. 1:10, 11, 12; 2:6; 3:15; 5:3; 6:1, 7; cf. Rom 3:28). (4) "Justify" is used here for the first time in Galatians and it is understood differently by scholars. The options include both forensic and ethical (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 84), only forensic (Burton, *Galatians*, 119; cf. George, *Galatians*, 191-90 [justification is by imputation]; Matera, *Galatians*, 93; Fung, *Galatians*, 113). We take the view that "justify" in Gal 2:16 is forensic, a declaration to be in the right with God. See discussion in chap. 5. (5) We understand "works of the law" to be works demanded by the law or works done in obedience to the law (cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 116; Bruce, *Galatians*, 137; Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament*, 55; Viard, *Galates*, 54; Schreiner, "'Works of the Law' in Paul," 244). Contra Dunn who understands "works of the law" to be identity markers or "badges" which distinguished the Jews from Gentiles (Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 194; cf. Garlington, "Role Reversal and Paul's Use of Scripture in Galatians 3:10-13," 89). For a response to why Dunn's view is not the correct reading, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 51-59; idem, "'Works of the Law' in Paul," 225-31; Silva, "Faith vs. Works," forthcoming. It is not necessary to go into details here on the different understandings of the works of the law since it does not impact the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Dunn and Barclay who argue for works of the law being boundary markers also argue for πίστις Χριστοῦ as faith in Christ (Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 32-35). Matera who takes works of the law as legalism argues for πίστις Χριστοῦ being the faithfulness of Christ (Matera, *Galatians*, 100).

⁵³Cf. Schlier, *Galater*, 88; Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 12. In this verse, "we," ἡμεῖς (v. 15) is repeated in v. 16 "even we," καὶ ἡμεῖς for emphasis. The referent, in the context of the Antioch incident, is Paul and Peter. It is possible that Paul includes all Jewish Christians as well (Matera, *Galatians*, 92; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 83; Martyn, *Galatians*, 248; Rohde, *Galater*, 110).

⁵⁴Taking εἶδοτες as a causal participle (cf. Gerhard Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians*, trans. David Green [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 122), εἶδοτες could also be

by the works of the law [ἔργων νόμου] but through faith in Jesus Christ” (2:16a). In other words, justification before God does not rest on human achievements. But what takes the place of the works of the law? Paul answers, “believe in Christ Jesus” (v. 16b).⁵⁵

What is the source of this common knowledge and what help does it provide in deciding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ? Martyn identifies the source of this shared knowledge as Romans 3:25; 4:25; and 1 Corinthians 6:11. He argues that justification, according to this tradition, is an act of God in Christ to set things right that have gone wrong. Therefore, πίστις Χριστοῦ (faithfulness of Christ) captures this act of God on our behalf.⁵⁶ Bligh seeks the source of this knowledge by looking at the biographical information on Peter and Paul’s conversion.⁵⁷

It may not be necessary to look far for the source of this common knowledge. In the context of 2:16, the knowledge that justification is by faith, not by works of the law, appears to be based on (1) the Christian experience of justification, “even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law” (v. 16b) and (2) the quotation from Psalm 143:2, “since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (v. 16c). Peter and Paul’s experience (2:16b) shows that justification is by faith and not by works of the law.⁵⁸ They have believed in Christ

taken as concessive (Burton, *Galatians*, 119; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 98) or circumstantial or as a coordinate verb (thus, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 83).

⁵⁵Schlier, *Galater*, 92. Schlier sees a close link between human faith and justification. He points to Rom 3:26, 28, 30; 4:3, 24; 5:1; Gal 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4.

⁵⁶Martyn, *Galatians*, 265.

⁵⁷Bligh, *Galatians*, 197-98.

⁵⁸Cf. Ebeling, *Truth of the Gospel*, 124.

Jesus for justification “because” (ὅτι) they know that “from the works of the law no flesh will be justified” (2:16c; cf. Rom 3:20). It is probable that Psalm 143:2⁵⁹ provides Paul with the knowledge that justification is not by works of the law.⁶⁰ It is also possible that the example of Abraham’s justification by faith (3:6; cf. Gen 15:6), the testimony of Scripture that God would justify the Gentiles by faith (3:8; cf. Gen 12:3), and the quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 (3:11) are other sources for Paul and Peter’s common knowledge.⁶¹

From their own experience and the evidence from Psalm 143:2, Paul and Peter know that works will not commend anyone to God. What is required in justification is faith in Christ Jesus (2:16b), not works. This being the case, the emphasis falls on the faith versus works antithesis. In none of these possible sources of Paul and Peter’s knowledge do we have an explicit reference to the πίστις of Christ in relation to justification. Not even Habakkuk 2:4 makes the case for πίστις being the “faithfulness of Christ” (see below). In light of this evidence, it appears that by πίστις Χριστοῦ Paul means, “faith in Christ.”

Faith in Christ versus works of the law. Paul draws a contrast between “works of the law” and “faith” twice in 2:16. Right at the start of his defense of the truth of the gospel, he states emphatically that a person (ἄνθρωπος [Jew or Gentile]) is not

⁵⁹For a discussion on the legitimacy of Paul’s use of this Ps 143:2 in Gal 2:16c, see Bligh, *Galatians*, 198.

⁶⁰Bligh objects to this understanding and argues that Ps 143:2 is added just as an aside in Paul’s argument to remind his readers that justification by faith is not something new (Bligh, *Galatians*, 198). This is possible though ὅτι most likely grounds the act of believing in Christ for justification (v. 16b).

⁶¹We will return to these texts later.

justified by “works of the law” (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) “but” (ἐάν μὴ) through “faith in Jesus Christ” (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). He makes the point again the second time by saying that “no flesh” (πᾶσα σὰρξ [cf. Ps 143:2]) will be justified by works of the law. In other words, a person’s only hope for a right standing before God is διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.⁶² But what is meant by these two phrases, πίστις Χριστοῦ, and ἔργα νόμου? It appears that Paul pits faith in Christ against works of the law in 2:16. According to Schlier, it is clear that ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ and νόμος and Χριστός correspond. As such, the relationship of faith to Christ Jesus is comparable to the relationship of works to law.⁶³ Schlier’s point appears to be that “works of the law” means “doing the law” and comparatively, “faith of Christ” means “believing Christ Jesus.”⁶⁴ Silva also points out the contrast between works of the law and faith in Christ. He writes, “The real issue, however, is not whether Paul contrasts πίστις and ἔργα νόμου—that he does so is simply incontrovertible—but rather whether we have properly understood the true nature of that contrast.”⁶⁵ In other words, is he contrasting two human actions, works done in obedience to the law and faith as belief in Christ or is he contrasting our works and Christ’s faithfulness?⁶⁶

⁶²The preposition διὰ indicates that faith is the means of justification for mankind (Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 170; cf. Bonnard, *Galates*, 54).

⁶³Schlier, *Galater*, 93.

⁶⁴Cf. Koperski, *Pistis Christou* in Phil 3:9,” 213. Contra Cosgrove, *Cross and the Spirit*, 134. He argues that the works of the law are not a person’s particular works but “the works of the law.” This is contrasted not with a person’s own particular faith but “the faith of Jesus Christ.”

⁶⁵Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming.

⁶⁶Betz, *Galatians*, 116; Bruce, *Galatians*, 137.

Some, in making their case for the πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faithfulness of Christ, argue that Paul contrasts the human acts of works and Christ’s faithfulness.⁶⁷ Wallis asks, “Upon what, then, does Paul encourage the Galatians to base their standing before God? Belief in Christ or works of the law? Or the more fundamental reality of the faith of Christ himself . . . ?”⁶⁸ Martyn notes that Paul draws a distinction between “rectification by Law observance and rectification by the deed of God in Christ.” Christ’s faithfulness is the expression Paul uses for this act of God.⁶⁹ Matera explains that Paul is not contrasting between “a person’s legal works and a person’s faith in Christ” since both are human actions. Rather, “the more powerful contrast is between a person’s legal works and *the work* of Christ, i.e., Christ’s faithfulness in handing himself over for our sins (1:4); . . . in accepting the curse of the cross (3:13); . . . in fulfilling the mission entrusted to him by the Father (4:4-5).”⁷⁰

Against the argument of these scholars (that in 2:16 the contrast is between human works and Christ’s faithfulness), it is better to see here a contrast between two human activities, faith versus works. The structure of 2:16 strongly supports this position. Even if πίστις Χριστοῦ were the faithfulness of Christ contrasted with works of the law, a contrast between two human actions (works of the law versus faith) is still

⁶⁷Taylor, “The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 75; Martyn, *Galatians*, 271; cf. Keck, “‘Jesus’ in Romans,” 454; Dunnill, “Saved by Whose Faith,” 17.

⁶⁸Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 106. Wallis’ question implies that the objective genitive reading argues that Paul was encouraging the Galatians to see their faith (as opposed to the work of Christ on the cross) as the basis for their justification before God. Cranfield rightly criticizes Wallis by pointing out that he (Wallis) has misunderstood the proponents of the objective genitive interpretation by assuming that they argue for faith as a meritorious work (Cranfield, *On Romans*, 92).

⁶⁹Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

⁷⁰Matera, *Galatians*, 100. His italics. Cf. Bligh, *Galatians*, 204.

present in 2:16. Commenting on the only finite verb in 2:16, ἐπιστεύσαμεν, “We have believed,” Silva rightly affirms that “one can hardly deny that the individual’s believing response plays a central role in this statement.”⁷¹ When Paul says that “we have believed in Christ Jesus” in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law (2:16), it is understood that the verb ἐπιστεύσαμεν (which parallels πίστις) contrasts works of the law. Therefore, whatever the contrast exists between “works of the law” and πίστις Χριστοῦ also exists between “works of the law” and ἐπιστεύσαμεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. That this contrast exists is “beyond controversy.”⁷²

Based on the structure of 2:16, there is a strong case for ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ being a contrast between two human actions, a person’s works versus faith in Christ.⁷³ The emphasis is clearly on the human acts of law observance versus believing. As Silva comments,

No manner of exegetical subtlety can excise the act of believing from the logical structure of Paul’s argumentation. It follows that (to put it in the mildest form) *some kind of contrast between “works of law” and the individual’s response of faith is latent at all stages of the discussion.*⁷⁴

In the end, the alternative to seeking justification by means of the law is not to

⁷¹Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming.

⁷²See Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming. This contrast between human works vs. faith continues in chap. 3. See discussion below. Additional support for the view advanced here comes from the numerous examples in Paul where works and faith, being two human actions, are contrasted. This is often the case in context where Paul is dealing with matters of righteousness of God or justification (Rom 3:28; 4:2-3, 5; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; Phil 3:9). We have discussed these texts in chap. 5.

⁷³To argue that the contrast is between works of the law and Christ’s faithfulness creates a problem. It would be suggesting that the opponents, and to some extent Peter, were advocating works in place of Christ’s death for our justification. The issue in Galatians does not seem to be that there was any denying of the atoning death of Christ. Rather, the issue seems to be that Paul’s opponents were advocating observance of the law in justification. Paul insists that the true gospel does not require acts done in obedience to the law. What the gospel calls for is faith.

⁷⁴Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming. His italics.

acknowledge Christ's faithfulness as demonstrated in his death on the cross (though this is true and is included in the content of faith), but to put one's trust in Christ's atoning work for justification. One believes in Christ for justification. This is the only hope of believers.

Even we have believed in Christ Jesus. The relation of καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν “even we have believed in Christ Jesus” (2:16b) to πίστις Χριστοῦ (2:16a) is disputed.⁷⁵ We have already pointed out that some take this phrase to be the evidence that by πίστις Χριστοῦ Paul meant, “the faithfulness of Christ”; otherwise a redundancy is created. Against this interpretation, the objective genitive supporters understand καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν as synonymous with διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “through faith in Jesus Christ.”⁷⁶ In this case, the addition of the phrase explains what is meant by πίστις Χριστοῦ in the earlier part of the verse. It shows that by πίστις Χριστοῦ, Paul meant, “faith in Christ.”⁷⁷ What is the evidence for this understanding?

The structure of verses 15-16 helps in understanding how “even we have believed in Christ Jesus” functions in the verse. The main clause of the verse is “We, [who are] by nature Jews and not sinners from among the Gentiles; even we have

⁷⁵This verse disproves Williams argument that Paul “was not accustomed to thinking of Christ as the ‘object’ of faith” (Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 434).

⁷⁶See Burton, *Galatians*, 123; Fung, *Galatians*, 117; Schlier, *Galater*, 92.

⁷⁷So Schlier, *Galater*, 92. Similarly Eckstein who argues that the main clause εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν in v. 16b unambiguously explains the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in v. 16a and c as objective genitive construction (Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 18). So too Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 170. Dunn understands Paul in 2:16b to be saying in effect, “We do not simply know that justification is by faith in Christ as a matter of principle; we have actually so believed; the principle has been tried and proven in our own experience” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 139).

believed in Christ Jesus” (2:15, 16b).⁷⁸ The purpose for this act of believing in Christ Jesus is stated in the ἵνα clause in verse 16b “in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.” There are two reasons for the necessity of faith in Christ for justification. First, it is because of the knowledge that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Christ. Therefore one must believe in order to be justified. Second, Scripture (Ps 143:2) makes it clear that “by the works of the law no flesh [πᾶσα σαρκί] will be justified” (2:16c; cf. Rom 3:20). Thus the whole sentence, believing in Christ Jesus for the purpose of justification, is grounded on the common knowledge about justification held by Paul and Peter and on the testimony of Scripture.

We note the following from the structure of verses 15-16: (1) there is indeed a redundancy but it serves a purpose. In an oral letter, redundancy could be a tool for emphasis. Paul’s point is that he and Peter have believed in Christ Jesus for justification. The first instance of πίστις Χριστοῦ in verse 16a indicates why faith in Christ Jesus is necessary for justification. Knowledge, “we know that . . .” precedes the action “even we have believed.” In this view, verse 16b explains what is meant by πίστις Χριστοῦ in verse 16a. According to Silva,

Immediately after the very first mention of the phrase πίστις Ἰ.Χ., Paul in effect exegetes the construction by saying εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἔπιστεύσαμεν. It is almost as though the apostle sensed the possibility of a misunderstanding and thus proceeded to state the matter in unambiguous terms!⁷⁹

With this understanding, the argument that the objective genitive interpretation makes Paul guilty of redundancy is accurate. He is redundant but the redundancy clarifies his

⁷⁸My translation. Ebeling also makes this observation (Ebeling, *Truth of the Gospel*, 122).

⁷⁹Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming.

meaning in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. Those who argue this way do not give reasons why the second clause, “we have believed in Christ Jesus” could not have been intended to shed light on the meaning of the first clause “through faith of Christ.”⁸⁰ It is likely that Paul, not wanting to be misunderstood by the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, explains it by means of the phrase, “we have believed in Christ Jesus.” Silva is probably correct in his assessment that,

Paul, after first using this indeterminate genitival construction, immediately resolves the ambiguity with the explicit ἐπιστεύσαμεν, thus indicating to the reader how the phrase is to be understood throughout the rest of the argument.⁸¹

Supporters of the subjective genitive reading fail to explain why Paul chose an ambiguous phrase to state a key concept in his argument on justification and never explained it for his readers and listeners. This is unlikely.⁸²

In light of the preceding analysis of the function of καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν in 2:16, we conclude that the redundancy argument is inconclusive.⁸³

⁸⁰Silva has pointed out that redundancy in itself is not a negative thing in communication. See Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantic*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 154. The argument based on redundancy fails to take into account that sometimes repetition may be used for emphasis (Koperski, “*Pistis Christou* in Phil 3:9,” 207 n. 53).

⁸¹Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming.

⁸²As Dunn notes, to take πίστις as the faithfulness of Christ in 2:16 would require “a great deal of unpacking, which Paul never provides” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 138-39).

⁸³Paul repeats the same expressions throughout v. 16 and this does not appear to be of concern for those who argue against the objective interpretation on the basis of redundancy. For example, in v. 16, “works of the law” is repeated three times (v. 16a,c,d). “Through faith in Christ” also appears three times (v. 16a,b,c) and the verb “justify” is used three times (v. 16a,c,d) (cf. Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 12). The repetitions emphasize Paul’s point that righteousness does not come by works of the law but through faith in Christ (see Ebeling, *Truth of the Gospel*, 123). Wallis adds that if the two occurrences of πίστις in v. 16 as well as the ἐπιστεύσαμεν refer to the faith of believers, “the emphasis within this key verse for Paul’s soteriology falls rather awkwardly upon the believer rather than Christ” (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 105). The fact of the matter is that Paul does emphasize the role of the human believer in the context of 2:16, but it does not follow from this that the centrality of Christ is minimized. Even with πίστις

Faith in the Son of God (2:20). In 2:15-16, Paul addresses matters on which there is agreement. In 2:17-20, he turns to matter of disagreement.⁸⁴ “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners,⁸⁵ is Christ then a minister of sin?”⁸⁶ Paul answers this with an emphatic μή γένοιτο, “may it never be!” On the contrary, if Paul seeks to rebuild what he once destroyed, then he makes himself a transgressor (v. 18).⁸⁷ But he knows he cannot rebuild what was destroyed because he has died to the law in order that he might live to God (v. 19).

In verse 20 Paul explains the statement in verse 19 that he has died to the law in order that he might live to God. He writes,

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by faith in/of the Son of God* (πίστει . . . τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ), who loved me and gave himself up for me.

As can be imagined, the meaning of the phrase πίστει . . . τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ

Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ, there is still a strong emphasis on the believer’s faith in Gal 2:16. For a response to Wallis, see Cranfield, *On Romans*, 92.

⁸⁴Longenecker, *Galatians*, 88; George, *Galatians*, 196. The connection between 2:17 and 2:15-16 is not exactly clear. Yet, one can see a connection in the following examples: (1) the statement, “seeking to be justified in Christ” (v. 17a) corresponds to “justified by faith in Christ” (2:16). (2) “We ourselves,” αὐτοὶ goes back to “we,” ἡμεῖς in 2:15 and 16, and (3) “Sinners,” ἁμαρτωλοὶ (2:17) goes back to “sinners from among the Gentiles” (2:15).

⁸⁵“Found to be sinners” recalls “sinners from among the Gentiles (v. 15). In v. 14, it is implied that the gospel allows for Jews and Gentiles to eat together. But in so doing, it appears, from the perspective of the law, that they are sinners (Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 79. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 129-30; Matera, *Galatians*, 95; George, *Galatians*, 196). Burton explains “found to be sinners” thus, “That they had become sinners by seeking to be justified in Christ, Paul would admit in the sense that they had become violators of law, but deny what the judaisers would affirm, that this was equivalent to saying that they had become actual sinners, wrongdoers, violator of God’s will” (Burton, *Galatians*, 125).

⁸⁶“Minister of sin” in the sense that rejection of the law for justification and reliance on Christ by faith would mean that Christ is responsible for sin (a minister of sin) since faith in Christ means that one lives like Gentiles who are sinners by being outside of the law (cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 89).

⁸⁷Taking “rebuild” as referring to a return to the practices of the law (so Bonnard, *Galates*, 56).

θεοῦ is debated as well. Is it “faith in the Son of God” or “the faithfulness of the Son of God?” Though both readings are possible since the genitival construction could go either way, context supports the reading, “faith in the Son of God.”⁸⁸

Attempts to interpret πίστει . . . τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ as the “faithfulness of the Son of God,” are not persuasive. Longenecker, though he argues for πίστις Χριστοῦ as faithfulness of Christ (2:16), rightly understands ἐν πίστει . . . τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ as “faith in the Son of God.” Yet, he qualifies it by saying that “The Christian life is a life lived ‘by faith.’ Its basis is “the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ (διὰ/ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, v. 16); its response is that of a commitment of belief (καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, v. 16).⁸⁹ Without arguing against the truth of the statement that the basis of the Christian life is the faithfulness of Christ (though this is not a Pauline expression), it remains to be shown that this concept is communicated by the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Longenecker, to find room for the faithfulness of Christ, puts forth, surprisingly, the idea that in 2:20, “the object of the Christian faith is here expressed by the dative article τῆ followed by a Christological title in the genitive.”⁹⁰ If we follow this line of thought, the article τῆ would be the object of ἐν πίστει.⁹¹ Thus, Paul would be saying that “I live by faith in the faithfulness of the Son of God.” This is simply not the case since the antecedent of τῆ is the πίστις just mentioned and

⁸⁸Schlier, *Galater*, 102-103; Rohde, *Galater*, 117 and n. 85; Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 18.

⁸⁹Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93-94.

⁹⁰Ibid., 94.

⁹¹He makes the comment that “the object of Christian faith is here expressed by the dative article τῆ followed by a Christological title in the genitive” (ibid., 94).

Longenecker himself agrees that it is Paul's personal faith by which he lives his life.

Longenecker's argument is grammatically impossible.

Wallis writes, "Paul's . . . life is now enabled by the faith of the son of God, whose love for him was epitomized in sacrificial death. Further, given the intimacy of the language (ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐμοὶ Χριστός), it would be difficult to envisage how Paul's response of faith could be meaningfully distinguished from that of the son of God who dwells within him."⁹² Does Wallis really mean that there is no distinction between our faith and the faith of Christ? In his view, for Paul to believe is the same as Christ believing. This cannot be sustained in Paul's writings.⁹³

Even some scholars who make a case for the subjective genitive view in 2:16, agree that 2:20 is an example of πίστις with an objective genitive.⁹⁴ Incidentally, they weaken their own position in 2:16 since these are similar constructions. It seems that "faith in the Son of God" in 2:20 is a reasonable translation of πίστει . . . τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.⁹⁵ Paul explains that the life he now lives to God (2:19) is a life of faith, a life characterized by trust in the Son of God (2:20). Thus one is not only justified by faith in Christ. Life itself is lived by faith in him.⁹⁶

Conclusion from context of chapter 2

From the context of chapter 2 we have laid out reasons that argue for the

⁹²Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 116.

