

THE RHETORIC OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH IN ROMANS 4

by

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ABSTRACT

The situation in the Letter to the Romans is one of dissension between Judean and gentile Christians. This dissension is deep seated because it occurs along the fault lines of Judean ethnic identity. Here, Judean Christians define their ethnic identity in terms of possessing the Mosaic law. Two factors aggravate this dissension. First, ethnic identity resists changes. Second, the audience is situated within the Mediterranean agonistic culture where honour is the most sought after limited good. This moves Judean Christians to use the Mosaic law to gain honour from gentile Christians. From a Judean emic perspective, the Mosaic law gains them righteousness. This righteousness is not only a social marker. More importantly, it is a socio-ethical construct that seeks to gain them honour in the eyes of the significant other, God. Consequently, gentile Christians are considered as inferior by Judean Christians. To alleviate this dissension, Paul uses the rhetoric of Abraham's trust (faith) that takes a two-pronged approach. He first undermines the Mosaic law as a means for Abraham to attain a worldwide fatherhood that makes Judeans Abraham's descendants. Paul next explains how trust in God gains Abraham a worldwide fatherhood so that both Judean and gentile Christians can become descendants of Abraham. In this way, Judean Christians' boast toward gentile Christians, and hence, dissension between these two groups are removed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient Abbreviations

<i>RIG</i>	<i>Recueil des Inscriptions Grecques</i>
<i>SIG</i>	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplement Epigraphicum Graecum</i>

Ancient Literature

<i>Apoc. Abr.</i>	The Apocalypse of Abraham
Aristotle	
<i>Gen. Ani.</i>	<i>De Generatione Animalium</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politica</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
Cicero	
<i>Inv.</i>	<i>De Inventione</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De Officiis</i>
<i>Rhe. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica Ad Herennium</i>
<i>Fam.</i>	<i>Familiares</i>
Dio Cassius	
<i>Hist. rom.</i>	<i>Historia romana</i>
Dio Chrysostom	
<i>Orat.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
Diodorus	
<i>Bib. hist.</i>	<i>Biblioteca historica</i>
Herodotus	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>
Hesiod	
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Women</i>

Josephus	
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	<i>Against Apion</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Judean Antiquities</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>Judean War</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Let. Aris.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
NT	New Testament
PCol.	Columbia Papyri
Plautus	
<i>Men.</i>	<i>The Two Menaechmuses</i>
Philo	
<i>Abra.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De virtutibus</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Pliny the Elder	
<i>Nat. Hist.</i>	<i>Naturalis Historia</i>
Plutarch	
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralis</i>
Quintilian	
<i>Inst. Orat.</i>	<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
Seneca	
<i>Ben.</i>	<i>De Beneficiis</i>
<i>Clem.</i>	<i>De Clementia</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae Morales</i>
Seneca the Elder	
<i>Ex. Con.</i>	<i>Excerpta Controversiae</i>
Suetonius	
<i>Cal.</i>	<i>Caligula</i>
<i>Jul.</i>	<i>Divus Julius</i>
<i>Tib.</i>	<i>Tiberius</i>
LXX	Septuagint
Tacitus	
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i>

Modern Literature

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. <i>The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> . Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Trans. R. W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>ERS</i>	<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>
<i>ERSP</i>	<i>European Review of Social Psychology</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>

<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNTSup	JSNT Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
KJV	King James Version
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>MTZ</i>	<i>Münchener theologische Zeitschrift</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	<i>NovT</i> Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>QJS</i>	<i>The Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SCJR	Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations
SP	Sacra Pagina
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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INTRODUCTION

1 Statement of the Problem

Romans 4 treats important themes such as righteousness by faith and the fatherhood of Abraham for Judean Christians¹ and gentile² Christians. Thus, interpreters and those interested in Christian theology have rightly engaged this passage when discussing important topics such as salvation history and the nature of the Christian faith.³ This passage has also

1. In this dissertation, “Judean” is used in place of the usual term “Jew” for reasons that I discuss in my chapter 3.

2. While some scholars use “Gentiles” with the uppercase “G,” (e.g., Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 113, 117, et passim), I have chosen the lowercase “g.” The reason is that the group “gentiles” does not denote an ethnic group. Although Terence L. Donaldson, “‘Gentile Christianity’ as a Category in the Study of Christian Origins,” *HTR* 106 (2013): 451–52, assigns an uppercase “G” to the word, “gentiles,” his comments corroborate my point that gentiles are not an ethnic group: “Left to their own devices and self-definitions, Phrygians, Parthians or Bithynians would no more describe themselves as ἔθνη than they would as βάρβαροι. In each case the term is one imposed by others—Jews in one case, Greeks in the other.” See Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University, 1994), 83, 84, et passim, who uses a lowercase “g.”

3. See, for example, the involved argument between U. Wilckens and G. Klein where Wilckens insists that Paul advocates the continuity of salvation history in Romans 4: Ulrich Wilckens, “Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Römer 4,” in *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen. Festschrift für Gerhard von Rad*, ed. R. Rendtorff and K. Koch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 111–27; Günter Klein, “Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte,” *EvT* 23 (1963): 424–47; Ulrich Wilckens, “Zu Römer 3,21–4,25: Antwort an G. Klein,” *EvT* 24 (1964): 586–610; Günter Klein, “Exegetische Probleme in Römer 3,21–4,25: Antwort an Ulrich Wilckens,” *EvT* 24 (1964): 676–83. Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 137, interprets Romans 4 as supporting salvation history from the perspective of typology. K. Berger, “Abraham in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen,” *MTZ* 17 (1966): 47–89, takes a mediating position. See also the discussion in Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul’s Understanding of God in Romans*, NovTSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 103–05, and the bibliographic references of

been a fertile ground for discussing the so called “New Perspective”⁴ which has become a “reigning paradigm that . . . controls contemporary discussion on Paul” and other related themes.⁵ Moving the discussion forward, however, is difficult as scholars have yet to come to an agreement on the intent of the passage without which there is no common platform to discuss the details of this passage for theological issues.⁶ Understanding the rhetoric of Romans 4 can help clarify the details and intent of this passage.

Romans 4 also deals extensively with the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians. It, thus, has an important “social function”⁷ in mediating ethnic issues that are straining the relationship between these two groups. Its social function is accentuated by the fact that it is the first chapter (apart from a brief 3:29-30) that addresses, in some length, Judean and gentile Christians as one people (under the fatherhood of Abraham). Paul seeks to alleviate the tension in the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians by way of the rhetoric of Romans 4.

Therefore, this dissertation hopes, by an investigation into and a better understanding of the rhetoric of Abraham’s faith in Romans 4, to further theological discussions and also to

scholars (including E. Käsemann, R. Bultmann, E. P. Sanders, P. Stulmacher, etc.) who have discussed Romans 4 for various theological interests.

4. E.g., E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 489–91; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 227; Richard B. Hays, “‘Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather According to the Flesh?’ A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1,” *NovT* 27 (1985): 76–98.

5. D. A. Carson, “Introduction,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism, Vol. 1*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 1.

6. For examples of how different construals of the intent of Romans 4 affect the interpretation of details pertaining to the New Perspective, see N. T. Wright, “Romans and the Theology of Paul,” in *Pauline Theology, Volume III*, ed. David M Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 40–41; Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Rom 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 233–36.

7. Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, SNTSMS 56 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 139.

better understand how this chapter alleviates the dissension between Judean and gentile Christians in Romans. From this point onwards, where appropriate, I shall translate the cognates of πιστ- as “trust” in place of the traditional rendering, “faith,” as it coheres better with the usage in the Mediterranean world. As I shall later elaborate, in the first century preindustrial world of the NT, power, property, and wealth were concentrated in the hands of two percent of the people who were the elites of the society.⁸ To obtain special goods, the vast majority of the world had to ask favours of these elites. When a patron granted a favour, a long term patron-client relationship was formed. A patron would grant favours to the client. The appropriate response of the client to the patron was to trust the patron to provide. This trust also included loyalty to the patron. Such an understanding undergirded the relationship between Abraham and God in Romans 4.

I shall now provide a literature review of the state of the research with regards to the rhetoric of Romans 4, as well as social and cultural studies that impact on the meaning of this chapter.

2 Literature Review

Romans 4 is a piece of rhetoric written by Paul to persuade a specific audience, in this case, the Roman Christian audience. This act of communication is only recognisable when read in light of “specific, material and ideological contexts” which involve social and cultural contexts.⁹ In other words, the social and cultural contexts which give rise to ideological and persuasive power in Romans need to be investigated. What follows below reviews the state

8. See below, pp. 174-181.

9. J. David Hester (Amador), *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*, JSNTSup 174 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 19–20, following Bakhtin. See Pam Morris, ed., *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov* (London: E. Arnold, 1994), 26–37; also, M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 271, who comments that language must be understood in “all its ideological spheres” as this involves the process of “sociopolitical and cultural centralization.”

of research in the purpose of persuasion, that is, the rhetorical goal of Romans 4, and major social and cultural studies done on Romans 4.