⁹³See Cranfield, *On Romans*, 92-93 for a more detailed response to Wallis on this point.

⁹⁴See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93; Bligh, *Galatians*, 215.

⁹⁵Thus, Dunn, *Galatians*, 146; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93; Bligh, *Galatians*, 215.

⁹⁶Cf. George, *Galatians*, 201; Bligh, *Galatians*, 216.

traditional reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ.” It has been shown that (1) Paul is concerned to preserve the truth of the gospel which excludes any notion of reliance on the law for justification. The gospel calls for faith in Christ Jesus (2:16b). (2) The source of Paul and Peter’s shared knowledge on justification shows that the emphasis is on the response of faith in justification. The possible sources for this knowledge do not include a reference to the faithfulness of Christ. (3) The contrast between faith and works of the law is a contrast between two human actions. One does not work but believes in order to be justified. The argument that the contrast is between our works and the faithfulness of Christ lacks support in Galatians and other Pauline letters. (4) Following πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16a is the phrase “even we have believed in Christ Jesus.” This is the main clause in the structure of 2:15-16. It helps explain the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase by specifying the object of faith. (5) The phrase “faith in the Son of God” in 2:20 furthers the case for the objective genitive interpretation. Attempts to explain this phrase as a subjective genitive construction are weak and stretched.

Overall, the emphasis in 2:15-21 clearly falls on the human response of faith in contrast to works of the law. There is nothing in 2:15-21 to suggest that πίστις has the meaning “faithfulness,” understood as “obedience” which is at the same time a reference to Christ’s atoning death on the cross. Thus, the attempts to make the case for πίστις as the death of Christ on the cross from within Galatians are very weak.⁹⁷

⁹⁷The arguments of Martyn and Matera have already been summarized. The structure proposed by Martyn where 2:16 and 2:21 form an inclusio is not evident since different terms are used. No other scholar that we know of supports this understanding of the structure of 2:16-21. Even if one accepts Martyn’s structural analysis, it remains to be shown that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 is equivalent to Χριστός . . . ἀπέθανεν in v. 21. Matera’s understanding of πίστις in v. 20 to be a reference to the death of Christ such that the second part of the verse “who loved me and gave himself up for me” explains the “faith of the Son of God” is not grammatically persuasive (Matera, *Galatians*, 96). The participial phrase τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός “who loved me . . .” does not explain faith but gives more information on the Son of God.

Resorting to evidence from contexts other than Galatians in support of πίστις as Christ's faithfulness is suspect and even then, there is no clear parallel outside Galatians that portrays Jesus as faithful. One would expect that Paul intended to be understood from what he says in Galatians. Can more be said from the broader context of chapter 3 in support of the position promoted here? We think so. In fact, as Paul's argument picks up steam in chapter 3, the case for the objective genitive interpretation becomes even stronger.

Πίστις in the Context of Galatians 3

Between Galatians 3:1 and 3:29, πίστις occurs 14 times (3:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23 [twice], 24, 25, 26). Once, it is used with a genitive modifier, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22). The arguments made for πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 also help in the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.⁹⁸ Still, the way that Paul uses πίστις in chapter 3 provides us with further evidence supporting or challenging the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 and 3:22. Hays argues that in chapter 3, Paul does not emphasize “the salvific efficacy of the individual activity of ‘believing’” and that Paul does not speak of “Jesus Christ as the object toward which human faith is to be directed.”⁹⁹ He goes on to argue against any reference to the human response of faith in Galatians 3 and states that πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot possibly be “faith in Christ.” Contrary to Hays' observations, πίστις is emphasized in Galatians 3 as the means by

This renders Matera's argument exegetically improbable. It seems that both Martyn and Matera lack strong evidence from Galatians for interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as referring to Christ's death on the cross.

⁹⁸There is no reason to think that Paul uses the phrase with different meanings in 2:16 and 3:22.

⁹⁹Hays, *Faith*, 124. See earlier for a summary Hays' argument.

which one receives the Spirit/the promise/justification (3:2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 22, 24). It is also most probable that Paul intends for πίστις in chapter 3 to be understood in light of his earlier use of the word in the preceding context (2:16-21). When approached this way, a different picture from Hays' begins to emerge. We propose that the use of πίστις in Galatians 3 is consistent with how it is used in 2:16-21.

The hearing of faith (3:2, 5). In Galatians 3:1-5, Paul addresses the Galatians directly for the first time since 1:13. He appeals to their personal experience and conversion as he continues to make the case for justification by faith apart from works of the law (2:15-16).¹⁰⁰ Their own experience shows that justification occurred not by works of the law but by faith.¹⁰¹ The genitive phrase ἀκοῆς πίστεως, “hearing of faith” (3:2, 5) is ambiguous and creates interpretive difficulties.¹⁰² Lexically, ἀκοή in the active sense means “act of hearing” versus the passive sense of “that which is heard, report.” Πίστις could also mean “Christian teaching”¹⁰³ thus adding to the interpretive difficulties of “the hearing of faith.” Such ambiguity has resulted in different interpretations of ἀκοῆς πίστεως.¹⁰⁴ It is not necessary to analyze these different

¹⁰⁰Burton, *Galatians*, 142; Dunn, *Galatians*, 151; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 83; George, *Galatians*, 205.

¹⁰¹Burton, *Galatians*, 142. In 3:2-5 Paul continues his argument on justification by faith. Here, the reception of the Spirit and justification “mutually interpret one another” (Schreiner, “Works of the Law in Paul,” 218 n. 4; cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 179; S. K. Williams, “Justification and the Spirit in Galatians,” *JSNT* 29 (1987): 97.

¹⁰²This topic is treated in detail by Williams, “The Hearing of Faith: Ἀκοή Πίστεως in Galatians 3,” *NTStud* 35 (1989): 82-93; Hays, *Faith*, 125-28; Rohde, *Galater*, 130-32, 134-35.

¹⁰³Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming; Hays, *Faith*, 125.

¹⁰⁴Hays lays out the four most likely possibilities. Hearing with faith, hearing the gospel, the message that enables faith, and the gospel message (for detailed discussion of these possibilities, see Hays, *Faith*, 125-28).

possible meanings here. What is notable is that even scholars who interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ to mean Christ's faithfulness, agree that in 3:2, 5 πίστις is the human act of trust.¹⁰⁵ For example, Williams writes that "Πίστις in verses 2 and 5, πιστεύειν in verse 6, πίστις in verses 7, 8 and 9, and πιστός in verse 9 all refer to the same thing: trusting acceptance of God's word and obedient compliance with the divine purpose it expresses."¹⁰⁶ Longenecker argues that πίστις does not have "Jesus Christ as its referent (as in 2:16)." He translates ἀκοῆς πίστεως as "believing what you heard."¹⁰⁷ As was the case in his discussion of 2:20, Longenecker qualifies this interpretation by saying that the Galatians believed the message that was focused on the "faith/faithfulness of Christ."¹⁰⁸ If this is meant to say that the gospel focuses on the death of Christ, one cannot refute it. But the case remains to be made that the gospel focused on πίστις as Christ's obedient death on the cross. Martyn understands ἀκοῆς πίστεως as "the proclamation that has the power to elicit faith."¹⁰⁹ Thus, in Martyn's view, πίστις is the believer's act of trust brought about by the gospel.

These scholars rightly understand that the human act of believing is in view in 3:2 and 5.¹¹⁰ In our judgment, this admission weakens the "faithfulness of Christ"

¹⁰⁵With the exception of Matera who believes that "the hearing of faith" is "hearing the message of faith" or hearing the message about the faith of Christ (Matera, *Galatians*, 116).

¹⁰⁶Williams, "Hearing of Faith," 87. Against Hays who maintains that πίστις in vv. 7, 8, 9 does not refer to believers who share the blessing of Abraham by believing like Abraham did. Rather, they share in the blessing because they participate in Christ who was faithful (Hays, *Faith*, 171-72).

¹⁰⁷Longenecker, *Galatians*, 103.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Martyn, *Galatians*, 281 and 286-88.

¹¹⁰Contra Hays who maintain that Paul does not make reference to the believer's faith in Gal 3 (Hays, *Faith*, 124).

arguments since it fails to explain why Paul would switch the referents to πίστις while still arguing for justification by faith. Silva rightly comments that taking ἀκοῆς πίστεως as “the message about Christ’s faithful act of giving his life” would be more consistent with the subjective genitive interpretation, but he says this is hardly sustainable.¹¹¹

The antithesis between “works of the law,” and “hearing of faith” (3:2, 5) recalls 2:16 where Paul contrasted “works of the law” with “faith in Christ.” It was argued then that this is a contrast between two human actions.¹¹² Longenecker, contrary to his argument in 2:16, takes “works of the law” and “hearing of faith” as two actions on the part of the Galatians. He notes that Paul’s argument “has to do with the basis of their reception of the Spirit, whether on the basis of ἔργων νόμου (‘works of the law’) or on the basis of ἀκοῆς πίστεως (‘believing what you heard’).”¹¹³ According to Silva, denying that the contrast is between works and belief “comes to grief at verse 3, which provides an undeniable parallel.” In this parallel, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου corresponds to σαρκί ἐπιτελεῖσθε and ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως corresponds to ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι.¹¹⁴ Two human acts are clearly contrasted in verse 3. Such is also the case in verses 2, 5. This contrast places the emphasis on faith as the means of receiving the Spirit.¹¹⁵ Based on the faith versus works contrast, we take πίστις as belief. The “hearing of faith” becomes,

¹¹¹Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming, n. 47.

¹¹²Cf. Williams, “Hearing of Faith,” 86; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 135.

¹¹³Longenecker, *Galatians*, 102. Longenecker had rejected this antithesis earlier in his discussion on 2:16, seeing there instead a contrast between the law and Christ Jesus (*ibid.*, 185). This creates an inconsistency in his argument.

¹¹⁴Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming.

¹¹⁵Contra Hays, *Faith*, 132 who sees the emphasis to be on the message. This misses the point of the text where Paul is dealing with the means of receiving the Spirit. In Hays’ view, it is not clear how the message becomes the means for receiving the Spirit.

“believing what is heard.” Following this (3:6-14) are two arguments from Scripture that provide additional support for our understanding of πίστις in 3:2, 5, and 2:16 as the faith of believers.¹¹⁶

The faith of Abraham (3:6-9). The key issue in 3:1-5 is that the Galatians knew from their own experience that the receiving of the Spirit and the ongoing work of God in their lives was not dependent on the works of the law but on the “hearing of faith.”¹¹⁷ In developing his argument further (3:6-9), Paul makes clear what he means by πίστις in 3:2 and 5. He compares the Galatians’ receiving of the Spirit to the justification of Abraham in verse 6, καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην, “Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (3:6; cf. Gen 15:6).¹¹⁸ The purpose for the example of Abraham is to demonstrate, from Scripture, the doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works of the law.¹¹⁹ Verse 6 establishes a close relationship between Abraham’s justification by faith and the Galatians reception of the Spirit by faith. Thus, the πίστις of the Galatians

¹¹⁶According to Rohde, after Paul’s appeal to the experience of the Galatians in which they received the Spirit by faith and not works of the law (vv. 2, 5), he proceeds to prove the point that a right standing with God is not based on law observation but rather it is based on faith. Paul points to Abraham as an example of faith leading to justification (Rohde, *Galater*, 135).

¹¹⁷Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 85.

¹¹⁸Barclay comments that the “hearing of faith” is meant to match the reference to Abraham’s believing in v. 6 (Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 85 n. 24). Hays does not agree that 3:6 makes a connection between the faith of the Galatians in v. 5 and Abraham’s believing in v. 6. Instead, he argues that the καθὼς indicates a comparison not with the human act of “hearing with faith,” as Lightfoot argues (Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 136; cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 153), but a comparison with the proclaimed message. Here Hays understands ἀκοῆς πίστεως as “the proclamation of the faith” (Hays, *Faith*, 170). In Hays’ view, human faith is not emphasized in 3:1-5.

¹¹⁹Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 107; George, *Galatians*, 215.

corresponds to Abraham's "believing" (πιστεύω).¹²⁰ If πίστις in 3:2, 5 were not the human act of "belief," the comparison with Abraham's believing would be unclear.¹²¹ The key role of faith in this argument links the paragraph (3:1-5 and 3:6-9) in a more satisfactory way.

The central role that faith plays in 3:1-9 is clear. The Galatians received the Spirit by faith (3:2, 5). Just as Abraham was justified by faith, it follows that only "those of faith," i.e. those who believe as Abraham believed, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (3:7, 9) are children of Abraham. Again, the human response of faith is key. The promise to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed in him (Gen. 12:3) was predicated on Scripture "foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith" (3:8).¹²² Therefore, "those of faith" οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, i.e. those who believe like Abraham,¹²³ are blessed along with Abraham the "believer"¹²⁴ (3:9). In other words, only those who have faith can share the blessing of Abraham.¹²⁵

¹²⁰Cf. Williams, "Hearing of Faith," 87; cf. Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 213.

¹²¹The connection between Abraham's believing resulting in justification and the Galatians reception of the Spirit by faith is lost in Matera's attempt to explain 3:2, 5 in relation to 3:6. He explains that just as Abraham was justified by the God in whom he believed, the Galatians receive the Spirit from the message of the faith of Christ in which they believed (*Galatians*, 116).

¹²²Faith, πίστις in 3:8 is the belief of the Gentiles by which they are justified (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 115). Matera agrees that πίστις in 3:8 includes personal faith but he argues that the focus is on the faith of Christ (Matera, *Galatians*, 118). This is unsupported in 3:1-9.

¹²³We understand οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as those who exercise faith or simply, believers (cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 80; Burton, *Galatians*, 155; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 119; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 115; Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 87). Matera is rather confusing in his explanation that "those of faith" are not those who believe but "those who have been saved from and through the faith of Jesus Christ and so have believed in Jesus Christ" (Matera, *Galatians*, 118). Similarly, Hays rejects the view that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως means "those who believe." In his view, "οἱ ἐκ πίστεως serves for Paul as a deliberate catchword allusion to the scriptural dictum: ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται" (Hays, *Faith*, 171).

¹²⁴Taking πιστός in its active sense in view of the reference to Abraham believing in v. 6 (so Longenecker, *Galatians*, 115; Burton, *Galatians*, 162; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 80).

¹²⁵Burton, *Galatians*, 153.

On the basis of how πίστις is used in 3:1-9, we conclude, in agreement with Silva, that it is without question that the human act of believing in justification is prominent. Commenting on the use of πίστις in 3:1-9, Silva writes, “It is . . . apparent that the human act of believing takes on a very prominent-in fact, the most prominent role-in this passage.” He goes on to say that one would need “extraordinarily persuasive evidence” to argue for a different meaning of πίστις. “Indeed, it would be folly to deny or even minimize the role of human faith in this expression.”¹²⁶

Works of the law versus faith (3:10-14).¹²⁷ Paul’s second argument from Scripture centers on the contrast between works of the law and faith. Earlier (2:16; 3:2, 5) Paul had stated the antithesis between faith and works. Now he states it again from the context of the OT scriptures. Works of the law cannot lead to justification because (γὰρ) “as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse” (3:10).¹²⁸ The proof for this statement is from Scripture itself. Paul appeals to four texts to make his argument that the law does not bring justification and that one’s only hope is faith (Deut 27:26 [Gal

¹²⁶Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming. Contra Hays who insists that Paul does not draw attention to the human act of believing in chap. 3 (Hays, *Faith*, 132).

¹²⁷Our concern in this section is to examine the role that faith plays as Paul continues to develop his argument. We will not be able to treat in detail the issues that are debated in this section. For a helpful and detailed discussion of the issues involved in 3:10-14, see Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 59-63; idem, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law,” *WTJ* 47 (1985): 245-78; Garlington, “Role Reversal and Paul’s Use of Scripture in Galatians 3:10-13,” 85-121; C. D. Stanley, “‘Under a Curse’: A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3:10-14,” *NTStud* 36 (1990): 481-511; J. P. Braswell, “‘The Blessing of Abraham’ versus ‘the Curse of the Law’: Another Look at Gal 3:10-13,” *WTJ* 53; (1991): 73-91; S. K. Williams, “Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul’s Reading of Scripture,” *JBL* 107 (1988): 709-20; T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 94-112.

¹²⁸οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is understood as “those who rely on the law.” The phrase contrasts οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, “those who rely on faith” in 3:7, 9 (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 116; Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming). Schreiner points out that 3:11-14 “is informed by the thesis of verse 10 that no one can keep the whole law.” Thus, v. 11 builds on the thesis of v. 10 and shows that one cannot be righteous by doing

3:10]; Lev 18:5 [Gal 3:12]; Deut 21:23 [Gal 3:13]; Hab 2:4 [Gal 3:11]).¹²⁹ Those who rely on the law for justification can expect nothing but a curse.

Contrary to reliance on the law for justification, Paul proves from Scripture (Hab 2:4) that righteousness is by faith alone.¹³⁰ It is evident (from Scripture) that “no one is justified before God by the law” (3:11a). The ground for this statement is Habakkuk 2:4, “for (ὅτι) the righteous man shall live by faith” (3:11b).¹³¹ Hays has argued that ὁ δίκαιος is Christ and πίστις is his faithfulness (see earlier). This is an unlikely interpretation in context. Paul writes that “it is clear” (δῆλον [ἔστιν]) that “no one is justified before God in the Law.”¹³² Habakkuk 2:4 is given as scriptural proof for this truth.¹³³ According to Williams, “the quotation will not serve to substantiate Paul’s claim that no one is justified in the Law unless it describes what is universally the case.” Thus, “the righteous one” corresponds to “no one” its negative counterpart and therefore

the law (since all sin, v. 10). One can only be righteous “by exercising faith” (Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 59).

¹²⁹Garlington, “Role Reversal and Paul’s Use of Scripture,” 95-106, offers a helpful discussion of the OT texts (Deut 27:26; Lev 18:5; Deut 21:23; Hab 2:4) in their original contexts.

¹³⁰Longenecker, *Galatians*, 119; Schreiner, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law,” 257.

¹³¹Cf. Garlington, “Role Reversal and Paul’s Use of Scripture,” 99. We have discussed the Hab 2:4 text in chap. 5. For literature dealing with the Hab 2:4 text here and Rom 1:17, see the following: Rikki E. Watts, “For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel: Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4,” in *Romans and the People of God*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 3-25; H. C. C. Cavallin, “The Righteous Shall Live by Faith,” *ST* 32 (1978): 33-43; P. J. M. Southwell, “A Note on Habakkuk 2:4,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 614-17; J. Fitzmyer, “Habakkuk 2:3-4 and the New Testament,” in *De La Torah au Messie*, ed. J. Doré and P. Grelot (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 447-57; O. Palmer Robertson, “The Justified (by Faith) Shall Live by His Steadfast Trust,” *Presbyterion* 9 (1983): 52-71; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 39-46. For a treatment of Hab 2:4 in Gal 3:11 and Rom 1:17.

¹³²“In the law” is shorthand for “by works of the law” as is clear from the parallel in 2:16 (so Dunn, *Galatians*, 174).

¹³³Mussner points out that Hab 2:4 is significant for Paul’s faith theology and provides the basis for the fact that no one is justified in the law (Mussner, *Galater*, 228).

means, “any righteous person.”¹³⁴ No one is justified by the law specifically because Scripture shows that justification is by faith (Hab 2:4). Just as “one” (3:11a) refers to the one in need of justification, “the righteous man” (3:11b) is the human being who is justified by faith. Habakkuk 2:4 (3:11b) proves the truth of 3:11a and shows that faith is the one thing necessary for justification.¹³⁵

To say that “the righteous man” is the messiah who will be justified by his faithfulness confuses the flow of thought here.¹³⁶ How does the justification of the messiah (a concept Hays uses regularly without explanation) serve as evidence that we are not justified by the law?¹³⁷ Taking “faith” here as the believer’s trust and “the law” as referring to “works of the law” we have here another faith versus works of the law contrast in a context of justification. Thus, in 3:11, Habakkuk 2:4 serves as proof that no one is justified by the law before God (cf. Rom 1:17). Only faith results in justification.

The mutual exclusiveness of the law (νόμος) and faith (πίστις) is evident in Paul’s statement that “the law is not of faith” (3:12).¹³⁸ Works of the law and faith

¹³⁴Williams, “Hearing of Faith,” 88 n. 2.

¹³⁵So, Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 124; Burton, *Galatians*, 166.

¹³⁶Hays’ interpretation of Hab 2:4 leaves much unexplained (see summary of his view earlier). For example, what does it mean to say that the messiah (the righteous one) will be justified (shall live) by his faith? Where else do we find this in Paul? In what way is Hab 2:4 behind every use of πίστις in chap. 3 as Hays claims (Hays, *Faith*, 133)? Williams, “Hearing of Faith,” 88 n. 2 also rejects Hays’ messianic interpretation of Hab 2:4 in 3:11 although he argues for the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians.

¹³⁷Not all who argue for the faithfulness of Christ take “the righteous one” as a messianic title. They see it as referring to the believer who is justified by faith (so Longenecker, *Galatians*, 119; Williams, “Hearing of Faith,” 88 n. 2). Longenecker does not explain whose faith is in view here. Matera contends that “the righteous one” is the believer who is justified by the faithfulness of Christ (*Galatians*, 119). This requires taking πίστις as faithfulness of Christ even though it does not have a genitive modifier. Against this option is the fact that Paul has used πίστις absolutely in 3:1-9 as the believer’s faith. Context requires πίστις to be understood in its active sense (Burton, *Galatians*, 166).

¹³⁸“Law” in v. 12 should not be taken as the whole OT thus implying that salvation was not by faith in the OT. This would not be the correct reading of “law” here since in 3:6-9, Paul says that Abraham

cannot be combined in justification.¹³⁹ Salvation by the law is based on doing the law but salvation by faith is based on believing.¹⁴⁰ The quotation from Leviticus 18:5 indicates that by “law” in verse 12 is meant the doing of the law. Thus, the statement, “the law is not of faith” stands in sharp contrast to verse 11 which contrasts verse 10.¹⁴¹ It is likely that verse 12 is a summary statement of verses 10-11.¹⁴² If the law is antithetical to faith, it follows that the receiving of the Spirit can only be by faith alone. Paul makes this point in verses 13-14.

The purpose of Christ’s redemptive work (3:13) is twofold. He became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law (1) so that “in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles” and (2) so that “we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (3:14).¹⁴³ In these two purpose clauses, faith is again at the forefront of Paul’s argument. Faith is not mentioned specifically in verse 14a, but it is understood that the promise of Abraham comes to the Gentiles through faith (cf. 3:8-9,

was justified by faith. According to Schreiner, “the law” in v. 12 should be understood as “works of the law” in line with the phrase “by the law” in v. 11a. He paraphrases v. 12 as follows: “Salvation by works of the law is contrary to faith, for salvation by works of law means that the one who does the law will live by his obedience” (Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 60).

¹³⁹Burton, *Galatians*, 167; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 120; Bruce, *Galatians*, 162. Contra Dunn who argues that “the law is additional to faith” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 175).

¹⁴⁰Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 60.

¹⁴¹Longenecker, *Galatians*, 119.

¹⁴²Howard, taking πίστις as “faithfulness,” argues that the first part of v. 12 means that the law cannot be the means for fulfilling the promise made to Abraham since the law requires perfect obedience. The promise is only fulfilled by God’s faithfulness in extending his blessing to the Gentiles (Howard, *Crisis*, 63).

¹⁴³In v. 14, Paul uses the word “promise” (ἐπαγγελία) for the first time. The “content” of the promise in v. 14 is debated among scholars, but most scholars take the position that the “promise of the Spirit,” τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος is “the promised Spirit” which the Galatians are said to have received (3:2, 5). See Williams, “Promise in Galatians,” 712; Ian Lambrecht, “Abraham and His Offspring,” *Bib* 80 (1999): 526; Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming; Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 62 n. 63.

14b). This would exclude any attempt to connect the Gentile Christians to Abraham through the law.¹⁴⁴ It is not only Gentiles who receive the promise by faith. “We,” Paul and the Jewish Christians included, receive the promised Spirit through faith (v. 14b). In a way, verse 14 (the blessing of Abraham which comes to the Gentiles in Christ) is understood in light of 3:8 and 9 to be the justification of Gentiles by faith. The blessing is “in Christ” in the sense that it is through faith in Christ that one partakes of it.¹⁴⁵ In light of v.14 we understand that the Spirit mentioned in 3:2, 5 is the promise made to Abraham which, in context, is the justification of Gentiles by faith (cf. 3:8).¹⁴⁶

Thus far, in the flow of thought from 3:1-14; there is nothing to suggest that Paul uses πίστις for the faithfulness of Christ. Each occurrence of πίστις is in the active sense of “belief” and refers to the believer’s faith. Therefore, even if πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 were the faithfulness of Christ, there is no doubt that the human response of faith in justification is at the center of Paul’s argument in these verses. The absence of any explicit reference to Christ’s πίστις meaning his faithfulness in 3:1-14 makes it less likely that such is the case in 2:16. In short, the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the faith/faithfulness of Christ” does not receive contextual support in 3:1-14. With the objective genitive reading, there is a consistent use of πίστις (2:16-3:14) as “belief” in relation to justification.

The permanent nature of the promise (3:15-18). Paul ended verse 14 with a reference to the promise of the Spirit which comes through faith. In 3:15-18, he picks up

¹⁴⁴Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123.

¹⁴⁵Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 175; Williams, “Hearing of Faith,” 88.

¹⁴⁶Cf. Silva, “Faith vs. Works,” forthcoming; Dunn, *Galatians*, 179.

the word “promise” and explains that it is permanent and does not depend on the law. In these few verses, Paul does not use the word πίστις but its presence cannot be missed. For example, the promise (3:16) recalls 3:8, 14 where he has already established that faith is the means by which the promise is received (cf. 3:22). Also, his discussion in 3:17-18 bears remarkable similarity to Romans 4:13-16. In 3:18a, the inheritance (or promise) is not based on law. In Romans 4:13, the promise to Abraham that he will inherit the world was not through the law (cf. 3:18a) but “through the righteousness of faith,” διὰ διδαιουσύνης πίστεως. The inheritance is based on a promise (Gal 3:18b). Romans 4:16 explains that the promise is by faith “in order that it may be in accordance with grace.” Thus faith shows that the promise is a work of grace, and as a gift received by faith, it is “guaranteed to all the descendants . . . to those who are of the faith of Abraham.” The parallel between Galatians 3:18 and Romans 4:13-16 helps us understand that faith is at the forefront of Paul’s argument in 3:15-18.¹⁴⁷ Even without the parallel in Romans, scholars see a reference to faith in contrast to works of the law in this section.¹⁴⁸

The purpose of the law and justification by faith (3:19-25). Galatians 3:19-25 addresses the purpose of the law.¹⁴⁹ In describing the purpose of the law, Paul continues to speak on the place of faith in justification (3:22, 24). Paul’s insistence that

¹⁴⁷Hays argues against interpreting Gal 3 in light of Rom 4. He does so in order to make the case for his new interpretation of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as a catchword for ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (Hays, *Faith*, 171). Hays does not follow this reasoning in making the case for πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ which is understood as his obedience. In this case, he appeals specifically to Rom 3:3; 4:16, and 5:19 (ibid., 148-49, 152).

¹⁴⁸See for example, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 126; Bruce, *Galatians*, 174; Dunn, *Galatians*, 187.

¹⁴⁹For an interaction with scholars over the meaning of Gal 3:19-20, see Daniel B. Wallace, “Galatians 3:19-20: A *Crux Interpretum* for Paul’s View of the Law,” *WTJ* 52 (1990): 225-45.

faith, not works of the law, is the basis for justification in the preceding section raises a question regarding the role of the law.¹⁵⁰ Now he explains the place of the law in redemptive history. The law was given because of transgression (3:19). It was never the intent of the law to lead to justification, for it cannot give life.¹⁵¹ As such, the law is not contrary to the promises of God which only come through faith (3:21). Paul also explains that the law had a temporary role until the seed would come (3:19). Consistent with his argument on justification by faith, Paul has now stated via the purpose of the law that justification cannot be attained by relying on the law.

Rather than the law giving life, it is faith in Christ (πίστις Χριστοῦ) that justifies (3:22; cf. 2:16b). The πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in 3:22 recalls 2:15-16. Naturally, the arguments postulated there for the meaning of the phrase apply here as well. In 2:16 we argued that πίστις Χριστοῦ is better understood as “faith in Christ,” not the “faith/faithfulness of Christ.” This is also the most probable meaning in 3:22. The context of 3:19-22 supports this reading. Paul has stated that the law could not bring righteousness for this was not the intention of the law (3:21). Rather than relying on the law for righteousness, faith is our only hope for justification. Thus verse 22 contrasts verse 21. “But [ἀλλὰ], the Scripture has shut up all things under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ [ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] might be given to those who believe” (3:22).¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰Burton, *Galatians*, 187.

¹⁵¹“to impart life” and “to justify” are synonymous in v. 21 (Bruce, *Galatians*, 80; cf. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977], 503).

¹⁵²Cf. Mussner, *Galater*, 253-54.

The word “but” (ἀλλά) sets up a contrast with the situation in verse 21. While the law cannot bring righteousness, verse 22 shows that πίστις Χριστοῦ “faith in Christ” is the only means for righteousness (cf. Rom 4:11, 13; 9:30). Although πίστις Χριστοῦ could be “the faithfulness of Christ,” context supports the reading “faith in Christ.” First, each time Paul draws this contrast in his argument (2:15-3:14), he is contrasting the human act of believing versus relying on the works of the law for justification (see earlier discussion in 2:16 and 3:2-5). Second, on the basis of the use of πίστις in 3:1-14, a better reading for πίστις in verse 22 is “belief.” There are no clues to suggest a different interpretation of πίστις in this context. Paul’s point in 3:22 is remarkably similar to what he says in 3:14. He writes that the promise of the Spirit is received by faith (3:14). The same point is made in 3:22. The promise is by faith, the believer’s faith (per 3:14) and everyone who believes receives it. It is highly unlikely that Paul intends for πίστις to be understood differently in these two verses. One is not sure why Longenecker argues that the promise is received by faith, the believer’s faith, in 3:14 and that it is based on the faithfulness of Christ in 3:22. His only explanation appears to be that πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faithfulness of Christ avoids redundancy.¹⁵³

Grammatically, the subjective genitive reading is possible in 3:22 but it leaves much unexplained. For example, it needs to be explained why Paul consistently uses πίστις as the believer’s act of trust in justification in chapter 3 except for 3:22. The objective genitive reading, on the other hand, provides a more consistent use of πίστις throughout 2:15-3:22. Again, the point is not to deny the truth that Christ was faithful. We are arguing that Paul does not communicate this truth by the use of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

¹⁵³Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145.

The coming of faith (3:23-25). Following 3:22, Paul mentions faith as something that came (3:23a, 25), was revealed (3:23b). The way Paul uses πίστις in 3:23-25 assumes that his readers know exactly what he is saying. In 3:23-25, Paul further explains the purpose of the law from 3:21-22. Thus, 3:23-25 picks up from 3:19-21 with verse 22 serving as a contrast to verse 21. In 3:19-21 he explains why the law was given. The law was added because of transgression (3:19) and therefore righteousness cannot be based on the law (3:21) but on faith (3:22). But how did the law function in the intervening time between when it was given and the coming of the seed (3:19)? The answer comes in verses 23-25. The law has become our custodian. This statement is modified by two phrases, one temporal “before faith came” and the other participial “being shut up until (εἰς) the faith which was later to be revealed (3:23).

We can understand “the coming of faith” in relation to the coming of Christ in the sense that Christ’s coming meant the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, a promise received by faith in Christ (3:14, 22). Gordon writes, “Clearly, what Paul means in 3:23 and 25 is ‘Before Christ, the *object* of faith, came.’ Thus, when Paul says ‘faith,’ he means ‘faith in Christ.’”¹⁵⁴ Hence the coming of Christ can be understood as the coming of faith or the time of receiving the promise by faith in Christ.¹⁵⁵ In this case, faith that comes is faith in Christ just mentioned in 3:22.¹⁵⁶ This is supported in verse 24

¹⁵⁴Gordon, “Problem in Galatia,” 37. His italics.

¹⁵⁵Rohde remarks that “the coming of faith” refers to the act of believing which is focused on Christ. The example of Abraham shows that faith was necessary in the Old Covenant. With the fulfilling of the promise, also begins the time of faith in that faith is the means by which God gives the gift of the promise (Rohde, *Galater*, 161).

¹⁵⁶Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 181; Burton, *Galatians*, 198; Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, 212-13; Mussner, *Galater*, 254-55. According to Dunn, the coming of faith is the coming of Jesus as the object of faith. He explains, “Paul does not necessarily deny that others believed as Abraham believed prior to the coming of Christ, but affirms that God’s purpose and promise have been realized in Christ (cf. 3:19), so

where the purpose of the law in leading us to Christ has as its goal our justification by faith. The faith here that leads to justification is hardly “the faithfulness of Christ” but rather, the believer’s faith.¹⁵⁷ The coming of faith means that the function of the law as a tutor is no longer needed (3:25) because all, Jews and Gentiles, are “sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26).¹⁵⁸ Verse 25 captures the contrast between the two periods, law and faith. Under the law, we were in custody “but now” through faith, we are children of God by means of faith.¹⁵⁹

We conclude that Galatians 3:23-25 explains 3:19-22. It further explains the purpose of the law in the period preceding faith which comes with the advent of Christ through whom the promise of Abraham becomes a reality for Gentiles by means of faith. Thus, the coming of faith refers to the receiving of the promise by faith in Christ. The law points to Christ and with Christ comes faith as the means of receiving the promise of justification (3:22). In this light, Gentiles and Jews receive the promise the same way, by faith. Thus, works of the law are excluded.¹⁶⁰

that he is now the natural and proper focus for the promise-releasing-and-fulfilling faith” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 197)

¹⁵⁷Outside of the debated πίστις Χριστοῦ contexts, there are other places in Paul where ἐκ/διὰ πίστεως is used in connection with justification. In these instances, πίστις is always the believer’s faith (Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 4:11, 13; 5:1; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; Gal 3:8, 11, 24). See discussion in chap. 5.

¹⁵⁸Whether or not “Christ Jesus” is the object of faith in v. 26 is debated. Even without it, “through faith” is best understood as the response of faith on the part of the believer (cf. 3:7).

¹⁵⁹Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 91.

¹⁶⁰We do agree with Caneday that 3:23-25 is redemptive historical and that faith and Christ are closely associated (see earlier for summary of his view). The question is how to explain this association. For Caneday, faith is oppositional to Christ (thus, to speak of faith coming is to speak of Christ coming). In the interpretation proposed here, the redemptive historical aspect of 3:23-25 and the close association between Christ and faith is explained differently. At this point in redemptive history, faith in Christ justifies but in the case of Abraham, it was his trust in God that resulted in his justification (3:6). Caneday makes a distinction between the era of the law and the coming of Christ/faith. In our understanding, rather than saying that Christ’s coming (the coming of faith) is separate from the human act of trust, we take the

Galatians 3:26 provides further support for the view that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22 is “faith in Christ” and that the “coming of faith” is a reference to the coming of “faith in Christ.” According to Paul, the coming of faith means that “we are no longer under a tutor” (3:25). He supports this statement with “for” (γὰρ) in verse 26, “for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Some scholars argue that 3:26 is a Pauline insertion.¹⁶¹ Also debated is whether “in Christ Jesus” is the object of “through faith” or not.¹⁶² Matlock has now made a good case that the variant reading of Galatians 3:26 in P⁴⁶ supports the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.¹⁶³ In P⁴⁶, instead of διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ we find διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. According to Matlock, this does not mean that the variant reading is another example of

coming of Christ and the act of trust to be inseparable. Thus the interpretation proposed above, that the coming of faith refers to the receiving of the promise through faith in Christ. As Schreiner comments, “Caneday separates redemptive history from anthropology. The two belong together. It is a new redemptive-historical era and we must believe in Christ” (personal comment from Schreiner).

Furthermore, there are additional reasons why Caneday’s argument is unconvincing. (1) He presupposes a theological definition of πίστις as the “faithfulness of Christ” which is understood as “his obedience.” Yet, he has not made the case from the preceding context that πίστις has this meaning. (2) Caneday determines the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ from 3:22 and then reads the conclusion back to 2:16. Given that the letter was read to the audience, it is reasonable to assume that Paul intended his audience to understand what he meant by πίστις in 2:16 and 3:1-14 before reading 3:22. It is unlikely he expected the listeners to make sense of the word only after 3:22-25 had been read. (3) Caneday’s interpretation equates faith with the person of Christ such that to speak of faith is to speak of Christ. One does not find evidence outside of the 3:22-25 text where faith and Christ are used interchangeably. (4) Finally, Gal 3:23 is a debated text, and it is questionable to have this be the deciding text for the meaning of such a debated phrase as πίστις Χριστοῦ. Matlock makes the observation that in Gal 3:23, “Paul’s choice of words . . . is not so clear as to provide independent support for one’s reading of the other contested phrases” (Matlock, “Paul and Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 307). It seems that whatever decision one makes on 3:23 depends on the conclusion already drawn on πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:22.

¹⁶¹Betz, *Galatians*, 181-86; Martyn, *Galatians*, 374-75, 378-83

¹⁶²Martyn seems to allow for “in Christ Jesus” being the object of “through faith” (Martyn, *Galatians*, 373, 375, 380).

¹⁶³Matlock, “Πίστις in Galatians 3:26: Neglected Evidence for ‘Faith in Christ?’” *NTS* 49 (2003): 433-39.

πίστις Χριστοῦ construction.¹⁶⁴ The reading διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is to be preferred. In this instance, διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ explains the variant διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ rather than the reverse.¹⁶⁵ According to Matlock, the variant reading διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is clearly an objective genitive construction since “The subjective genitive διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ could not thus straightforwardly have been substituted for διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.”¹⁶⁶ Matlock concludes that P⁴⁶ “is a commentary on πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul and slightly favors the objective genitive interpretation.”¹⁶⁷

Conclusion from Contextual Analysis

It has been our contention that the context of Galatians 2 and 3 supports the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ (“faith in Christ”). We do not deny that the semantic range of πίστις includes the meaning “faithfulness” such that πίστις Χριστοῦ could be read as “the faith/faithfulness of Christ. Yet, the evidence for this reading is not forth-coming from within Galatians. Our analysis of Galatians 2 and 3 and Paul’s use of πίστις in relation to justification shows that the faith of believers in contrast to works of the law, is consistently referred to throughout. While the subjective genitive reading requires importing concepts into the context from Romans (such as πίστις being faithfulness = Christ death on the cross) the objective genitive reading adds the least to the context and is in turn supported more strongly by the context of Galatians.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 435. Contra Howard, “Faith of Christ,” 758.

¹⁶⁵Matlock, “Πίστις in Galatians 3:26,” 435.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 437.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 438.

There remain compelling reasons, both from the context of Galatians and Paul's use of πίστις in his other letters for maintaining the reading "faith in Christ" for πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22. For example, (1) in the context of Galatians 2-3, Paul does not make any unambiguous references to the Christ being faithful or to his believing. Instead, we find that the verb "to believe" πιστεύω is used of the human response of faith in God or Christ (2:16; 3:6, 22, 25).¹⁶⁸ Paul does not even use the word "faithful" (πιστός) for Christ in Galatians and there is no explicit reference to πίστις as Christ's faithfulness meaning his death on the cross.¹⁶⁹ (2) Paul generally uses πίστις in the active sense of belief and hardly in the passive sense (the only obvious instance is Rom 3:3). Also, he does make use of πίστις with other objective genitives. These all combine to provide added support for the view espoused here.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸So Silva, "Faith vs. Works," forthcoming; Dunn, *Galatians*, 139.

¹⁶⁹Silva, "Faith vs. Works," forthcoming.

¹⁷⁰See appendix 3.

CHAPTER 7

“FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST” IN PHILLIPIANS

Summary of the Problem in Philippians

In Philippians 3:9 we come across the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase once again. Here, as in the other instances (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16; 3:22) Paul is concerned with the theme of righteousness in relation to the law and faith.¹ He contrasts two types of righteousness: “my own righteousness” (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην) derived from the law (ἐκ νόμου) and “the righteousness from God” (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην) appropriated “through faith in/of Christ” (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ). The question of the syntactical relationship between the genitive Χριστοῦ and the noun πίστις faces us here as well.² If one takes Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive, then the phrase διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Phil 3:9) would be rendered, “through faith in Christ.”³ On the other hand, if Χριστοῦ is a

¹Cf. Morna Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 331; Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 142-43.

²In the last chapters we argued that πίστις Χριστοῦ should be interpreted as “faith in Christ” in the contexts of Rom (3:22, 26) and Gal (2:16, 20; 3:22). This conclusion is not necessarily assumed here. It remains to be shown from the context of Philippians whether the phrase is better translated as “faith in Christ” or “the faithfulness of Christ.”

³Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Waco: Word, 1983), 142; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1913; reprint, Zondervan, 1953), 150; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 186-88; William Hendriksen, *Philippians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 166; Marvin R. Vincent, *The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 102; Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1999), 146; Gerhard Barth, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), 60-61; Joachim Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 194; Ulrich B. Müller, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1993), 156;

subjective genitive, the interpretation becomes “through the faithfulness of Christ.”⁴ Our concern in this chapter is to seek the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ from the context of Philippians. Did Paul’s audience understand him to be saying that righteousness comes from God through faith in Christ or through the faithfulness of Christ? Both readings are possible but which is most probable?

Πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the Faithfulness of Christ”

Different arguments are advanced in favor of the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Philippians 3:9. These can be categorized as theological, semantic, and syntactical arguments.

Theological Argument

In this argument, Christ’s faithfulness is believed to be his obedience to the

Pierre Bonnard, *L’Épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens et l’Épître aux Colossiens*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Neuchâtel, Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1950), 65; J. F. Collange, *L’Épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Neuchâtel, Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1973), 115; I-Jin Loh and Eugene Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1977), 102-03; C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans: and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998): 95; A. J. Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 262; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 200; J. G. D. Dunn, “Once More πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 251.

⁴Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 396-400; Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 132-33; Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 133-34; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 114; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 118-24; P. Vallotton, *Christ et la Foi* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960), 88, 89; R. N. Longenecker, “The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church,” in *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 147; S. K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 48 (1987): 446; D. W. B. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’, A New Testament Debate,” *RTR* 29 (1970): 80; Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 332; L. T. Johnson, “Romans 3.21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 85-87; N. T. Wright, *What St Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 123.