2.1 Purpose of Persuasion

Traditionally, this text has been understood as a polemic against righteousness by deeds.¹⁰ Since Abraham is regarded as the model par excellence of obedience to the law of Moses,¹¹ Paul's interpretation, which shows that Abraham was made righteous by trust, constitutes a strong polemic against righteousness by means of the Mosaic law. This seems, *prima facie*, to be the intent considering that the theme of righteousness by trust is a thread that runs through the chapter. Recently, however, this interpretation has been called into question by proponents of the New Perspective. They claim that Judaism, like Christianity, advocates salvation by grace. Hence, Paul's polemic is not levelled at some form of legalism. Paul's contention, rather, was with the Judeans' perceived privileged ethnic status. Thus, New Perspective scholars argue that Romans 4 revolves around Abraham as the father of Judean and gentile Christians.¹² What follows elaborates on the two views.

10. E.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 224–25; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 105; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 255.

11. Judeans contemporary with Paul often present Abraham as a model for the devout Judean. E.g., in *Jub* 16:25-28, Abraham is said to have obeyed the law although it had yet to be written; see also *Jub* 24:11: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thy father obeyed My voice, and kept My charge and My commandments, and My laws, and My ordinances, and My covenant; and now obey My voice and dwell in this land." Similarly, *Bar* 57:1-2; *CD* 3:2.

12. Thus, Hays, "Have We Found," 84, "Romans is *not* how a person may find acceptance with God; the problem is to work out an understanding of the relationship in Christ between Jews and Gentiles." See also Michael Cranford, "Abraham in Romans 4: The Father of All Who Believe," *NTS* 41 (1995): 71–88; Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 45–63. Cf. Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 209–11, who subscribes to this view but does not support the New Perspective.

2.1.1 Romans 4 as Rhetoric to Establish Righteousness by Trust

The view that the rhetoric of Romans 4 attempts to establish righteousness by trust has several variations. Käsemann understands the primary purpose of Romans 4 in terms of providing scriptural proof for the thesis in 3:21-26, which is elaborated in 3:27-31, that righteousness comes by trust. This thesis, as Paul explains in Romans 4, is supported by “God’s direction of salvation history . . . as it is documented in the OT.”¹³ Käsemann further elaborates that Paul chooses Abraham because of “the Jewish tradition which closely connects the covenants with Abraham and Moses.”¹⁴ Like Käsemann, Byrne also regards Abraham in Romans 4 as a scriptural proof of righteousness by trust and sees Abraham being depicted as part of salvation history in Romans 4.¹⁵ He, however, narrows Romans 4 as a response to a narrower preceding context, namely, 3:21-22. Cranfield thinks that Romans 4 substantiates the first part of 3:27 that no one has a right to boast. This is achieved by establishing the basis that Abraham has “no right to glory.”¹⁶ Paul, as Cranfield understands him, selects Abraham primarily because he is regarded by the Judeans’ as a model who attained righteousness by deeds.¹⁷ In the same vein, Fitzmyer interprets Romans 4 as

13. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 91, interprets Abraham as “the prototype of faith” (cf. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 127). See also Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), 79–101. Similarly, Wilckens, “Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Römer 4,” 10, interprets Abraham as beginning “election history.” Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 87, however, argues against Wilckens that Paul does not advocate an unbroken continuity in salvation history which “could fit into the theological formula of promise and fulfilment.”

14. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 105. Scholars who regard Abraham as part of salvation history include Moo, *Romans*, 257, footnote 8; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 371.

15. Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 141–42, does not use the term “salvation history.” He implies it, however, when he says that Abraham’s “ancestral role continues in a truly representative way . . . for his descendants” including “the glorious Israel of the messianic age” and is, “[a] definition of God’s eschatological people.”

16. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 224; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 369–71.

17. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 227. Also, Moo, *Romans*, 256; Byrne, *Romans*, 142; Jewett, *Romans*, 308–9. Contra Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New*

primarily “an illustration of 3:27” but adds that Romans 4 also responds to 3:31.¹⁸ Moo argues that Paul seeks in Romans 4 to elaborate the key theme, righteousness by trust, as found in 3:27-31¹⁹ and to draw out its implications, especially that of the “full inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God.”²⁰ Paul’s choice of Abraham stems from several reasons: his pivotal role in the formation of the people of Israel, his position as an exemplar of Torah obedience and trust, and his pivotal position in the history of salvation.²¹

Scholars who take the position that Paul by Romans 4 seeks to establish righteousness by trust generally provide first a minimal discussion of how Romans 4 continues the preceding argument before proceeding to demonstrate the logic of Romans 4 based on their preferred position. It is difficult, however, to decide on the correct view from their discussions as they do not substantiate their positions with sufficient proof. Neither have they interacted sufficiently with the other major position that Romans 4 is a demonstration of Abraham’s fatherhood of Judean and gentile Christians.