Father. It is this obedience that forms the objective ground for justification. O'Brien writes that Paul contrasts a righteousness "gained by obeying the law" with the righteousness from God which has as its basis "Christ's faithfulness, that is, his unflinching obedience to the Father's will . . . through suffering and death" (Phil 3:9).⁵

Philippians 2:6-11 (cf. Rom 5:19) is seen as evidence that Christ's πίστις is his obedience. Paul speaks of justification through the obedience of Christ (Rom 5:19).⁶ In terms of Philippians 2:6-11, the argument is made that it has a close link with 3:9. Paul's use of ἡγήομαι establishes this close link between 2:6-11 and 3:9 suggesting that διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in 3:9 "ought to refer to the obedient self-surrender of Christ, that is, to his faithfulness" (cf. 2:6-11).⁷ Vallotton adds that Philippians 3:10 explains that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9 refers to the suffering of Christ (his obedience) and the power of his resurrection.⁸

In response to this theological argument, we make the following points: (1) it is consistent with Paul's theology to argue that Jesus was faithful in carrying out his Father's will. This point is not in dispute, although one does not find the expression "faithfulness of Christ" in Paul apart from the disputed texts. At issue is whether Paul, in writing πίστις Χριστοῦ, meant Christ's faithfulness, i. e., his obedience to the Father.

⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 392; cf. Martin, *Philippians*, 132-33; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 119.

⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 399; Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26," 85, 87-90; Robinson, "Faith of Christ," 80; Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 332; Longenecker, "Obedience of Christ," 147. See chap. 5 for discussion of Rom 5:19 in relation to πίστις Χριστοῦ in Rom 3:22.

⁷For example, Wallis argues that the link between Phil 3:9 and 2:6-11 is established by ἡγήομαι, by the relationship between obedience and faith in Paul's thinking, and the flow of the letter. That would lead the reader to conclude that πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ's obedience, i.e., his "self-giving in death mentioned in chapter 2" (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 120-21; cf. Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 331-32; Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26," 88).

⁸Vallotton, *La Foi*, 89.

The context of Philippians (see below) does not appear to support this conclusion. (2)

The link between 2:6-11 and 3:9 is not a strong argument.⁹ It is true that Paul speaks of the obedience of Christ in 2:8, but he uses the word ὑπακοή. It remains to be shown that in Philippians (or anywhere else in Paul), ὑπακοή and πίστις are used interchangeably such that Christ's πίστις is the same as his ὑπακοή. Simply pointing to the presence of ἡγέομαι in the two sections does not explain that πίστις is equivalent to ὑπακοή. The verbal parallel does not establish the claim that the two terms are essentially synonymous.

(3) There is no clear evidence in Philippians that Paul speaks of Christ as πιστός (faithful) or that “he believed” (ἐπίστευσεν).¹⁰ In light of these reasons, the subjective genitive argument on theological grounds may not be the best interpretation in the context of Philippians.

The Semantic Range of Πίστις

The semantic range of πίστις includes the meanings “trust” or “faithfulness.”

The argument for the sense “faithfulness” for πίστις in Philippians 3:9 is based on (1) the

⁹In response to Wallis' argument on the link between 2:6-11 and 3:9, Cranfield writes, “I find it very difficult to take this seriously as exegesis of what we actually have in the text” (Cranfield, *On Romans*, 95).

¹⁰Melick points to πιστός δε ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος (2 Thess 3:3) as evidence that Paul speaks of Christ as “faithful” (Melick, *Philippians*, 133-34), but it is debated whether ὁ κύριος is referring to Christ or to God. Melick's contention that when πίστις is used of God and Christ, it means faithfulness simply fails to take into account texts such as Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13 and 14:12 (ibid., 134 n. 32). We have already discussed the use of πίστις in these texts (chap. 2). O'Brien explains that Paul does not refer to Jesus as faithful (πιστός) or believing (ἐπίστευσεν), because he (Paul) prefers “to use the language of obedience” and therefore he “does not unambiguously speak elsewhere of Christ being faithful (πιστός) or believing (ἐπίστευσεν)” (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 399). Against O'Brien, there is no indication that Paul prefers the language of “obedience” in speaking of Christ. He uses the noun ὑπακοή only twice with reference to Christ (Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 10:5) compared to eight times with reference to believers (Rom 1:5; 6:16; 15:18; 16:19, 26; 2 Cor 7:15; 10:6; Phlm 1:21). The adjective ὑπήκοος is used once for Christ (Phil 2:8) and once in reference to believers (2 Cor 2:9). It is also worth noting that the verb ὑπακούω is only used in reference to people and not Christ (Rom 6:12, 16, 17; 10:16; Eph 6:1 [cf. Col 3:20]; 5 [cf. Col 3:22]; 2 Thess 1:8; 3:14). The evidence does not support O'Brien's claim that Paul prefers “to use the

use of the πίστις followed by a genitive of a person or a personal pronoun,¹¹ (2) the predominant use of πίστις as faithfulness in Hellenistic Jewish literature,¹² (3) the contribution of Romans 3:3 and 4:16,¹³ (4) Paul's use of πίστις as a quality of God or Christ,¹⁴ and (5) the absence from Paul's writings of a clear example of πίστις used with an objective genitive of Christ or God.¹⁵

The argument for πίστις as "faithfulness" in Philippians 3:9 requires reliance (as in the case of O'Brien) on sources external to the context of Philippians. Other texts in the NT that would disprove the subjective genitive argument are dismissed as rare or debatable. O'Brien admits that Mark 11:22 provides the clearest example of πίστις with an objective genitive, but he dismisses the relevance of this example by saying that this

language of obedience" and therefore "does not unambiguously speak elsewhere of Christ being faithful (πιστός) or believing (ἐπίστευσεν)" (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 399).

¹¹O'Brien joins Howard in arguing that whenever πίστις is followed by the genitive of a person or a personal pronoun, the reference is always to the "faith of an individual, never faith in an individual" (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398; cf. George Howard, "Notes and Observations on the 'Faith of Christ,'" *HTR* 60 (1967): 459-60). His italics. Melick notes that when πίστις is followed by a genitive of person, it refers to a quality in that person but when it occurs with God or Christ, the objective sense of trust is excluded since "trust" is not a quality of God. He concludes that when πίστις is "applied to deity, it means faithfulness; when applied to man, it may mean either" (134 n. 32). Melick's argument is hardly sustainable in light of Mark 11:22; Jas 2:1, Rev 2:13, and 14:12 (cf. chap. 2).

¹²The argument is made that since the predominant use of πίστις means faithfulness in Hellenistic Jewish literature, one should look for this meaning to appear often in the NT (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398; cf. Howard, "The Faith of Christ," *ExT* 85 (1973-74): 214).

¹³O'Brien, *Philippians*, 399. For our response to this argument, see chap. 5.

¹⁴Melick contends since πιστός is used with God (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13) and Christ (2 Thess 3:3), the idea of faithfulness applied to God and Christ is not foreign to NT thought (Melick, *Philippians*, 133-34). Thus in the διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ phrase, the idea is that righteousness comes through "Jesus' faithfulness and a person's total reliance on him" and this righteousness "comes to people from God based on that faithfulness" (ibid. 134). We should note that it is debated whether πιστός in 2 Thess 3:3 is that of Christ or God. It seems that there is no clear use of πιστός in Paul to refer to Christ.

¹⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398. He acknowledges that the construction of πίστις with an objective genitive is possible (Mark 11:22), but says that this is rare.

usage is rare and there are no clear examples in Paul.¹⁶ Against O'Brien, it is not as clear that the use of πίστις with the objective genitive is rare. It has already been argued that (1) πίστις is used with an objective genitive outside of Paul's letters (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:12; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12)¹⁷ and (2) examples of πίστις with an objective genitive are quite likely in Paul's letters (see Col 2:12; Phil 1:27; 2 Thess 2:13).¹⁸ Even if O'Brien is correct that there are no instances of πίστις with the objective genitive in Paul, it remains the case that Paul uses πίστις predominantly in the active sense of "belief" or "trust."¹⁹ There is only one undisputed example of πίστις as "faithfulness" (Rom 3:3).²⁰ Though the semantic range of πίστις includes the sense "faithfulness," this does not appear to be the way Paul applies πίστις in Philippians (see below).

Syntactical Argument

This argument focuses on the precise meaning of the genitive Χριστοῦ in relation to πίστις. Based on his analysis of Paul's use of the possessive genitive in relation to Christ in Philippians, Wallis argues that the evidence supports interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as Christ's faith.²¹ He also calls attention to three other genitival constructions with relevance for πίστις Χριστοῦ. These are τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ

¹⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398.

¹⁷See chap. 2.

¹⁸See appendix 3. O'Brien does not address these examples but simply notes that "a difference of opinion exists as to the precise significance of these genitives" (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398).

¹⁹This is true in most of the examples where πίστις is followed by a genitive of a person or a personal pronoun.

²⁰See appendix 3 for the use of πίστις in Pauline letters.

²¹Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 121. He notes the following, σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, (1:8), τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:19), τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ (2:30), τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

Χριστοῦ (“the gospel of Christ” [1:27]), τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (“faith of the gospel” [1:27]), and τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (“knowledge of Christ” [3:8]).²² In the first expression, Wallis takes τοῦ Χριστοῦ as a genitive of apposition (“the gospel which is Christ”).²³ The second expression, τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (1:27), according to Wallis, is not to be read as “faith in the gospel.”²⁴ Rather, the phrase should be interpreted “by means of the faith belonging to the gospel.”²⁵ Thus in both expressions (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ and τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου [1:27]), τοῦ εὐαγγελίου stands for τοῦ Χριστοῦ such that to speak of “faith belonging to the gospel” is synonymous with “faith belonging to Christ.”

Concerning the third genitival construction, Wallis explains that τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (3:8) could be a simple objective genitive construction, “knowing Christ Jesus,” but this is less likely because it places the emphasis on the human initiative and not on God’s grace. He then suggests that Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is a subjective genitive. In this instance, τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ “refers to the knowledge of Christ and constitutes the grounds rather than the goal of Paul’s kenosis.”²⁶

Wallis’s syntactical analysis, though fascinating, is plagued with problems.

(3:18) and ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (4:23), ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:6), εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ (1:10; 2:16).

²²Ibid., 121.

²³Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 122.

²⁴Ibid. We will discuss this expression later on in this chapter.

²⁵Ibid. Here, τῇ πίστει is understood as an instrumental dative and τοῦ εὐαγγελίου as genitive of possession pointing back to τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

²⁶Ibid., 123. Here Wallis appears to be following Vallotton who is convinced that in 3:8 Paul uses a subjective genitive expression in the phrase τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ, thus Christ’s knowledge of Paul. See Vallotton, *La Foi*, 87.

First, the examples of the genitive Χριστοῦ as possessive genitive are not true subjective/objective genitive constructions since all (except one, τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ) are not verbal nouns used with Χριστοῦ as is the case with πίστις Χριστοῦ. Second, his argument requires that τοῦ εὐαγγελίου be taken as standing in apposition to τοῦ Χριστοῦ. This is very unlikely in the context of 1:27 and no other scholars accept this reading.²⁷ Third, besides Wallis and Valloton, no one (including other supporters of the subjective genitive interpretation) takes τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ (3:8) as a subjective genitive construction.²⁸

Conclusion

Despite the support claimed for the subjective genitive arguments, there are good reasons, within the immediate (3:2-11) and the broader contexts of Philippians why the objective genitive interpretation is still the most probable reading of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. In other words, though the subjective genitive view is a possible reading of the debated phrase, it remains unlikely given the weight of the contextual evidence.

Πίστις Χριστοῦ as “Faith in Christ”

The immediate context (3:2-11)

The issue Paul is addressing in Philippians 3:2-11 focuses on righteousness in relation to the law and faith.²⁹ The underlying question is how one attains true

²⁷See discussion later on in this chapter.

²⁸We will come back to this later.

²⁹Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 142-43; Hooker, Πίστις Χριστοῦ, 331.

righteousness. Is it by obedience to the law or through faith in/of Christ?³⁰ In 3:2-3, Paul warns the Philippians against the practices of his opponents. He goes on to describe his past life in Judaism in refutation of his opponents' beliefs (vv. 4-6).³¹ In verses 7-11 Paul explains his present life and future hope.

Warning against opponents. Paul begins in 3:2 by calling on the Philippians to “beware of” (βλέπετε)³² “the dogs,” “evil workers,” and “false circumcision.”

Although the identity of the opponents in Philippians is debated, most scholars agree that they were emphasizing works of the law, particularly circumcision, as a requirement for acceptance with God. According to Hendriksen, the opponents “insisted that in order to attain salvation—at least *complete* salvation—it was necessary for all, Gentile as well as

³⁰There are some scholars who see the issue here differently. For example, Sanders argues that Paul does not reject righteousness by works since he considered his life under the law to be gain. The only reason he now rejects the law is because he has come to see that salvation is only through Christ (E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 44-45, 139-41; idem, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977], 485, 550). For a response to Sanders's view, see Schreiner, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law,” *WTJ* 47 (1985): 245-78. N. T. Wright argues that in Phil 3 Paul is speaking about covenant membership and not about “a detached system of salvation.” He paraphrases Paul in 3:7-9 as saying, “I, though possessing covenant membership according to the flesh, did not regard that covenant membership as something to exploit; I emptied myself, sharing the death of the Messiah; wherefore God has given me the membership that really counts, in which I too will share the glory of Christ” (N. T. Wright, *What St Paul Really Said*, 124). According to Dunn, Paul is only rejecting those Jews who want to establish their own covenantal righteousness which excludes Gentiles (Dunn, *Theology*, 370-71). For a response to Dunn, see Seifrid, “The ‘New Perspective on Paul’ and Its Problems,” *Themelios* 25:2 (2000): 7-8; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 112-14; idem, “‘Works of the Law’ in Paul,” *NovT* 33 (1991): 225-31.

³¹On the different views concerning Paul's opponents in Philippians, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 26-35; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xlv-xlvii; Silva, *Philippians*, 147-51; John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville, Broadman, 1999), 167-68.

³²Hawthorne argues against translating βλέπετε as “beware of” and suggests the meaning “consider,” “take proper notice of,” “pay attention to,” or “learn your lesson from.” In this light, Paul is not warning the Philippians but simply asking them to pay attention to the opponents, study them, understand them and avoid following in their ways (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 125; cf. G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, New Clarendon Bible [Oxford, 1976], 132-33; D. E. Garland, “The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors,” *NovT* 27 [1985]: 166). This interpretation of βλέπετε is doubtful. Martin argues against this weakened sense of βλέπετε and notes that it fails to account for the “repetition of the call which is couched as a warning” (Martin, *Philippians*, 124; cf. Silva, *Philippians*, 172; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 354; Gnllka, *Philipper*, 185; G. Barth, *Philipper*, 55).

Jew, to keep the law of Moses, with special emphasis on circumcision.”³³ In what Silva calls “the great spiritual reversal” Paul calls the opponents “dogs,” “evil workers,” and “false circumcision.”³⁴ As “dogs” (τοὺς κύννας)³⁵ they, not the Gentiles, are the ones who are unclean and outside of the covenant people of God.³⁶ By calling them “evil workers” (τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας) Paul refutes their view of themselves as good workers because they were faithfully obeying the law.³⁷ Schreiner explains that Paul calls them “evil workers” probably because they put confidence in the flesh and rely on their obedience to the law and in so doing boast in their obedience and not in Christ, thus giving glory not to Christ but to themselves.³⁸ The cutting remark “false circumcision” or “mutilators” (κατατομή)³⁹ supports the view that the opponents were arguing that

³³Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 150. For similar views, see Melick, *Philippians*, 127; Michael, *Philippians*, 136; Vincent, *Philippians*, 92; Silva, *Philippians*, 147, 153; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 56; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 60; Jean Baptiste Edart, *L'Épître aux Philippiens: Rhétorique et Composition Stylistique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 2002), 224; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 113; Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, Novum Testamentum Supplements 68 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 174; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1994), 147-53; Polhill, “Twin Obstacles in the Christian Path: Philippians 3,” *RevExp* 77 (1980): 361.

³⁴Silva, *Philippians*, 170 makes the point that “the polemic of Philippians 3 begins with an unequivocal assertion of the great spiritual reversal” Judaizers are the new Gentiles, while Christian believers have become true Jews” (ibid., 170).

³⁵The term “dogs” was an insult word used by Jews to refer to Gentiles (Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 143-44; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 56; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 60).

³⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 355; Silva, *Philippians*, 169; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 144; Polhill, *Paul*, 167.

³⁷Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 151; Silva, *Philippians*, 169; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 356; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 125; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 60; Edart, *Philippiens*, 224.

³⁸Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 113. According to Schreiner, “When it comes to acceptance with God, works of the law are excluded and so is boasting in them (cf. Rom 3:27-28; 4:4-1; 1 Cor 4:7; Gal 6:13; Eph 2:9). Such is the case because “Those who are righteous by law do not assign praise and glory to God for their salvation but ascribe glory to themselves” (ibid., 114).

³⁹κατατομή can also mean “the mutilation,” “the cutters,” “those who mutilate the body.” See Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 126; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 354; Silva, *Philippians*, 169; BDAG, s.v. “κατατομή.”

circumcision is a necessary condition for acceptance with God.⁴⁰ According to O'Brien, Paul's opponents must have insisted on "circumcision as the special sign of belonging to the people of God."⁴¹ Contrary to their belief, Paul argues that what they take the most pride in (circumcision) is evidence that they do not belong to the people of God.⁴² We can conclude from Paul's description of his opponents that they emphasized observance of the law (particularly circumcision) as indispensable for Gentiles to be accepted before God.⁴³

Verse 3 builds on the last warning in the preceding verse "Beware of the false circumcision" (βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν) and states the reason for the warning. Here Paul draws a sharp contrast between the opponents (v. 2) and the true people of God (v. 3). In response to those opponents who insisted that Gentiles be circumcised in order to be included in the people of God, Paul writes, "we are the true circumcision" (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἔσμεν ἡ περιτομή) indicating that Gentile believers and not the Jewish opponents are the true people of God.⁴⁴ Three participial clauses mark out the distinctive qualities of those who are "the true circumcision." Believers (ἡμεῖς) are "those who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (3:3). Worship that

⁴⁰G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 56; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 357; Bruce, *Philippians*, 79; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 151; Polhill, "Twin Obstacles," 361. Cf. Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 118.

⁴¹O'Brien, *Philippians*, 357.

⁴²See Silva, *Philippians*, 170; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 60; Collange, *Philippiens*, 110.

⁴³Cf. Martin, *Philippians*, 125; Silva, *Philippians*, 169; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 56.

⁴⁴Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 164; K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1962), 93-94; Melick, *Philippians*, 128; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 358; Silva, *Philippians*, 170; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 56; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 60. "True" is added to ἡ περιτομή to emphasize the contrast with τὴν κατατομήν (Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 91; Martin, *Philippians*, 126; cf. Gal 5:12).

is pleasing to God is that which is done in the Spirit of God (cf. John 4:23-24)⁴⁵ and not “with the ordinances and traditions of men.”⁴⁶ The true people of God glory (boast) “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)⁴⁷ and do not put confidence “in the flesh” (ἐν σαρκί), i.e. they do not trust in “human status, privilege, or achievement.”⁴⁸ To glory in Christ is to glory in the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14) which means to trust his atoning work alone as the basis for salvation.⁴⁹ In other words, glorying in Christ necessarily excludes putting confidence in the flesh. Hendriksen writes, “It stands to reason that if a person is constantly making his boast in Christ Jesus, he will put no confidence in flesh.”⁵⁰ The question implicit in verse 3 is whether there is in the flesh anything (from human capabilities and achievements) that is “certain, reliable or trustworthy” that forms the basis for a right relationship with God. Paul’s opponents would say yes but Paul says no.⁵¹

⁴⁵O’Brien, *Philippians*, 360.

⁴⁶Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 145.

⁴⁷ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ being the sphere or the object of glorying (boasting). See O’Brien, *Philippians*, 360, 361; cf. Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 93.

⁴⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 360; Caird, *Letters from Prison*, 134. According to K. Barth, “The question as to what gives occasion for . . . glory . . . is the point at issue between Paul and his opponents. Do knowledge of the Law, and the corresponding ceremonial and moral righteousness, supply the occasion for it? Or does the ‘glory’ begin at the point where all that ceases, where man lays down his arms, where God *entirely* alone begins to speak, utters his *Word of grace* which man can do *no more* than believe?” (K. Barth, *Philippians*, 94. Italics his).

⁴⁹Thus, Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 153; G. Barth, *Philipper*, 57.

⁵⁰Confidence in the flesh is putting one’s trust in “anything apart from Christ on which one bases his hope for salvation” (Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 153). The alternative to confidence in the flesh is to put one’s trust in Christ. As Silva points out, “to believe in Jesus Christ is to put one’s confidence in Him; but if Jesus Christ is our grounds for confidence, He is therefore also our grounds for boasting” (cf. Silva, *Philippians*, 171).

⁵¹See K. Barth, *Philippians*, 94; cf. G. Barth, *Philipper*, 57.

In his threefold description of the distinguishing marks of true believers, we get a glimpse into Paul's view of his opponents. Implied in Paul's comments (v. 3) is that these opponents are not the real circumcision (as Paul understands it). They do not "worship in the Spirit of God,"⁵² they do not "glory in Christ Jesus," and the object of their confidence is the flesh.⁵³ By this (confidence in the flesh) is meant that they glory in themselves and trust (or put confidence) in their own achievements.⁵⁴ In the end, they are putting their trust in something other than Christ.⁵⁵ Implied in verses 2-3 is the argument that acceptance before God is not based on works of the law (cf. Rom 3:20, 21-22, 27-30; 9:30-10:4; Gal 2:16; 3:22). Rather, those accepted by God are those who boast in Christ and do not put confidence in the flesh, i.e., their object of trust is Christ, not the flesh. This becomes clearer as the argument progresses (3:4-6, 9).

Paul's past life. Paul focuses on himself (vv. 4-6) shifting from ἡμεῖς (3:3) to ἐγὼ (3:4) and indicates what "putting confidence in the flesh" entails.⁵⁶ Paul makes the point that he does not put confidence in the flesh although (καίπερ, v. 4) he has far more reasons for doing so than the opponents. If one's standing before God were determined by his achievements, then Paul would be well qualified. Yet, he refuses to rely on

⁵²Hawthorne suggests that they required that Gentiles be circumcised before they could worship God (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 123).

⁵³For a similar view, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 359.

⁵⁴In short, their religion was one in which they focused on the "externals that fostered pride in their own achievements instead of a boasting in Christ Jesus, and that encouraged a confidence in themselves instead of a reliance upon the Spirit" (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 123).

⁵⁵So Martin, *Philippians*, 127; Silva, *Philippians*, 171; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 127.

⁵⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 365. Cf. Martin, *Philippians*, 127.

anything other than Christ (3:3) in his quest for the righteousness from God (3:9).⁵⁷ He is going to show that what he had considered as gain turned out to be loss (vv. 7-11).⁵⁸ Hawthorne captures Paul's argument in verses 4-7 when he says that Paul expresses "his conviction that no person profits who does not surrender to Christ, and no person loses who surrenders everything for Christ."⁵⁹

Paul states in verse 6 that he was blameless "as to righteousness which is in the law" (κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος). The phrase could be understood instrumentally to indicate the righteousness which is "by [means of] law" (cf. Gal 3:11; 5:4; Rom 2:12, 20).⁶⁰ Most scholars understand "righteousness" in the sense of conformity to the requirements of the law.⁶¹ Thus, in terms of conformity to the law, Paul is "blameless" (ἄμεμπτος).⁶² Paul appears to be explaining that in terms of sheer credentials and conduct in keeping with the requirements of the law, he was blameless.

⁵⁷Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 132. By laying out his own experience in terms of external achievements, Paul refutes any claim that there is a saving value in these things (vv. 4-6).

⁵⁸Cf. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 155. We know from 2 Cor 11:16-29 and 12:1-10 that Paul dislikes boasting. It seems necessary here to give his own testimony in terms of external achievements, not to exalt himself but to refute his opponents' ground for confidence (the flesh) and to show that all external achievements amount to nothing if one does not have Christ (3:7-8).

⁵⁹Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 131.

⁶⁰Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, 23.

⁶¹BDAG, s.v. "δικαιοσύνη"; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 134; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 59; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 148; Polhill, "Twin Obstacles," 363. Seifrid adds that Paul's blamelessness was not limited to his obedience to the law but included the heritage into which he was born (Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 174).

⁶²Sanders argues that 3:6 is evidence that Paul believed in righteousness by the law and the possibility of human blamelessness (Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 23-24). Contra Sanders, Schreiner argues that Paul's point is not on human sinlessness but on his preconversion state. He was blameless when it relates to obedience to the law (cf. Gal 1:13-14) and exceptional compared to his contemporaries (Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 70; cf. Thielmann, *Paul and the Law*, 155; Silva, *Philippians*, 175; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 379; Vincent, *Philippians*, 99; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 160).

But as he has come to realize, diligent observance of the law does not commend one to God. True righteousness only comes διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (3:9).

In 3:2-6, Paul has been concerned to warn against any reliance on the flesh and to promote Christ as the only true object of confidence. Acceptance with God is not determined by law observation, particularly, circumcision (3:2). The true people of God do not put confidence in the flesh (or boast in their achievements). They glory or boast in Christ. As Paul's own life makes clear, meticulous observation of the law does not result in true righteousness (3:4-6).⁶³ Therefore the opponents are wrong to require that Gentiles conform to the demands of the law.

Paul's present life and future hope. Following the account of his past condition (vv. 4-6), Paul describes the reorientation of his life that has come about because of Jesus Christ (vv. 7-9).⁶⁴ He explains that whatever was gain (κέρδη) to him (cf. vv. 5-6) he has counted "these things" (ταῦτα) as "loss" (ζημίαν, v. 7).⁶⁵ All that he had possessed and considered to be advantages, he now realizes that they are but liabilities in the sense that these things were keeping him from seeing the real righteousness that is required by God and which Paul could not in himself achieve despite his efforts.⁶⁶ The reason for Paul's re-evaluation of his values is given as διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ("for the sake of Christ").

⁶³Paul's rejection of works of the law as a way of seeking acceptance with God and the fact that confidence in Christ is the only right way is very clear in 3:2-6. Although works of the law and faith are not mentioned explicitly, their presence in this section is unmistakable.

⁶⁴ἀλλὰ ("but") introduces a contrast from vv. 5-6 (this contrast is evident whether or not one accepts ἀλλὰ as part of the original text or not).

⁶⁵Gnilka calls this *Umwertung der Werte* ("a re-evaluation of values," *Philippenerbrief*, 191).

⁶⁶Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 135-36; Gnilka, *Philippenerbrief*, 191.

Beginning with 3:8 Paul repeats and expands the thought of v.7.⁶⁷ With a cluster of particles, ἀλλὰ μὲν οὖν γε καί⁶⁸ (“more than that”) that emphasize and carry forward the thought of verse 7,⁶⁹ Paul makes the transition from the perfect tense ἤγημαι (“I have counted,” v. 7) to the present tense ἡγοῦμαι (“I continue to count . . .,” v. 8a). The change is deliberate and by it Paul indicates that he “continues to count” (ἡγοῦμαι) “all things” (πάντα) as loss.⁷⁰ It is not just those things listed in verses 5-6 that he has counted as loss. Everything that might be a source of confidence in the flesh Paul now counts as loss.⁷¹ As in verse 7, Paul states the purpose of his action as διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (“because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,” v. 8a).⁷² The διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν (v. 7) is now explained

⁶⁷Gnilka, *Philippenerbrief*, 192; G. Barth, *Philippener*, 60; Müller, *Philippener*, 151.

⁶⁸For a discussion on the nature of these particles, see M. E. Thrall, *Greek Particles in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 11-16.

⁶⁹Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 64.

⁷⁰Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 136; cf. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 385. One sees here a progression in Paul’s argument as indicated by the shift from the perfect tense ἤγημαι (“I have counted,” v. 7) to the present tense ἡγοῦμαι (“I count” or “I continue to count,” v. 8). The shift from ἅτινα (“whatever things”) and ταῦτα (“these things,” v. 7) to πάντα (“all things,” v. 8) also indicates a progression in Paul’s argument.

⁷¹Cf. Silva, *Philippians*, 179; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 382; Müller, *Philippener*, 151; Gnilka, *Philippener*, 192.

⁷²In the construction διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, διὰ τὸ (“because of”) introduces the reason for Paul’s action with τὸ ὑπερέχον (“the surpassing value”) as the object of the preposition διὰ. The surpassing value is explained as τῆς γνώσεως (“the knowledge”). Here τῆς γνώσεως is a genitive of apposition to τὸ ὑπερέχον, i.e., “the surpassing value” is “knowledge” (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 137; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 387; Vincent, *Philippians*, 100). The genitive Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is problematic due to its ambiguous nature. It could be subjective genitive meaning that “surpassing value” for Paul is to be known by Christ (cf. 1 Cor 13:12). This is the view of Vallotton, *La Foi*, 87. A second option is to interpret Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ as an objective genitive where Christ Jesus is the one who is known. Thus, the surpassing value for Paul is for him to know Christ Jesus. In this sense, Christ would be the ultimate object of Paul’s quest for knowledge (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 137; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 387; Melick, *Philippians*, 132; Silva, *Philippians*, 183; Barth, *Philippians*, 98). This is the view of majority of scholars with the exception of Vallotton and Wallis (see discussion below).

as διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (v. 8).⁷³ The ultimate goal for which Paul “has suffered the loss of all things” (τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην) and continues to “count [them] but rubbish” (ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα) is ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ (“in order that I may gain Christ and may be found in him,” vv. 8b-9a).⁷⁴

Righteousness through faith. In a long participial construction, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (“not having a righteousness of my own derived from [the] Law, but that which is through faith in/of Christ”), Paul explains the means by which he may attain true righteousness (i.e., gain Christ and be found in him in the day of judgment [cf. 2 Cor 5:3]).⁷⁵ He knows that he cannot stand before God on the basis of his own merit but in Christ and on the basis of what Christ has done.⁷⁶ As such, he cannot put confidence in the flesh (3:4-6) in an attempt to establish his own righteousness (μὴ

⁷³Caird argues (probably correctly so) that knowledge here means “a personal response of faith and obedience to God’s self-revelation” (Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison*, 137; see also Melick, *Philippians*, 132; Michael, *Philippians*, 145; Martin, *Philippians*, 133).

⁷⁴There is also a sense of progression in Paul’s purpose for counting all things as loss. He has counted all things as loss διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν (“for the sake of Christ,” v. 7), more than that, he continues to count all things a loss διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (“because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,” v. 8a) and it is on account of Christ (δι’ ὅν) that he “has suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish” ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ (“in order that I may gain Christ and may be found in him,” vv. 8b-9a). Hence, “for the sake of Christ” (v. 7) is explained as “the surpassing value of knowing Christ” (v. 8a) which is ultimately to “gain Christ” (v. 8b) and “be found in him” (v. 9a).

⁷⁵Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 90 n. 23. We take the participial construction μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει as subordinate to the two purpose statements ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ (vv. 8b-9a. Cf. K. Barth, *Philippians*, 99). Some scholars understand the participial construction as a parenthetical insertion, but still explain that it states the means by which righteousness from God is attained (see Gnika, *Philippianerbrief*, 194; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 60).

⁷⁶Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140; Williams, “Again Pistis Christou,” 445.

ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην, 3:9) by means of obedience to the law.⁷⁷ The proper object of confidence is Christ (3:3) and, as it is now clear to Paul, true righteousness comes only διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (“through faith in/of Christ,” 3:9).⁷⁸ Hence, in 3:9b, Paul contrasts self- righteousness (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην) appropriated by obeying the law (ἐκ νόμου) and the righteousness from God (τὴν [ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην]) appropriated “through faith in/of Christ” (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ).⁷⁹ Here, διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ stands against ἐκ νόμου, and ἐκ θεοῦ contrasts ἐμην in the preceding clause.⁸⁰

Clearly, the alternative to “the righteousness which is derived from the law (δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου) is “that which is through faith in/of Christ” (τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ). It is generally agreed that the former (τὴν ἐκ νόμου) refers to righteousness sought by obedience to the law. There is disagreement however, as to what Paul means by the latter, (τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ). Is he saying that he wants to

⁷⁷For the view that μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου refers to righteousness that comes from obeying the law, see O’Brien, *Philippians*, 382; Martin, *Philippians*, 132; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 61; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, 65; Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 107, 110; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 118-19. Contrary to Dunn who believes that “my own righteousness” does not refer to righteousness attained by Paul’s own effort but to what Paul has gained. Thus it does not mean “achieved by me” (Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 370); Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 445.

⁷⁸Paul does not explain what he means by righteousness here, leaving one to believe that he had fully instructed the Philippians on what it means (so Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 394). Here we understand “righteousness” to be the gift of justification (see discussion in chap. 5).

⁷⁹So too, Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 194; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 60-61; Müller, *Philippianer*, 156; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 119; Schreiner, *Paul*, 200; Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 445. Contra N. T. Wright who contends that “righteousness” in 3:9 is a “membership language” and has nothing to do with how one becomes a Christian. For him, righteousness of my own, refers to that righteousness which was Paul’s by birth, a covenant status, marked by the badge of circumcision. Thus, in the first part of v. 9, Paul is not rejecting righteousness through human effort but “the status of orthodox Jewish covenant membership.” Now, Paul has a different covenant status which is a gift from God, “the righteousness from God” not as a status bestowed but the status of covenant membership (Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 124).

⁸⁰Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 150.

be found in Christ having that righteousness which is “through faith in Christ” or “through the faithfulness of Christ?” Despite the many arguments made in support of the latter (see summary earlier), we think that in the context of Philippians 3:2-9 as analyzed here, the former (“through faith in Christ”) is the most likely reading. It is less disruptive to the context of Paul’s argument. We note the following reasons why πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” is the correct reading in 3:2-11:

Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the context of 3:2-11

The nature of Paul’s argument (3:2-9a). According to the subjective genitive view, διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ means the faithfulness of Christ, i.e., his obedience demonstrated in his death on the cross. But as one follows the flow of Paul’s argument from 3:2-9, this interpretation is unlikely. Paul’s line of thought in 3:2-9a (see above) leaves the reader asking, as Caird puts it, “What must a man do if God is to declare that he is in the right and so give judgment in his favor?”⁸¹ For Paul’s opponents, the answer was that “one must obey the law of Moses” but Paul’s answer, supported by texts such as Psalm 143:2 (Gal 2:16c; Rom 3:20) and Genesis 15:6 (Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3), is that “what God really requires is faith.”⁸² Paul sought to do the law (3:4-6) and his opponents are emphasizing the law (3:2) as necessary for acceptance with God. Paul has come to realize, contrary to the beliefs of his opponents (3:2) and his former beliefs (3:5-6), that God asks not for good works but for faith in justification (cf. Gen 15:6).⁸³ Also Martin observes that “In the context [of 3:2-9] . . . a right standing and relationship with God

⁸¹Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison*, 138.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141.

cannot be acquired or achieved by human effort on the basis of the law. . . . Such righteousness comes to the trusting person as God's gift."⁸⁴ To this end, in order for Paul to know Christ (by faith), to gain him and be found in him, he could not continue to boast and put confidence in the flesh (note the contrast between 3:3-6 and 3:7-9a). To do so would mean certain exclusion from the people of God. His confidence must rest on Christ alone. His emphasis clearly falls on the exclusion of works and the necessity of faith (belief) in justification.⁸⁵

It is fair to say that from the flow of Paul's argument, when the audience heard the letter read, and Paul saying that he wants to be found in Christ "not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law but that which is διὰ πίστεως Χριστου" they understood that διὰ πίστεως is Paul's trust and that Χριστοῦ is the object of his trust. Thus, Paul is certain he will gain Christ and be found in him by having the righteousness from God through faith in Christ. We conclude that the general tone of the passage suggests that when Paul talks of the righteousness which is διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ the genitive Χριστοῦ is best taken as an objective genitive.⁸⁶ In other words, the issue is not a righteousness that is based on the faithfulness or loyalty or fidelity of

⁸⁴Martin, *Philippians*, 132. Yet, Martin, in arguing for the subjective genitive view, does not indicate the object of trust.

⁸⁵Wallis is concerned that the objective genitive interpretation emphasizes the human act of trust, takes away from the centrality of Christ in Paul's argument (e.g. Phil 2:6-11), and rests upon a dichotomy between 'works of the law' and 'faith in Christ' not evident in Philippians (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 121). Contrary to Wallis, Paul does emphasize the human act of trust (confidence in Christ) against the act of works. The issue Paul is responding to is not the centrality of Christ (that is assumed). Rather, the issue is that reliance on the law only leads to "self-righteousness." God calls for "faith in Christ" not reliance on the law (cf. Caird, *Letters from Prison*, 138).

⁸⁶Similarly, Hultgren who argues that the issue for Paul is the obtaining of righteousness from God by faith rather than seeking to establish a righteousness that is based on his own works of the law (A. J. Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul," *NovT* 22 [1980]: 259).

Christ to the Father.⁸⁷ The issue is the righteousness that is from God (ἐκ θεοῦ) and appropriated through faith in Christ (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ).⁸⁸ This interpretation adds the least to the context of 3:2-11 and is supported by the nature of Paul's argument here. With this interpretation, the emphasis rightly falls on Christ as the proper object of boasting/confidence (3:3), knowledge (3:8, 10) and faith (3:9; cf. 2:29).⁸⁹

Faith versus works. Hardly anyone disputes that in 3:9 Paul distinguishes between righteousness by works of the law and righteousness διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.⁹⁰ In this distinction, διὰ πίστεως (“through faith”) stands in contrast to ἐκ νόμου (“from the law”).⁹¹ If πίστις Χριστοῦ is interpreted as “faithfulness of Christ” then the contrast would be between human works and Christ's faithfulness. This is possible since Χριστοῦ could be a subjective genitive. Contextually, it makes better sense to see here a contrast between two human actions, one (faith) leads to righteousness and the other (works) does not.⁹² It is highly unlikely that all along Paul would contrast the human

⁸⁷Contra Vallotton, *Le Christ*, 88, 89; Longenecker, “The Obedience of Christ,” 142-52.

⁸⁸Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141.

⁸⁹According to Schreiner, the sense of the passage is that Paul contrasts works with faith in Christ, thus both refer to human response. Justification is not by doing but by believing (cf. Rom 9:30-10:8 [Schreiner, *Paul*, 214]).

⁹⁰Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140-41; Silva, *Philippians*, 186; Martin, *Philippians*, 132; Melick, *Philippians*, 133; Michael, *Philippians*, 149; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 118-19; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 166; Vincent, *Philippians*, 102; Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 80; Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation,” 259.

⁹¹Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141; Müller, *Philippianer*, 156. Dunn, *Paul*, 370 agrees that the contrast is between righteousness “which is from the law” and “which is through faith” and thus very similar with Gal 2:16 and Rom 3:28. Dunn goes on to qualify this contrast by saying that Paul was not opposing self achieved righteousness but the view that Gentiles must become Jews to be accepted by God (ibid., 371). Dunn's view is rejected by Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 53-60.

⁹²Koperski, “*Pistis Christou* in Phil 3:9,” 213.

action of works (which he rejects, 3:2, 4-6), with boasting in Christ, putting confidence in Christ (3:3), and knowing Christ (3:8) only to change in 3:9b, making the contrast between human works and Christ's faithfulness. The hearer of the text would be at a loss if this were the case and Paul does not provide any clues to indicate the change. Instead, we find ample clues to the effect that Christ is the object of boasting, confidence, knowledge. The logical conclusion, in light of the dictates of the context, is that Christ is also the object of faith. Thus, justification is not by doing the law but by believing (cf. Rom 9:30-10:8).⁹³ The sense of the passage (3:2-9) shows that Paul is arguing against seeking righteousness by means of the law (3:6, 9b) because true righteousness can only be received (as a gift, 3:9c; cf. Rom 3:24) through faith in Christ. In other words, those who are acceptable before God are those whose boast is in Christ and whose confidence is not in the flesh but in Christ (3:3). It is those whose object of knowledge is Christ (3:8) and who put their faith in Christ for justification. Thus, two opposite ways of seeking to attain righteousness are contrasted. Righteousness appropriated by doing the law and righteousness appropriated by trusting Christ.⁹⁴

Arguing that faith is a necessary condition⁹⁵ in justification does not mean that

⁹³Schreiner, *Paul*, 200, 214. Hooker allows for the possibility that the contrast is between our work and our faith but she argues that Paul "does not normally speak of our works, but of the works of the Law in us; the logical antithesis to this is not our faith but the faith of Christ" (Hooker, Πίστις Χριστοῦ 336, 341; cf. Johnson, "Romans 3:21-16," 83 n. 25). Contra Hooker, the context of Paul's argument indicates that he is concerned with observance of the law and not the law doing a work in us (see 3:2-6, 9b).

⁹⁴The faith vs. works contrast as two human activities in relation to justification also gains support from other contexts where Paul links human faith with righteousness/justification (see Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 4:11, 13; 5:1; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; Gal 3:8, 11, 24. Cf. our discussion in chap. 5. See also Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulation," 259).

⁹⁵Faith is a condition in justification in the sense that without it one cannot be justified before God (cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998], 61). Michael comments that in justification, "there are conditions to be satisfied on man's part: he must accept and appropriate the free gift. Apart from that personal trust and self-surrender called

one makes faith a work.⁹⁶ Righteousness from God and righteousness by faith in Christ should not be misunderstood to mean that righteousness comes partly from God and partly through faith.⁹⁷ This is unlikely in light of Paul's words that faith is a gift from God (Phil 1:29; cf. Eph 2:8) and faith's object is Christ (Phil 1:29). Faith is the medium of receiving the righteousness from God. According to Michael, "Faith is the attitude towards Christ which brings about man's reconciliation with God and secures for him a right standing before God's tribunal."⁹⁸ Hawthorne comments that faith is not an alternative way to earn God's favor. Rather, faith is the opposite of work or merit. Faith admits that "I cannot earn God's approval, but can only accept his free offer of forgiveness, grace and love. And since the offer is made in the life and above all in the death of Christ, true righteousness, the condition of being truly right with God, must come through faith in Christ."⁹⁹ Similarly, K. Barth points out that "from man's point of view, faith in its decisive act is the collapse of every effort of his own capacity and will, and the recognition of the absolute necessity of that collapse."¹⁰⁰ Thus faith in

faith there can be no reconciliation and no right standing before God" (Michael, *Philippians*, 150. See also Caird, *Letters from Prison*, 138).

⁹⁶One of the objections against the objective genitive interpretation is that it turns faith into a work that merits justification. Wright argues against faith as a condition in justification on the grounds that this would make faith a "surrogate work" or "a substitute for moral righteousness." Rather, faith is a badge of covenant membership and not something one must do before being saved (Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 125).

⁹⁷Gnilka, *Philippianerbrief*, 194, explains that faith is not to be taken here as an achievement taking the place of the law. Righteousness is a work of God's grace, and faith is not detached from that grace but lays hold of it.

⁹⁸Michael, *Philippians*, 149.

⁹⁹Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141.

¹⁰⁰Barth, *Philippians*, 101-02.

Christ, rather than being a work, magnifies the role that Christ plays. In faith, the emphasis is not on the subject but “altogether on the object” of that faith.¹⁰¹

The righteousness from God on the basis of faith (3:9c). Right after the διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ phrase, Paul adds τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (“the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” [v. 9c]). The thrust of this phrase is on the fact that righteousness has its source in God (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην)¹⁰² and that it is given to faith (ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει).¹⁰³

Most scholars agree that ἐπὶ τῇ πιστεῖ is the human act of trust in response to God’s gift of righteousness.¹⁰⁴ Disagreement comes in deciding the syntactical relationship between ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει and διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. According to Wallis, διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is Christ’s faithfulness “which leads to [or for the purpose of] faith [of believers].”¹⁰⁵ Martin explains that διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ provides the objective ground for God’s action and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει is the medium by which humans receive the gift, otherwise, we would have a tautology and the objective ground of God’s action is unspecified if both instances of πίστις refer to the believer’s faith.¹⁰⁶ Williams sees

¹⁰¹Cranfield, *On Romans*, 94-95.

¹⁰²So Silva, *Philippians*, 185.

¹⁰³The preposition ἐπὶ most likely has a conditional function here. A conditional force for ἐπὶ would render the expression ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει as “on the basis of faith” or “depends on faith” making faith the condition that is necessary for receiving righteousness (see Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 142; Silva, *Philippians*, 194; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 150; Vincent, *Philippians*, 102).

¹⁰⁴O’Brien, *Philippians*, 383, 400; Martin, *Philippians*, 133; Gnilka, *Philippianerbrief*, 194; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124; Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 445; Koperski, “The Meaning of *Pistis Christou*,” 198. The only exception is Melick who argues that διὰ πίστεως and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει both refer to Christ’s faithfulness (Melick, *Philippians*, 134).

¹⁰⁵Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124.

¹⁰⁶Martin, 133; cf. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 354.

πίστις Χριστοῦ as Christ's faithfulness and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει as adopting Christ's faith as one's own.¹⁰⁷ Seifrid rejects both the subjective and objective genitive interpretations and proposes that ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει as the believer's faith has as its source Christ. Thus, in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, Χριστοῦ is a genitive of source.¹⁰⁸

A more plausible way to explain the syntactical relationship between ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει and διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is that the former explains the latter. The righteousness indicated simply by the definite article τὴν which is appropriated διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is explained as "the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει).¹⁰⁹ This being the case, Paul, after expressing himself succinctly with an ambiguous phrase, clarifies what he means and averts any misunderstanding of what he means by πίστις Χριστοῦ.¹¹⁰ Thus, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην (v. 9c) explains τὴν (v. 9b) and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (v. 9c) clarifies that διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (v. 9b) is faith in Christ. With this understanding of the syntactical

¹⁰⁷Williams explains ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει as "nothing other than Jesus' own mode of being, now through the gospel made available to all" (Williams, "Again *Pistis Christou*," 445).

¹⁰⁸Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 90. He notes that faith and its righteousness are present only 'in Christ.' As such, the 'faith of Christ' means that Christ is the source of faith. Even with this interpretation, faith remains the believer's and the object is understood in context to be Christ. Thus, Christ as the source of faith does not argue against Christ being the object of faith. In an earlier work, Seifrid correctly observes that "the δικαιοσύνη ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, which presupposes the act of faith, with all probability reveals the sense of πίστις Χριστοῦ" (Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 175 n. 154).

¹⁰⁹Cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 142; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 166; Vincent, *Philippians*, 102; Michael, *Philippians*, 150; Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul," 256; Koperski, *Pistis Christou* in Phil 3:9," 214.

¹¹⁰In three other πίστις Χριστοῦ expressions, Paul follows each with a reference to the human faith (Gal 2:16; 3:22; Rom 3:22). It is often argued that this is evidence that πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ's faithfulness otherwise Paul would be redundant (see chaps. 5, 6, and 7). This way of arguing does not consider the fact that repetition may be used for emphasis (Koperski, *Pistis Christou* in Phil 3:9," 207 n. 53). It is equally likely that Paul makes sure to add the reference to human faith in order to explain what he means by πίστις Χριστοῦ and therefore avert any misunderstanding.

relationship between these two phrases, πίστις in both instances is the believer's trust and Χριστοῦ specifies the object of that trust.

The force of the genitive case (3:8). The πίστις Χριστοῦ construction (3:9) is similar to τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (3:8). Most scholars on both sides of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate take τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ as an objective genitive construction.¹¹¹ This interpretation is confirmed in verse 10 where αὐτόν, referring to Christ, is the object of the infinitive γνῶναι.

Also implied in the expression τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (knowledge of Christ Jesus") is the concept of faith. Paul does not explain the means by which he may know Christ but it stands to reason that his knowledge of Christ includes his faith. Melick explains that knowledge here (3:8) means "a personal response of faith and obedience to God's self-revelation."¹¹² If Melick is correct (as we believe he is), then we have here a clue to the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in verse 9. For Paul, Christ Jesus is clearly the object of knowledge and faith.¹¹³

The grammatical equivalence of τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ to πίστεως Χριστου (v. 9b) shows that an objective sense for πίστις Χριστοῦ in verse 9 is very likely. Schreiner notes that "Since the genitive Χριστοῦ is objective in verse 8, there is no grammatical reason for declaring such to be impossible in verse 9."¹¹⁴ The presence of

¹¹¹Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 137; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 387; Silva, *Philippians*, 183; Martin, *Philippians*, 131; K. Barth, *Philippians*, 98; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 163 n. 142.

¹¹²Melick, *Philippians*, 132; cf. Caird, *Letters from Prison*, 137; Michael, *Philippians*, 145.

¹¹³Cf. Schreiner, who writes, "The context suggests that faith in Christ is in view since he is both the object of knowledge and faith" (Schreiner, *Paul*, 213).

¹¹⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 183; Dunn, "Once More . . .," 251.

τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in close proximity to διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ lends support to the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9.¹¹⁵

Conclusion. Thus far we have argued that the reading “faith in Christ” for πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9 is more consistent with the context of Paul’s argument. We showed that this reading (1) fits with the emphasis in Paul’s flow of thought (3:2-9a), (2) is supported by the faith versus works contrast which shows that Paul is contrasting two human actions in justification (3:9), (3) makes sense when the addition of the phrase τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει is understood as an explanation of τὴν [δικαιοσύνην] διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, and (4) the presence of the objective genitive construction τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in 3:8 clues us into the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9. These are reasons from the immediate context of 3:9 for retaining the traditional interpretation. Could this view be sustained in the broader context of Philippians?

The Broader Context of Philippians

Thus far the view espoused here has been that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Philippians 3:9 should be interpreted as “faith in Christ.” At this point, we want to see if this interpretation can stand the test of the broader context. We will focus on Paul’s use of the genitive referring to the person of Christ, and his use of πίστις in the rest of the epistle.

¹¹⁵Those who argue for the subjective genitive view fail to explain why τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ should not inform our exegesis here. Although O’Brien, *Philippians*, 387 and Martin, *Philippians*, 131, take τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ as an objective genitive construction, both fail to explain why this should not inform the interpretation of a similarly constructed phrase.

Wallis argues that Paul's usage of the possessive genitive in relation to Christ in Philippians suggests that Χριστοῦ in 3:9 is possessive and indicates Christ's faith.¹¹⁶ Wallis' argument faces problems in that most of the examples he gives do not fit the category of subjective or objective genitive.¹¹⁷ Two of his examples are either objective or subjective genitive, but not genitive of possession as he proposes.¹¹⁸ In the end, Wallis does not present an explicit example of a verbal noun used with a subjective genitive in relation to Christ.

Wallis is correct in probing the broader context of Philippians for help in arriving at a correct interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Since the issue facing us with the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase is determining the syntactical function of Χριστοῦ in relation to πίστις (as object or subject), it is helpful to consider Paul's use of the genitive Χριστοῦ and the noun πίστις in the rest of the letter.

The genitive referring to Christ. The genitive referring to the person of Christ occurs nineteen times in Philippians.¹¹⁹ Of interest for us are the four instances where Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is used with a verbal noun and could be, among other possibilities, either subjective or objective genitive (1:8, 27; 2:30; 3:8).

¹¹⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 121 n. 234. He notes the following, σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, (1:8), τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:19), τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ (2:30), τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:18) and ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (4:23), ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:6), εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ (1:10; 2:16).

¹¹⁷The subjective and objective genitives are used with verbal nouns. In other words, "the head noun has a verb as a cognate" (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 112). To this end, some of Wallis' examples are not relevant for the debate on πίστις Χριστοῦ. For example, τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:19), τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:18), ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (4:23), ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:6), εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ (1:10; 2:16).

¹¹⁸σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, (1:8), τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ (2:30).

¹¹⁹1:1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 19, 27, 29; 2:10, 16, 21, 30; 3:8, 12, 18; 3:10, 21; 4:23.

Paul writes in 1:8 that he longs for the Philippians ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (“with the affections of Christ Jesus”). It is difficult to make a decision on whether Χριστοῦ is a genitive of source/origin (“Paul’s affections with Christ as the source”),¹²⁰ or subjective genitive (“the affections that Christ himself has for the Philippians”)¹²¹ which expresses itself through Paul,¹²² or objective genitive (“Paul’s own affections for Christ”). Either of these suggestions is possible and one cannot be dogmatic here.

In 1:27, Paul exhorts the Philippians to conduct themselves in a manner worthy τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“of the gospel of Christ”). Scholars have interpreted the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ variously. The options include objective genitive (“the good news about Christ”),¹²³ genitive of source/author (“the gospel with Christ as its author”),¹²⁴ both objective and subjective genitive (“the gospel from Christ and about Christ”),¹²⁵ and genitive of apposition (“the gospel which is Christ”).¹²⁶ Again, a clear cut decision is not

¹²⁰Silva, *Philippians*, 55; Melick, *Philippians*, 61; Vincent, *Philippians*, 11.

¹²¹Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 15; Fee, *Philippians*, 51; Barth, *Philippians*, 20.

¹²²O’Brien, *Philippians*, 71 (O’Brien allows for the possibility that Χριστοῦ is a genitive of source); Martin, *Philippians*, 67.

¹²³See Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 38; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 56; Michael, *Philippians*, 63; Vincent, *Philippians*, 32, 38.

¹²⁴Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 84; Vallotton, *La Foi*, 85.

¹²⁵According to Muller, “the gospel emanating from Christ is also the gospel concerning Christ” (J. Muller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955; reprint, 1970], 68; cf. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 148 n. 25).

¹²⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 122. Wallis does not deny that τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ could be “the good news about Christ.” He thinks that though this is possible, the genitive of apposition fits the context “more faithfully” (ibid.).

possible here.¹²⁷

We read in 2:30 that Epaphroditus came close to death διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ (“because of the work of Christ”). The only possible way to take Χριστοῦ is as an objective genitive. O’Brien argues that the genitive points to Christ as the one who assigns the work.¹²⁸ Even in O’Brien’s view, the subject of the verbal idea in the noun τὸ ἔργον is still Epaphroditus. In this case, τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ should be understood as the work done by Epaphroditus in serving Christ.¹²⁹

There is another example where the genitive Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is clearly an objective genitive. Paul says in 3:8 that he has counted all things as loss διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχων τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (“in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”). We have already discussed why here τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is an objective genitive construction.

In the instances where the genitive referring to Christ is used with a verbal noun, two are debated (1:8, 27) and two are obviously objective genitive constructions (2:30; 3:8). There are no unambiguous uses of Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive in Philippians. On the other hand, the possibility of the objective genitive in 1:27 and the certain reference to Χριστοῦ being an objective genitive in 2:30 and 3:8 tips the scale a bit on the side of the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9.

¹²⁷Silva categorizes τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ as a vague expression that served simply to identify Paul’s message (Silva, *God, Language and Scripture*, vol. 3 of *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, 6 vols. in One, ed. Moisés Silva [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 258).

¹²⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 342.

¹²⁹Cf. Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 85; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 119; Vincent, *Philippians*, 77.

Faith with a genitive case (1:27). The expression τῆ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is the only other instance in Philippians where πίστις has a genitive modifier.¹³⁰ The genitive τοῦ εὐαγγελίου could be descriptive (“a gospel-faith”), objective (“a faith directed toward the gospel” or “faith in the gospel”),¹³¹ source (“faith which is based on the gospel”),¹³² subjective (“faith produced by the gospel”),¹³³ or appositional (“faith which is the gospel”).¹³⁴

Most scholars argue that the objective genitive option is the least likely. This is often stated without any contextual reasons.¹³⁵ Yet, without denying the possibility of the other options, a good case could be made for τοῦ εὐαγγελίου being an objective genitive and πίστις being the believer’s subjective faith in the gospel. First, there are at least three examples of εὐαγγελίου as an objective genitive in Philippians. The Philippians were partakers with Paul ἐν τῇ ἀπολογία καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (“in the defense and confirmation of the gospel,” 1:7). In this expression, τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is clearly an objective genitive.¹³⁶ In 1:12, Paul wants them to know that his circumstances have turned out for the greater “progress of the gospel” (προκοπήν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). Here “the gospel” is probably an objective genitive and the sense is that

¹³⁰This expression occurs only here in the NT.

¹³¹BDAG, “εὐαγγέλιον”; G. Barth, *Philippianer*, 37.

¹³²O’Brien, *Philippians*, 152.

¹³³Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 57 takes πίστις as a technical term for “creed” (those things that the Christian believes). Cf. Silva, *Philippians*, 94; Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 85; Muller, *Philippians*, 69; Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 40.

¹³⁴Melick, *Philippians*, 90 is open to this option.

¹³⁵For example, Melick, *Philippians*, 90; Silva, *Philippians*, 95; Loh and Nida, *Handbook*, 41 all say that the objective genitive view is unconvincing but they do not give reasons why.

¹³⁶BDAG, s.v. “εὐαγγέλιον.”

his situation, instead of hindering the gospel, has “served to advance it.”¹³⁷ Another example of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου as an objective genitive is also found in 1:16 where Paul says that he has been “appointed for the defense of the gospel” (εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμαι [cf. 1:7]). In 4:15 ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου could be understood as an objective genitive expression, “at the first preaching of the gospel.”¹³⁸ At the very least, these examples show that an objective genitive reading of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is not out of question. In other words, there is more in support of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου being an objective genitive than the other options listed above.¹³⁹

Second, Paul exhorts the Philippians to conduct their lives in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27a) so that whether present or absent, he will hear that they are standing firm in one spirit. In two participial constructions he explains how this is to be done. They will stand firm in one spirit by “striving together for the faith of the gospel” (συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, v. 27b) and “in no way alarmed by [their] opponents” (μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων, v. 28a). In verse 29 he gives the ground for all of verses 27-28. They are to carry out Paul’s exhortation in verses 27-28 because (ὅτι) it has been granted to them for the sake of Christ “not only to believe in him [Christ] but also to suffer for his sake” (ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, v. 29). It is very possible that “faith in Christ” (αὐτὸν πιστεύειν) is the same as “faith in the gospel” (τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) and clarifies the faith referred to in verse 27.

¹³⁷Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 87.

¹³⁸See BDAG, s.v. “εὐαγγέλιον”; Vincent, *Philippians*, 146.

¹³⁹There are no clear examples in Philippians of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου as descriptive, apposition, source, or subjective genitive.

Hence, their faith in the gospel is essentially faith in Christ. In believing what is preached (the gospel) one is putting trust in Christ for salvation. According to this understanding, τῇ πίστει is taken as a dative of means explaining the means by which they are to strive together in the face of opposition from their opponents.

Third, πίστις is used five times in Philippians, twice with a genitive case (1:27; 3:9) and three times without any modifier (1:25; 2:17; 3:9c). In the three uses of πίστις without a modifier, two are definitely the subjective faith of the Philippians (τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν [2:17¹⁴⁰] and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει [3:9c¹⁴¹]). One instance is debated (τῆς πίστεως [1:25]).¹⁴² Generally, πίστις in Philippians does not mean faithfulness. This holds true in all of Paul's letters with the exception of Romans 3:3.¹⁴³

Conclusion. From the broader context of Philippians, we conclude that (1) Paul clearly uses the genitive Χριστοῦ as objective genitive in two instances. (2) There is not one explicit example of Χριστοῦ used subjectively. (3) The noun πίστις occurs once with a genitive τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (1:27) and as we have argued, a good case exists for it being an objective genitive expression. (4) Also, in all the instances of πίστις in Philippians the sense “faithfulness” is excluded. In view of all these points, the case for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 3:9 gains further support from

¹⁴⁰The nature of this faith might differ among scholars but it is agreed that it is the faith of the Philippians. See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 310; Silva, *Philippians*, 151; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 105.

¹⁴¹See discussion earlier.

¹⁴²ἡ πίστις in 1:25 could refer to (1) “a life of faith” (G. Stählin, “Προκόπτω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley [TDNT] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 6:715), (2) “the truth believed” (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 140), or (3) the faith of the Philippians. We prefer the last option in light of the fact that Paul refers to their faith in 2:17.

¹⁴³See appendix 3.

the broader context of the epistle.

Conclusion

It is possible that Paul uses the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ to mean the faithfulness of Christ which is understood as his obedience to the Father's will. We do not deny that the concept of Christ's faithfulness and obedience to the Father is consistent with Pauline theology. We dispute the argument that Christ's πίστις carries with it all that this view claims it does. We have argued from the immediate context of 3:2-11 that πίστις Χριστοῦ as faith in Christ fits the context better. This reading gains further support from broader contextual considerations.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The goal of this dissertation has been to defend the thesis that the Pauline phrase, πίστις Χριστοῦ, in its various contexts, is best translated as “faith in Christ” (objective genitive) and not “faith/faithfulness of Christ” (subjective genitive). As we have stated in each chapter (especially chapters 5-7), reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” is the better reading in the context of Paul’s arguments. It adds the least to the contexts of his arguments and is in turn supported by such contexts. The same could not be said for the subjective genitive interpretation. At this point, we briefly summarize our findings in support of our thesis.

Results of the Investigation

Chapters 1-4

In chapter 1 we investigated the debate in the history of interpretation from 1795 to the present. What is clear from this history is that the question of how to interpret the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase is far from settled. In general, the debate has been approached from the perspective of grammatical concerns, stylistic issues, OT background of πίστις, theological considerations, and the use of πίστις in Greek literature. It is evident from the history of interpretation that although many scholars embrace the subjective genitive interpretation, others remain convinced that the

traditional reading is the best interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. The latter is the position taken in this work.

In chapter 2 we investigated the use of πίστις in the LXX and the rest of the NT corpus outside of Paul's letters. We found that in the LXX πίστις always means "faithfulness." This evidence lends support to the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as "the faithfulness of Christ."¹ We also found that πίστις as "faithfulness" is not prominent in the NT. The NT writers use πίστις predominantly in the active sense of "belief" or "trust." Significant in the use of πίστις in the NT is the fact that outside of Paul, other NT writers make use of πίστις with objective genitives (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13; 14:12). Even supporters of the subjective genitive view agree that most of these (Mark 11:22 in particular) are instances of πίστις with an objective genitive.² We concluded, based on the predominant use of πίστις in the active sense and the instances of πίστις with objective genitives, that there is rather significant support among other NT writers for taking the Pauline phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive construction. It is reasonable to assume that Paul's use of πίστις would be consistent with that of the rest of the NT writers.³

¹For example, A. G. Hebert, "'Faithfulness' and 'Faith,'" *Theology* 58 (1955): 373; Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 87.

²For example, Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 269; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 149; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 116. Very few have tried to argue against these examples. See, for example, D. W. B. Robinson, "'Faith of Jesus Christ', A New Testament Debate," *RTR* 29 (1970): 78; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 71.

³Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 69, 70. Here we disagree with those who argue that Paul used πίστις in keeping with OT background. See note 1 above.

Turning to the writings of the apostolic fathers, we argued in chapter 3 that the evidence from fathers inclines one toward the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. The fathers used πίστις mainly in the active sense and in many cases with an objective genitive (*1 Clem.* 3.3; 27.3; *Ign. Eph.* 16.1; 20.1; *Ign. Magn.* 1.1; *Ign. Rom.* Introduction; *Barn.* 4.8; 6.17; *Herm. Vis.* 4.22.8; *Herm. Man.* 11.43.4, 9; *Herm. Sim.* 6.61.2). It seems from these examples that πίστις with an objective genitive may have been a shorthand way of indicating the object of faith. Even in cases where it is clear that πίστις is used with a subjective genitive, it still carries an active or different sense other than “faithfulness.” Also, there is no explicit use of πίστις for God’s or Christ’s faithfulness in the fathers. Where “faithfulness” is meant, the adjective πιστός is the word of choice. The fathers never make reference to Jesus as having faith or believing. On the contrary, Jesus is portrayed as the object of πίστις in a few cases (*1 Clem.* 22.1; *Ign. Eph.* 1.1; 14.1). We also noted that the fathers do not make reference to Jesus’ obedience and there is no evidence that they equate faith with obedience. These reasons provide further support, from Paul’s earliest interpreters, for our thesis that πίστις Χριστοῦ is “faith in Christ.”⁴

In chapter 4 we took the opportunity to address preliminary considerations surrounding the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Here we focused on the main arguments made in defense of the subjective genitive interpretation. We concluded that these arguments are generally inconclusive and can be reasonably answered from an objective genitive point of view. Thus, our thesis stands. It was also noted in chapter 4 that Paul’s use of the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ with πίστις and other verbal nouns lends

⁴If πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ’s faithfulness which is understood as his death on the cross, there

further support for our thesis. Paul uses these genitives with objective genitive constructions much more frequently than he does with subjective genitive constructions. Although this is not conclusive, it would seem that stylistically, the use of verbal nouns with the objective genitive is a common practice in Paul as well as the rest of the NT (see appendix 2).

Chapters 5-7

Chapters 5-7 are mainly exegetical in nature and focus on the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans (chapter 5), Galatians (chapter 6), and Philippians (chapter 7).⁵ The thesis proposed in this dissertation stands or falls on the strength of the evidence in these chapters.⁶

In chapter 5, we made the case for πίστις Χριστοῦ (Rom 3:22, 26) as “faith in Christ” by focusing on 3:21-26. It was also noted that the objective genitive interpretation is consistent with the development of Paul’s argument in 3:27-31 and 4:1-25. This interpretation is strengthened by the use of πίστις in the preceding context (1:1-3:20) and the subsequent context (5-11). Although the reading “faithfulness of Christ” for πίστις Χριστοῦ is possible, it lacks strong support from the overall context of Romans. The subjective genitive view fails to account for Paul’s use of πίστις in Romans, especially in cases where he clearly links the human act of belief with justification. Outside of 3:22, 26, each time that Paul links πίστις with justification, it is

is no unambiguous evidence from the fathers in support of this interpretation.

⁵Eph 3:12 is treated in an appendix 4.

⁶While the evidence from chap. 2 (πίστις in the LXX and NT) and chap. 3 (the apostolic fathers) is important, it serves to support the evidence from these epistles.

always the faith of the believer (Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 4:3, 5, 11, 13; 5:1; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; cf. Gal 3:8, 11, 24). Additionally, outside of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in 3:22, whenever Paul contrasts works of the law with faith, it is clear that the contrast is between two human activities (Rom 3:28; 4:2-3, 5; 9:30-32; 10:4-6). This strongly argues for our view that in 3:21-22 where πίστις is linked with the righteousness from God and contrasted with works of the law, Paul intends the believer's faith in Christ. Also, the absence of any explicit reference in Romans to Jesus as exercising faith or being faithful (πιστὸς) and the many references to the faith of believers (Rom 1:5, 8, 12; 3:27-28, 30-31; 4:5, 9, 11-14, 16, 19-20; 5:1-2; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 14:23; 16:26) speaks against the subjective genitive view. There would have to be overwhelming evidence to overturn this emphasis on the faith of believers and make a case for the notion of "the faithfulness of Christ."⁷ It is our judgment that there is greater contextual support for the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Romans 3:22 as "faith in Christ."

Chapter 6 addresses the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Galatians 2:16, 20 and 3:22. Here too, we found that the objective genitive interpretation is supported in the context of Galatians 2 and 3. While πίστις could mean "faithfulness," the evidence for this view is not forth-coming from within Galatians. On the contrary, we found that in Galatians 2 and 3, Paul consistently uses πίστις in the active sense of "belief" or "trust." There is no clear evidence in this context to suggest reading πίστις as "faithfulness." As in Romans, the πίστις of believers is linked with justification and contrasted with works of the law in

⁷Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 185; James D. Dunn, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A

Galatians (Gal 2:16b; 3:8, 11, 24). There is also a strong emphasis on the faith of believers in Galatians (Gal 2:20; 3:2, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 14, 26; 5:5-6). Absent from Galatians is any clear indication that Paul intended πίστις Χριστοῦ to be understood as Christ's act of obedience to the Father's will or to his death on the cross. The subjective genitive requires appeal to contexts outside of Galatians in defense of this interpretation. The objective genitive reading makes sense in the context of Galatians as it stands.

As is the case in Romans and Galatians, πίστις Χριστοῦ in Philippians 3:9 as "faith in Christ" makes good sense in the context of 3:2-11. Here too, faith is linked with righteousness from God and contrasted with works of the law. It seems that in all three contexts of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase, the issue centers around the righteousness/justification of God, faith as the means by which one is justified, and the rejection of works of the law in this process of justification.

General Observations

It has been our concern to make the case for the objective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ from within the context of each epistle (Romans, Galatians, and Philippians). Putting these chapters together, we make the following observations in support of our thesis. First, throughout our investigation, we have not found any evidence in the NT, the apostolic fathers, or in Paul's letters that Jesus exercised faith in the sense that he "believed." On the contrary, we found many references to the believer's faith in Christ. Second, there is no explicit reference to πίστις as "the faithfulness of Christ" in the NT or in the fathers. In the few instances

(Dallas: Word, 1988), 1:166; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 225.

where the faithfulness of Christ is referred to, πιστὸς is the word of choice. There are very few examples of these and none is found in Paul. Seifrid remarks that “Only five texts in the New Testament speak of the ‘faithfulness of Christ’ using the adjective *pistos*, a paucity which stands in stark contrast to the approximately 400 (both implicit and direct) references to faith in Christ in the New Testament.”⁸ Third, a key argument for the subjective genitive position is that πίστις Χριστοῦ is Christ’s faithfulness which is his obedience to the Father’s will. Romans 5:18-19 and Philippians 2:6-11 are pointed to as evidence for this argument. What we have found is that the concept of the obedience of Christ is important in Paul. Yet, in none of these texts does Paul refer to the πίστις of Christ. In other words, although Paul refers to the obedience of Christ, he does not in any place refer to him as “faithful” (πιστὸς). Fourth, the reading “faith in Christ” fits the context of Paul’s argument best. That is, πίστις Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” makes sense of Paul’s flow of thought in Romans 3:22-4:25; Galatians 2-3; and Philippians 3:2-11. These reasons (as listed above) argue against the subjective genitive interpretation and for our thesis that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul is an objective genitive construction.

⁸Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 140.

APPENDIX 1

LIMITING THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ DEBATE TO THE SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE GENITIVE CATEGORIES

The debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ has been limited to two categories of subjective and objective genitives. This has been challenged and the categories of genitive of source or quality have been proposed. Seifrid argues that the genitive Χριστοῦ in relation to πίστις is most likely a genitive of source. As he argues, Paul most likely used the

genitive relation to express the basis of faith and therewith its character. He might have expressed this idea by speaking of “faith from (ἐκ) Christ”, but the semantically broader genitive relation serves to define faith in a way that the mere designation of its source does not. We have to do here with a “qualifying” genitive, which is roughly parallel to Paul’s usage of the genitive in “the word of Christ,” “the gospel of Christ,” “the truth of Christ,” “the law of Christ” and the like.¹

According to Seifrid, in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ, Paul “sets forth Christ as the exclusive, all-determining source of faith.”² Thus for Seifrid, the genitive in the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase is both source and quality.³

¹Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 146.

²Ibid., 142, 146. See also A. J. Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 262-63.

³Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, “The Question of the Historical Jesus,” in *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 303. See also Adolf Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* 5th ed (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1963), 586-587. He argues that the designation “objective genitive” is itself a poor explanation for the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ and that referring to Jesus only as the object of faith separates faith from its origin.

Williams also argues for a genitive of quality in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ.

He writes,

When Paul speaks of *pistis Christou*, he has in mind that faith which is given its distinctive character by the absolute trust and unwavering obedience of Jesus, who created, in the last days, this mode of being human in the world. Christian faith is Christ-faith, that relationship to God which Christ exemplified . . . Christ is not the ‘object’ of such faith, however, but rather its supreme exemplar – indeed, its creator. . . . As the eschatological actualizer and exemplar of such faith, Christ makes this orientation, this openness to God, this life-pervading trust and obedience, available as a real human possibility in the last days, the time between his resurrection and his parousia.⁴

Hultgren who argues strongly for the objective genitive reading is also convinced that Χριστοῦ is a genitive of source. He writes,

When Paul uses the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation, he is not referring to Christ’s faithfulness. The center of interest is the faith of the believer, and that is particularly faith “of” (or “in”) Christ. To emphasize the adjectival function of Χριστοῦ, one can speak (rather awkwardly) of “Christic faith” or (more clearly) “faith which is in and of Christ,” i. e., the faith of the believer which comes forth as Christ is proclaimed in the gospel (cf. Rom. 10:8, 17; Gal. 3:2, 5).⁵

In Hultgren’s view, πίστις Χριστοῦ is both objective genitive and genitive of source but his emphasis seems to be on the objective genitive.

Thus Williams, Hultgren, and Seifrid all agree that that the genitive Χριστοῦ is a genitive of quality in that it qualifies the noun πίστις⁶ or a genitive of source indicating the source or origin of faith. Though these are good arguments, there are reasons why the subjective and objective genitives remain the two grammatical possibilities for the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase. First, it is not clear what Williams and Hultgren mean by “Christ-

⁴S. K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 446.

⁵Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulation,” 257.

⁶See Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, III, Syntax (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 212-14; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early*

faith.” Williams is concerned to deny Christ as the object of faith and Hultgren’s last sentence in the quote above places him squarely within the objective genitive understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ.⁷ Second, if Christ is the source or origin or creator of faith (though one lacks textual evidence for this) this is still closer to the objective genitive reading. Faith here is still the believer’s and not Christ’s faith. Third, contextual considerations allow only for the subjective and objective genitive categories. The options proposed by Seifrid and Williams lack clear parallel examples. Seifrid does not provide other examples where Christ is said to be the source or origin of faith. He builds his case on the fact that πίστις Χριστοῦ appears in contexts where the “faith of Christ” is connected with the gift of salvation as well as in connection with justification.⁸ In our judgment, this still does not call for the conclusion that Christ is the source of faith in this context. There are other instances where πίστις is used absolutely in connection with justification and there is no indication of Jesus as the source of such faith. Genitive of source may not be a good choice here. As Wallace points out, this is not common in Koine Greek. He further notes that,

Since this usage [genitive of source] is not common, it is not advisable to seek it as the most likely one for a particular genitive that may fit under another label. In some ways, the possessive, subjective, and source genitives are similar. In any given instance, if they all make good sense, subjective should be given priority.

Christian Literature, ed. and trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 91-92 for discussion on the genitive of quality.

⁷Williams seems to make Christ only an exemplar of faith and does not explain how our faith relates to Christ though he agrees that the response of faith is necessary for justification. Otherwise Christ’s πίστις means nothing. The most he says is that “for the Apostle Paul, faith is that way of responding to God which is now a reality because at a particular moment in the fullness of time Jesus trusted and obeyed” (Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” 447).

⁸Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 145.

In cases where there is no verbal head noun, possessive still takes priority over source as an apt label.⁹

According to Wallace's comment, Seifrid's genitive of source would fit better with the subjective genitive, a position he rejects strongly.¹⁰ It seems that the subjective and objective genitives remain the two most likely categories for the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.

⁹Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 109.

¹⁰See Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 139-42.

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLES OF OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE GENITIVES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Evidence for Objective Genitive

εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (4:23);¹ ἐξουσίαν πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων (10:1); ¹ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία (12:31); τὴν παραβολὴν τοῦ σπείραντος (13:18); τὴν παραβολὴν τῶν ζιζανίων (13:36); ἀκοὰς πολέμων (24:6);² τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:1);³ ἐξουσίαν τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν ἀκαθάρτων (6:7); ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ (11:22); ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ (6:12); τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ (11:42); βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν (22:25);⁴ ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου (2:17); διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων (7:13, cf. 20:19); ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός (17:2); κατηγορίαν . . . τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (18:29); μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ (1:22); τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου (2:42); ἐπι εὐεργεσία ἀνθρώπου (4:9); τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ κυριοῦ (9:31); καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ (Rom 2:7); διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου (Rom 2:23); φόβος θεοῦ (Rom 3:18); ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης (Rom 3:25); ζῆλον θεοῦ (Rom 10:2); σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ (Rom 11:34); θεοῦ. . . διάκονός (Rom 13:4); ὁ λόγος . . . ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ (1 Cor 1:18); τῆς

¹Possibly subjective but most likely objective genitive in light of Luke 8:1 where “kingdom” is the direct of “proclaiming (εὐαγγελιζόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν).

²Cf. Luke 21:9, ἀκούσητε πολέμους.

³Cf. Acts 5:42 where “Christ” is direct object of proclaiming (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν).

⁴“Kings of Gentiles” means “those ruling over the Gentiles.”

ύμῶν ἐξουσίας (1 Cor 9:12); ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 15:15); ἀγνωσίαν γάρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν (1 Cor 15:34); τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου (2 Cor 5:11); ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 5:14);⁵ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ . . . εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 10:5); τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 4:13); ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ (Eph 5:21); δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ (Eph 6:6); τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ (Col 1:10); τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Thess 1:3); τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας (2 Thess 2:10); πίστει ἀληθείας (2 Thess 2:13); εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Thess 3:5); ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας (Titus 1:1); τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης (Jas 2:1); διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ (1 Pet 2:19); ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας (1 Pet 1:22); τὸν . . . φόβον αὐτῶν (1 Pet 3:14); ἀπόθεσις ρύπου (1 Pet 3:21); ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ . . . (2 Pet 1:2); ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (1 John 2:5);⁶

Evidence for the Subjective Genitive⁷

ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Matt 24:27); ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν (Mark 14:59); τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ (Luke 7:30); ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὑμῶν (Luke 21:19); τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ (John 5:42); τῆς προσδοκίας τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (Acts 12:11); τῶν προσευχῶν μου (Rom 1:10); δικαιοσύνη . . . θεοῦ (Rom 1:17); ὀργὴ θεοῦ (Rom 1:18); τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 2:3); διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως (Rom 4:13);⁸ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 5:5; 8:39); τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 8:35); ἡ . . . πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 9:11); τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ (Rom 13:2); ἀληθείας θεοῦ

⁵Could be subjective or plenary genitive.

⁶Could be subjective genitive.

⁷Some of these examples could be classified as genitive of possession, source or origin.

⁸In light of Rom 10:6 which has “the righteousness from faith.”

(Rom 15:8); κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου (Rom 16:25, cf. Rom 2:16; 2 Tim 2:8); τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου Ἀχαιικοῦ (1 Cor 16:17); ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 5:14); ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου (2 Cor 7:6); τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑποκοήν (2 Cor 7:15); τὴν . . . ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως (2 Cor 8:24);⁹ δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 1:12); τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης (Eph 4:3); τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (Eph 6:6); ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ (Phil 4:7); ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Col 3:15); τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος (1 Thess 1:3); διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων (1 Tim 4:1); ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν (1 John 2:16); τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. . . ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ (1 John 5:9); ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν (3 John 12).

⁹In this verse, only the pronouns ὑμῶν and ἡμῶν are subjective genitives. τῆς ἀγάπης and καυχήσεως are objective genitives respectively.

APPENDIX 3

ΠΙΣΤΙΣ IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES¹

Πίστις as Belief

There is no doubt that Paul puts much emphasis on faith.² Πίστις in the Pauline epistles ranges in meaning from “belief,” to “faithfulness,” and “Christian doctrine.” Of these different meanings, πίστις occurs mostly in the active sense of belief. Paul makes use of πίστις absolutely to refer to the faith of believers (see for example, Rom 1:5, 8, 12, 17 [εἰς πίστιν]; 3:27, 28, 30, 31; 4:5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20; 5:1, 2,; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 14:23; 16:26; Gal 3:2, 5, 8, 12, 14; 1 Cor 12:9;³ 13:2; 16:13⁴; 2 Cor 5:7; 8:7; 13:5; Gal 3:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14; 5:5, 6, Eph 2:8; 3:17; Phil 3:9b; Col 1:23⁵; 2 Thess 3:2; 2 Tim 1:5; 2:22; 3:10; 4:7; Titus 2:2, 10). Some examples are hard to

¹The Pauline authorship of all thirteen epistles is assumed in this work.

²Leon Morris notes that Paul uses the noun πίστις 142 times compared to 101 occurrences in the rest of the NT (“Faith,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 285).

³Faith, as a gift of the Spirit is “a special measure of faith that God can work miracles (cf. 13:2) or to sustain a person when he chooses not to work them” (Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 244).

⁴Τῇ πίστει in 1 Cor 16:13 could mean “the Christian religion” but even then, Barrett argues that this religion is “marked by trust and obedience” on the human side. See C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1968), 393.

⁵It is possible that πίστις in Col 1:23 is the Christian doctrine but 1:4 and 2:5 where πίστις is used with a preposition with Christ as its object inclines one to see here a reference to the faith of the individual. Opinions vary. P. T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco, Word, 1982), 69, says that faith here refers to the gospel and not the subjective response of faith. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 163, suggests that in this text, “τῇ πίστει is perhaps ‘your faith,’ rather than ‘the faith.’”

classify (1 Cor 13:13; 2 Cor 8:7; 13:5; Gal 2:23, 25; Eph 6:23; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:10; 4:7; Titus 2:2, 10; 3:15). Seifrid comments on the absolute use of πίστις in Paul that, “Paul generally presupposes that his addressees share his understanding that faith has its object in God’s work in Christ, a stance which is common to the letters of the New Testament.”⁶ From Paul’s general use of πίστις, we find that it refers often to the faith of believers. There is no explicit use of πίστις for the faith/faithfulness of Christ.

Πίστις Used with Prepositions

The object of πίστις is specified with a preposition ἐν, εἰς or πρὸς. The use of different prepositions to indicate the object of πίστις is mainly for style. It shows that Paul uses different constructions rather freely. There are eight instances of this with God or Christ as object. For instance, ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν . . . ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ (1 Cor 2:5), διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Gal 3:26),⁷ τὴν καθ’ ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (Eph 1:15, cf. Col 1:4), τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν (Col 2:5), ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν (1 Thess 1:8), πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 1:13, cf. 3:15). This use gives to πίστις the same function as the verb πιστεῶ.⁸ These examples provide unambiguous evidence that Paul does call for faith in Christ using the noun πίστις with a preposition. This would be the most natural way to understand the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Romans 3:22 (cf. Gal 2:16; 3:22; Phil 3:9).⁹

⁶Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 142.

⁷Disputed but see discussion in chap. 6.

⁸Such use of πίστις without a stated object and sometimes with a preposition is very close to the use of the verb πιστεῶ absolutely as well as with a preposition.

⁹Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 185.

Πίστις with Subjective Genitives

Third, Paul frequently makes use of πίστις with a genitive of person or personal pronoun. In this usage, the genitives are subjective for it is clearly the faith of the individual person in view. Even then, πίστις still has the active sense of “belief” (Rom 1:8, 12, 16; 4:5, 12; 1 Cor 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 1:24; 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:7; 1 Thess 3:5, 5, 6, 7, 10; 2 Thess 1:3, 4; 2 Tim 2:18; Titus 1:1). For example, “your faith” (ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, Rom 1:8) which is “proclaimed throughout the whole world,” is probably “faith toward God” (cf. 1 Thess 1:8). Abraham’s πίστις is his believing in the one who justifies the ungodly (Rom 4:5, 12). The faith (πίστις) of the Corinthian believers (1 Cor 15:14) is their act of believing.¹⁰ The faith (πίστις) of the Colossians is specifically “faith in Christ Jesus” (τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ, Col 1:4). The faith of the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:2, 5, 7, 10; 2 Thess 1:3, 4) is “faith toward God” (ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 1 Thess 1:8). Similarly, in 2 Tim 2:18, “the faith of some” is understandably “believing the truth” (context) or “faith in Christ Jesus” (cf. 2 Tim 1:13; 3:15). Only once is there an undisputed case of πίστις with a subjective genitive meaning “faithfulness” (Rom 3:3). It seems that even in the clear examples of πίστις with a subjective genitive, πίστις takes on an active sense and the meaning “faithfulness” does not fit the context.

Πίστις with Objective Genitives

Excluding the πίστις Χριστοῦ passages and their equivalents (Rom 3:22, 26;

¹⁰The statements “your faith also is vain” (κενή καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, 1 Cor 15:14) and “unless you believed in vain” (εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε, 1 Cor 15:2) are virtually synonymous. The object of such faith is either the gospel/what is preached (1 Cor 15:3-11) or faith in the power of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:5).

Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9) there are other uses of πίστις with the genitive case in Paul. This is important for our understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ since it shows that Paul does use πίστις with a genitive case to indicate its object. For example, we have διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ (“faith in the working of God,” Col 2:12), τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (“faith in the gospel,” Phil 1:27), and πίστει ἀληθείας (“faith in the truth,” 2 Thess 2:13). The genitives in these texts could be either subjective or objective (or apposition/source in the case of Phil 1:27) but it is most likely that they are examples of objective genitive constructions.

Very few scholars attempt to make a case for the subjective genitive reading in these examples. Robinson contends that πίστις in Colossians 2:12 is God’s πίστις meaning “pledge” or “assurance.”¹¹ With reference to 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Robinson concedes that the subjective genitive reading is difficult to defend. Yet, he opts for the possibility that the πίστις of God could be meant with ἀληθείας functioning as an adjectival or qualitative genitive.¹² Robinson’s argument is followed by Wallis who simply accepts it as conclusive.¹³ Hebert translates διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ as “through the faithfulness of the working of God.”¹⁴ It is interesting that Hays does not deal with these examples in his discussion on πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul. Despite Robinson’s attempts, there are good reasons why these examples are objective genitive

¹¹D. W. B. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’-a New Testament Debate,” *RTR* 29 (1970): 79.

¹²Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79.

¹³See Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 71 n. 35.

¹⁴G. Hebert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith,’” *Theology* 58 (1955): 377.

constructions.

Faith in the Working of God (Col 2:12)

It is possible that διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ (Col 2:12) means “through the faithfulness of the working of God” but the evidence from the use of πίστις in Colossians argues against this interpretation. Twice, πίστις is used with a preposition to indicate its object (1:4; 2:5). Twice, it is used absolutely but understood as the faith of believers (1:23; 2:7). In these instances, πίστις is used in the active sense of “belief.” Nothing in the epistle suggests the meaning “faithfulness” for πίστις. It is most probable that by διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ the readers understood it as “through faith in the working of God. O’Brien who argues for the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Philippians 3:9 and Ephesians 3:12, treats πίστις in Colossians 2:12 as the believer’s faith. He says that “ἐνέργεια is here [Col 2:12] the object of faith, cf. Eph 1:19-21.”¹⁵ In this light, the resurrection of Jesus is presented here as “the supreme manifestation of the power of God” such that “faith in the working of God” is “faith in the divine power which brought Christ back from the dead.”¹⁶

Faith in the Truth (2 Thess 2:13)

Again, πίστει ἀληθείας could be construed either as objective or subjective genitive. It is scarcely the case that πίστει ἀληθείας is a subjective genitive construction, “faithfulness of the truth” or “faith that comes from the truth.” Robinson is

¹⁵Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco: Word, 1982), 121.

¹⁶E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *Ephesians and Colossians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957; reprint, 1977), 236; Herbert M. Carson, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960; reprint,

correct to avoid this interpretation though he opts for adjectival or qualitative genitive.¹⁷

In 2 Thessalonians, πίστις is used in the active sense of “belief” and refers to the believer’s faith. This would support the reading, “faith in the truth” for πίστει ἀληθείας. The strongest argument for this interpretation is found in the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:11-13. Two kinds of people are contrasted in verses 11-12 and 13. Those judged because they “did not believe the truth,” οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ (v. 12) and those who receive salvation through “faith in the truth” (v. 13).¹⁸ It makes most sense to see here a contrast between lack of faith (belief) leading to condemnation and faith (belief) resulting in salvation.¹⁹

Faith in the Gospel (Phil 1:27)

The genitive in the phrase τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου could be taken in three ways: “faith that is the gospel” (genitive of apposition), “the faith that originates from the gospel” (genitive of source), or “faith in the gospel” (objective genitive).²⁰ Even if one understands πίστις here to be “faith that originates from the gospel” it still remains the faith of the believer. It cannot be ruled out that this is a reference to the believer’s faith in the gospel.

1975), 67; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Macmillan and Company, 1879; reprint, Zondervan, 1974), 185.

¹⁷Robinson, “Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79.

¹⁸RSV correctly has “belief in the truth” to bring out the active sense of πίστις.

¹⁹Cf. Turner, *Grammatical Insights*, 111; Leon Morris, *Thessalonians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956; reprint, 1974), 136-37; Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 45 (Waco: Word, 1982), 190-91;

²⁰See note on Phil 1:27 in NET. Both genitive of source and objective genitive are the most likely options. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 57; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 152 see a genitive of source but BDAG, s.v. “πίστις” lists it as objective genitive.

With these examples (Col 2:12; 2 Thess 2:13; Phil 1:27), πίστις appears with a genitive of object meaning that an objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ is not out of order. The case gains more strength when one considers other NT uses of πίστις with a genitive of object (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Jam 2:1; Rev, 2:13; 14:12).

The following summarizes Paul's use of πίστις in his letters that might inform our interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ: (1) Paul regularly uses πίστις absolutely and in the active sense of "belief." When so used, the object or content of what is believed is implied in context. In these instances, πίστις is always the faith of the individual or group of believers. (2) The second most frequent use of πίστις in Paul is with a genitive of person or personal pronoun. Though these are subjective genitives and refer to the faith of the person, there is always an understood object of such faith. With one exception (Rom 3:3), πίστις with a genitive of person or personal pronouns always has the sense "trust" or "believe." (3) Paul's use of πίστις with a preposition denoting its object further supports the sense of πίστις as "trust" or "believe." (4) In three places, we find πίστις used with an objective genitive. We gather from this that Paul rarely uses πίστις in the passive sense of "faithfulness." When Paul wants to indicate "faithfulness" he uses πιστός (Rom 3:3 is an exception) and he does not make a clear reference to Jesus' faithfulness (outside of the debated texts), not even with the adjective πιστός.²¹

²¹In a few cases, πιστός has the meaning "believing" or "believers" (2 Cor 6:15; 1 Tim 4:3, 10, 12; 5:16; 6:2; Titus 1:6). Note also the πιστός ὁ λόγος constructions in 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8. While the sense "faithfulness," "trustworthy," or "reliable" for πίστις is not predominant in Paul, it is communicated by the adjective πιστός. God's people and servants are described as "trustworthy" or "faithful" (1 Cor 4:2, 17; 7:35; Gal 3:9; Eph 1:1; 6:21; Col 1:2, 7; 4:7, 9; 1 Tim 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim 2:2 [Note also the "trustworthy statement" formula in 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 1:9; 3:8.]). Πιστός also describes God's faithfulness in relating to his people (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 2:13).

APPENDIX 4

FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST IN EPHESIANS

The epistle to the Ephesians contains the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (3:12) which resembles the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Paul (Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Rom 3:22, 26; Phil 3:9). Scholars have generally not given much weight to this text in resolving the meaning of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase.¹ This is probably because whatever conclusions one arrives at in the other texts apply here as well.² At issue is whether in Ephesians 3:12 we should translate διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ as “through his faith” meaning “Christ’s faithfulness,”³ or “through faith in him” meaning the believer’s subjective faith in Christ.⁴ The translation could go either way. The question is, which is the most likely.

¹Paul Foster, “The First Contribution to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Study of Ephesians 3:12,” *JSNT* 85 (2002): 78.

²Other reasons may include the fact that the Pauline authorship of Ephesians is debated, that the context where the other πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases appear deal with justification/righteousness in relation to the law and faith, but the context of Eph 3:12 does not address the issue justification and faith directly.

³Foster, “First Contribution,” 78; Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 347; Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pelican New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 249; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84 (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 128; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 151; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 115.

⁴Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 190; G. B. Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison*, New Clarendon Bible (Oxford, 1976), 67; Ernst Best, *Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 330; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003,

Πίστις αὐτοῦ as Christ's Faithfulness

Paul Foster has written a full article focusing on the contribution of Ephesians 3:12 to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. His basic argument is that Ephesians 3:12 provides evidence that among the first generation of believers post-Paul, πίστις Χριστοῦ was understood as referring to Christ's faithfulness. To this end, "Eph 3:12 provides the first contribution to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, and it comes down in favour of the subjective reading."⁵ Foster develops his arguments in terms of grammatical considerations, the immediate context of 3:8-13, and the wider contexts of 2:8, 18.

Grammatical Argument

Building on Burton's principle that the presence of the definite article with πίστις is important in deciding whether πίστις is used with a subjective genitive or not, Foster argues that 3:12 is a subjective genitive construction.⁶ Dunn and Hultgren use this principle in arguing for the objective genitive interpretation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation.⁷ Foster focuses on Dunn who rejects the subjective interpretation of Ephesians 3:12 even though πίστις is used with a definite article. For Dunn, Ephesians

reprint), 256-57; J. D. G. Dunn, "Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ," in R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 254.

⁵Foster, "First Contribution," 80, 96. He goes on to argue that "the proximity of the author of Ephesians to Paul himself may result in discovering what the apostle meant by the disputed πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase" (ibid.).

⁶In relation to genitive constructions involving πίστις, Burton states, "Those in which πίστις is accompanied by a subjective genitive indicating by whom the faith is exercised. The article in this case is almost invariably present. The object of the faith is usually indicated, more or less definitely, by the context, but occasionally directly expressed, such cases falling at the same time under the preceding head" (Burton, *Galatians*, 482).

⁷Dunn, "Once More," 252-54; Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulation," 253.

3:12 is an exception to the rule, but for Foster a consistent application of the principle demands that Ephesians 3:12 be taken as a subjective genitive construction.⁸

Ephesians 3:12 in Its Immediate Context

The immediate context of 3:8-13 shows that the emphasis is on Christ through whom Jews and Gentiles now have “boldness and access” to God as a consequence of Christ’s death.⁹ As to what Christ’s faith consists of, Foster explains that in 3:8, the “riches of Christ” (πλοῦτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ) refer to “that wealth and status bestowed upon Christ because of his obedience to the Father’s will (cf. Phil 2:6-11).”¹⁰ In light of this he concludes that Christ’s πίστις is his obedience. Describing Christ’s faithfulness as his obedience is acceptable for Foster because it conforms to the “multivalent nature of the language.”¹¹ Thus, in the immediate context of 3:12, the emphasis is on the “obedient sacrificial death of Christ” which makes possible confident access to God.¹² Foster concludes,

Therefore, in vv. 8-13 the revelation of the divine plan is implicitly, but inextricably, linked to Christ’s actions of obedient compliance to the Father’s will through the faithfulness of death. Moreover, it is on the basis of this faithfulness that the παρρησία and προσαγωγή are mediated through Christ to those who now participate in the new order.¹³

⁸See Dunn, “Once More,” 254. For Foster’s interaction with Dunn’s exception argument, see Foster, “First Contribution,” 81-83. While Foster zooms in on the argument based on the presence of the definite article, he says nothing of the other arguments put forward by Dunn and Hultgren.

⁹Foster, “First Contribution,” 84; cf. Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 129; O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 249.

¹⁰Foster, “First Contribution,” 84; cf. O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 249; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 132-33.

¹¹Foster, “First Contribution,” 87.

¹²*Ibid.*, 88; Barth, *Ephesians*, 329.

¹³Foster, “First Contribution,” 89.

Ephesians 3:12 in Its Broader Context

According to Foster, there is a verbal parallel between 3:12 and 2:18 and “an important thematic contact” between 3:12 and 2:8. Both 2:18 and 3:12 use the verb ἔχομεν and make reference to τὴν προσαγωγήν. At the beginning of each verse is a reference to Christ as the basis for access, δι’ αὐτοῦ (2:18) and ἐν ᾧ (3:12). The διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ phrase in 3:12, which clarifies the basis for the access to God, is absent in 2:18. Yet, the material preceding 2:18 describes the basis of the access as διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ (“through the cross”). According to Foster, διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ (2:16) is a clarification of διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (3:12).¹⁴

Turning his attention to 2:8, Foster argues for interpreting διὰ πίστεως not as the human response of faith but rather as the faithfulness of Christ by which God’s gift (of salvation) is given.¹⁵ If taken as human faith, then faith becomes the basis for salvation. On the contrary, “salvation, and the πίστις that generates it, are portrayed as divine provisions made on behalf of the believers through Christ’s obedience to the

¹⁴He writes, “The equivalence of these two phrases demonstrates not only that the author of Ephesians was indeed referring to Christ’s faithfulness as the basis of such access, but, moreover, it becomes clear that the content of this act of faithfulness is presented as the death of Christ on the cross” (ibid., 90-91). Furthermore, he notes that reference to the cross (1:7; 2:16) or the blood of Christ (2:13) in Ephesians “connote the idea of a self-surrendering, an act of entrusting himself to God’s eternal purpose, which by its very nature entails obedience, or better still, faithfulness” (ibid., 86). Similarly, Barth also argues that 3:12 parallels 2:18 where Christ alone is portrayed as the mediator between Jews’ and Gentiles’ access to God. He concludes from this that the words “through his faithfulness” (διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ, 3:12) are synonyms for “in Christ’s blood,” “in his flesh,” “in one body,” “through the cross,” “in one Spirit” in 2:13-18 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 347 n. 111; cf. Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 132-33). The assumption here is that if access to God is said to be through the cross in one place and through faith in another, then the two (cross and faith) must mean the same thing. This does not necessarily follow. It is just as reasonable to understand the reference to be that the cross of Christ forms the ground for our access to God, and faith in him is the means by which one appropriates the salvation accomplished by Christ’s work on the cross.

¹⁵Foster, “First Contribution,” 92. So too, O’Brien who maintains that διὰ πίστεως in Ephesians 2:8 is a shorter expression of πίστις Χριστοῦ (O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 175). Barth, on the other hand, believes that included in the word “faith” in 2:8 are references to “God’s faithfulness,” “Christ’s faithfulness,” and the “faith of the saints” (Barth, *Ephesians*, 225).

Father's will."¹⁶ Foster concludes, "once again, in the wider context of the epistle, when πίστις is linked with the soteriological process, it denotes the faithfulness of Christ that found its demonstration in the obedient death of Christ on the cross."¹⁷

Conclusion

Foster concludes that the weight of the grammatical arguments, and the immediate and wider context speak in favor of the subjective genitive understanding of διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ in 3:12 as Christ's faithfulness which is specifically his death on the cross. Foster does not accept Pauline authorship of Ephesians and explains that the author of the epistles sought to preserve and explain Paul's meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ. He did so by "emphasizing the already implicit sense of πίστις Χριστοῦ terminology, by showing that it refers to Christ's faithfulness in going to the cross."¹⁸ As such, Ephesians 3:12 provides evidence that among the first generation of believers post-Paul, πίστις Χριστοῦ was understood as referring to Christ's faithfulness.¹⁹

Πίστις αὐτοῦ as Faith in Him (Christ)

Contrary to the views summarized above for the subjective genitive interpretation, some scholars argue for an objective genitive reading of διὰ τῆς πίστεως

¹⁶Foster, "First Contribution," 93.

¹⁷Ibid., 94. It is difficult to see with Foster that πίστις in 2:8 is Christ's faithfulness (see below).

¹⁸Ibid., 95.

¹⁹One is left wondering how the Eph 3:12 text can help resolve the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate in Paul since the phrase is more ambiguous in Ephesians than in the other Pauline texts. The πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Paul is followed by a reference to the faith of believers (Gal 2:16; 3:22; Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9), but this is not the case in Ephesians.

αὐτοῦ in 3:12. First, in 3:12, ἐν ᾧ at the beginning of the verse refers to Christ as the ground for the believer's access to God. "It is because of the new situation God has brought about in and through Christ" that both Jews and Gentiles have access to God.²⁰ The phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως indicates the means by which this new situation in Christ is appropriated.²¹

Second, leading up to 3:12, the author has used πίστις twice. In 1:15 the author mentions the faith of the Ephesians (τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν) in the Lord Jesus (ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ). Here, πίστις is used with the preposition ἐν plus a dative object (τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ). There is no dispute that the faith here is the believer's trust in the Lord Jesus.²² The second occurrence of πίστις is in 2:8 where it is written that salvation is τῆ χάριτί ("by grace") διὰ πίστεως ("through faith").²³ Some have sought to make the case that πίστις here in 2:8 is the faithfulness of Christ.²⁴ Despite the attempt of these individuals, the majority opinion is that the πίστις in 2:8 is the believer's faith by which the gift of salvation is received.²⁵ The addition of "not from works" (v. 9a) indicates that

²⁰Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 190; Caird, *Letters from Prison*, 67; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 257.

²¹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 190.

²²Wallis acknowledges this but goes on to argue that since πίστις is used with ἐν in 1:15, it shows that the author was familiar with the construction πίστις ἐν plus the dative and therefore could have used it in 3:12 (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 128). Had this occurred, Wallis would still not be satisfied, for he argues that πίστις ἐν is ambiguous because it could indicate location and not the object of faith (ibid., 128 n. 2).

²³For a concise and helpful summary of the issue surrounding the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο in 2:8, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 334-35.

²⁴So O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 175; Foster, "First Contribution," 92.

²⁵For example, Best, *Ephesians*, 226; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 111; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 227; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 129. According to Best, it is unlikely that πίστις in 2:8 is Christ's faith because the author of Ephesians mentions Christ regularly and if he had intended Christ's faith, one would expect the genitive "of Christ" to follow faith (Best, *Ephesians*, 226). Also, though πίστις is used without a specified object, it is understood from 1:13 and 15 that the object is Christ (ibid., 226).

the focus is on the human response in salvation.²⁶ The whole process of salvation (which includes the gift of faith) is a gift from God. Therefore works are excluded.²⁷

In light of how πίστις has been used leading up to 3:12, it is fair to conclude that when the audience heard the words “we have boldness and confident access through the faith of him” they would have concluded that faith is used in the same manner as earlier in the letter, their faith in Christ.²⁸ To argue otherwise would be to grant to πίστις a sense that is not evident in the epistle.²⁹

Lincoln points out that a similar theme of access to God is found in Romans 5:2, and there the access is a consequence of justification by faith.³⁰ In Romans 5:2, faith is clearly the believer’s trust which is the means of access to God. The parallel between

²⁶Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 130.

²⁷The qualification in vv. 8a-9 would not make much sense in context if the human response of faith was not in view in 2:8.

²⁸Another instance of πίστις referring to the believer’s trust is found in 3:17, “Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Best, *Ephesians*, 226; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 206-207; O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 259; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 262). Contra Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 132, who takes πίστις in 3:17 as possibly Christ’s own faith.

²⁹Here we disagree with the arguments summarized earlier which give to πίστις the meaning “faithfulness” which is “Christ’s obedience” (see discussion earlier). The parallel with 2:18 does not warrant this interpretation of πίστις. It remains to be shown that by the word πίστις the author of Ephesians meant “Christ’s obedience” in dying on the cross. It is a strained interpretation of πίστις to argue, as Barth does, that the words διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ are synonyms for “in Christ’s blood,” “in his flesh,” “in one body,” “through the cross,” “in one Spirit” in 2:13-18 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 347 n. 111; cf. O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 249 n. 114; Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 131). Wallis’s argument that πίστις in 3:12 must be Christ’s faith because no other πιστεύω cognate is attested in the immediate context (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 128). This is a surprising comment since Wallis himself admits to the use of πίστις in 1:15 and 2:8 as the believer’s faith. He gives no reasons why these occurrences of πίστις should have no relevance for the meaning of πίστις in 3:12. Wallis may have overstated his case in his quest to retain the centrality of Christ in Ephesians when he writes that the “intimacy of the relationship between Christ and believers is so profound that the faith of the latter can be spoken of almost exclusively in terms of the faith of Christ – his response encompasses all human response” (Wallis, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 134).

³⁰Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 190. See also John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; reprint, 1973), 1:370.

Romans 5:2 and Ephesians 3:12 and the fact that faith is clearly the human faith in the former, is a strong indication that faith in the latter is also the believer's faith in Christ.³¹

In light of these reasons we conclude that the objective genitive interpretation of διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ in 3:12 is a reasonable interpretation in the context of the epistle. It accounts for the use of πίστις in the letter as the believer's faith and it is also congruent with the parallel in Romans 5:2.

³¹Interestingly, Foster alludes to Rom 5:1-2 and only mentions that the believer's access to God is grounded on Christ. He says nothing about the use of πίστις in this context (Foster, "First Contribution," 88). Hays also points out this connection but rejects Murray's argument that Rom 5:2 supports the objective genitive view in Ephesians 3:12. Yet, Hays does not seem to deny that faith in Rom 5:2 is the believer's faith (Hays, *Faith*, 152).

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ABSTRACT

THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST: AN ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S USE OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

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This dissertation defends the thesis that the Pauline phrase, πίστις Χριστοῦ (“faith of Christ” [Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Phil 3:9; Eph 3:12]), in its various contexts, is best translated as “faith in Christ” (objective genitive) and not “faith/faithfulness of Christ” (subjective genitive). Chapter 1 surveys the history of the debate from 1795 to the present.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the use of πίστις (“faith”) in the LXX and the rest of the NT corpus outside of Paul’s letters. It is argued that the LXX usage of πίστις supports the subjective genitive interpretation, but the NT usage argues for the objective genitive interpretation.

Chapter 3 investigates the use of “faith” in the writings of the apostolic fathers. The research shows that the fathers use πίστις along the lines of NT writers and the evidence from their writings also supports our thesis concerning the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase in Paul.

Chapter 4 addresses the nature of the genitive case, Paul’s use of the genitives Χριστοῦ, κυρίου, and θεοῦ. Also in chapter 4, the main arguments made in defense of the subjective genitive interpretation are summarized and evaluated.

Chapters 5-7 are exegetical in nature and make up the core of this dissertation. Arguments are made from the context of each letter in which the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase appears (Romans, Galatians, and Philippians). First, the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ is sought in its immediate context and the results evaluated in light of the broader context of each letter. We found that in all these instances, the reading “faith in Christ” for πίστις Χριστοῦ is the more probable reading in context.

Chapter 8 summarizes the results of this investigation and evaluates the thesis proposed in this dissertation. Appendices 1-4 cover topics such as (1) why the debate is limited to the subjective and objective genitives (appendix 1), (2) examples of subjective and objective genitives in the NT (appendix 2), (3) πίστις in the rest of Paul’s letters (appendix 3), and (4) πίστις Χριστοῦ in Ephesians 3:12 (appendix 4).

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