2.1.2 Romans 4 as Rhetoric to Show that Abraham is Father of Judean and Gentile Christians

Hays claims that Romans 4 attempts to demonstrate that Abraham is the father of Judean and gentile Christians alike.²² To do this, Hays takes Ἀβραάμ as the direct object of εὐρηκέναι, and its subject the “we” of ἐροῦμεν. He then translates 4:1 as follows: “What

Testament (London: SCM Press, 1969), 169, 190, who thinks Abraham is chosen as a random example.

18. Also, Thomas C. Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law*, SBLDS 55 (Michigan: Scholars Press, 1981).

19. Moo, *Romans*, 243; Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought*, ed. John Riches, trans. James C. G. Greig, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 118, Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief*, Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 121, thinks that Romans 4 proves the thesis of 3:28.

20. Moo, *Romans*, 257.

21. Moo, *Romans*, 256–57.

22. Hays, “Have We Found,” 92.

then shall we say? Have we found Abraham (to be) our forefather according to the flesh?”²³ Most scholars reject this reading as it is not usual to leave the accusative subject of the infinitive unexpressed.²⁴ Hays, however, argues that this translation coheres with the preceding and following discussions.²⁵ Dunn disagrees because it weakens the more immediate link between 4:1 and 4:2-8.²⁶ In response, Cranford asserts that 4:1-3 emphasises the basis by which righteousness is associated with Abraham and his descendants, and hence, supports the theme of Abraham’s fatherhood.²⁷ Similarly, Schreiner adds that Romans 4 defends the fatherhood of Abraham by confirming the double themes of 3:27-31 that righteousness is by trust and that everyone receives it in the same manner.²⁸

Hays represents a serious attempt to bolster the position that Romans 4 focuses on Abraham’s fatherhood of Judean and gentile Christians. Scholars who subscribe to this position, however, have not explained adequately why Paul describes the content of Abraham’s trust in detail and couches it in terms of “death” and “life” topoi.

2.2 Social and Cultural Studies on Romans 4

The NT is “comprehensible only within a larger constellation of social, economic, political, and cultural currents.”²⁹ Most studies on the social and cultural background of Romans 4 have focused on the influence of Second Temple Judaism. Studies on how

23. Hays, “Have We Found,” 81.

24. So most scholars, e.g., in Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199; Thomas H. Tobin, “What Shall We Say Abraham Found? The Controversy Behind Romans 4,” *HTR* 88 (1995): 443; Byrne, *Romans*, 148; Schreiner, *Romans*, 213; Jewett, *Romans*, 307.

25. Hays, “Have We Found,” 83–93.

26. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199.

27. Cranford, “Abraham,” 79. Also others, e.g., Byrne, *Romans*, 145; Schreiner, *Romans*, 213.

28. Schreiner, *Romans*, 209.

29. So John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 9.

Mediterranean culture influences the rhetoric of Romans 4 are needed. The following is a survey of the state of research in this area.

2.2.1 Halvor Moxnes

Moxnes examines how “honour,” a value in the Mediterranean culture which “plays a crucial role in establishing a sense of worth,” shapes the rhetoric of Romans.³⁰ Honour “is public esteem, rather than private and individualistic esteem; a culture of this type is public and group-oriented.”³¹ Moxnes equates righteousness with honour.³² That honour and its counterpart, “shame,” play a crucial role in Romans is indicated by related vocabulary found throughout the section of Romans, and by the fact that these terms “are more evenly distributed than terms for justification and righteousness.”³³ In a setting constrained by this culture of honour and shame, the question arises, according to Moxnes, as to how a crucified Jesus preached by Paul could be powerful or bring honour. This causes a conflict between Judean and gentile Christians who had accepted Paul’s gospel. Romans seeks to “bring believing Jews and non-Jews together in one community.”³⁴ To do this, Paul employs “terms which had been used to emphasise the special status of the Jews.”³⁵ At the same time, he also changes the meaning of these terms by sharing “concepts for values with his cultural context”³⁶ and changing, in many instances, the content of these concepts. Paul’s objective is two-fold: it alleviates the conflict with the synagogues, and hence, the Judean Christians³⁷

30. Halvor Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness in Romans,” *JSNT* 32 (1988): 61–77.

31. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 62.

32. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 71.

33. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 63.

34. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 64.

35. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 64.

36. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 64.

37. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 64.

and included “Jews and non-Jews . . . among those who are made righteous.”³⁸ At the same time, this new community of Judean and gentile Christians can function within Graeco-Roman society. In alleviating the conflict with the synagogue, Paul uses two constants. First, God is the “significant other” in whom honour must be sought. Second, Paul argues in Romans 2 that such honour is given by the significant other, “God,” to those who obey and not to those who merely possess the law.³⁹ These two points continue to be discussed in Romans 3-4. This discussion on “honour” is brought out by the boasting of the Judeans in 3:27 and 4:2. This boasting is “linked to the law and to ‘works.’”⁴⁰ In Romans 4, Paul “retains the concept of the righteous man as the honourable man.”⁴¹ According to Moxnes, Paul, however, redefines righteousness in terms of honour as “*father* [his emphasis] of a large offspring (4:11-12, 16-18) or *heir* [his emphasis] of the world (4:13).”⁴² This righteousness is not obtained by doing good deeds (4:2-4), or observing the Mosaic law (3:27-28; 4:13), nor through circumcision (4:9-10). It is given as a gift and is unconditional (4:13-14).⁴³ It is given to both Judeans and gentiles so that “this honour is awarded by the one and only ‘significant other,’ and it is in his eyes, ‘before him’ [4:2, 17].”⁴⁴

Moxnes has ably demonstrated his major thesis that Paul, in order to reduce conflict between Judean and gentile Christians within an “honour and shame” culture, uses terms that emphasise the special status of Judeans and at the same time re-configures them so that both Judeans and gentiles can be included as people who are honourable, that is, righteous. How terms that describe a Judean are re-configured to alleviate the dissension between Judean and

38. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 71.

39. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 69.

40. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 71.

41. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 71.

42. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 71.

43. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 72.

44. Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 72.

gentile Christians can be further explored. Moxnes' argument has, however, several weaknesses. First, it is doubtful that the contention between Judean and gentile Christians in Romans centres around the crucified Jesus.⁴⁵ It may be an issue in 1 Corinthians (see 1:23), but this issue is not explicitly mentioned in Romans. Instead, Paul's gospel and the righteousness it brings are often set in opposition to the law of Moses in Romans. In other words, the controversy in Romans is not about a gospel that preaches a crucified Jesus but one that preaches a righteousness without the help of the law of Moses.

Second, Moxnes proposes that "the righteous man is the honourable man."⁴⁶ This, however, requires a more thorough investigation to prove the equation. He runs roughshod over the argument of Romans 4 when he equates righteousness to the special statuses of Abraham as "father of a large offspring" (4:11-12, 16-18) and "heir of the world" (4:13). These statuses are the results and not the equivalents of becoming a righteous or an honourable man. Such an understanding is made more unlikely by the tight nexus between righteousness and holiness in Romans. How righteousness, holiness, and honour are integrated to resolve the dissension between the "weak" and the "strong," which I shall argue to be a major problem facing the Roman Christians, needs to be investigated.⁴⁷

2.2.2 Francis Watson

In *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, Francis Watson utilises two sociological models to discern Paul's rhetorical strategy. The first model concerns "the transformation of a reform-movement into a sect."⁴⁸ This reform movement, while incorporating the content of the old group, also opposes some of its content that defines the old group. If this reform movement,

45. Moxnes, "Honour and Righteousness," 64.

46. Moxnes, "Honour and Righteousness," 71.

47. See below, p. 53.

48. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 19. Cf. Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*, SNTSMS 57 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 20, who opines that a sect is created in the intensity of opposition with the old religion.

according to Watson, manages to overcome this initial conflict with the old group, it will become a sect. Second, to maintain “separation from the religious group from which it originated, it will require an ideology legitimizing its state of separation.”⁴⁹ In the case of Romans, Watson detects this legitimation taking the form of “denunciation” in Romans 2,⁵⁰ “antithesis” in Romans 3,⁵¹ and “reinterpretation” in Romans 4.⁵² In employing legitimation, Paul contrasts two different views of Abraham in 4:1-8 to stress the incompatibility of membership in the Judean community with “membership in a Pauline congregation.”⁵³ This contrast that seeks to de-legitimise the circumcised, in Watson’s view, is furthered in 4:9-12 where Paul seeks to communicate that righteousness is not found among the circumcised. Similarly, Watson thinks that Paul is reiterating in 4:14b-15 that “membership of the Jewish community is neither necessary nor desirable.”⁵⁴ Watson concludes that in all his argument, “Paul’s aim was to persuade the Jewish Christians to recognise the legitimacy of the Gentile congregation and to join with it in worship, even though this would inevitably mean a final separation from the synagogue.”⁵⁵

Watson offers a plausible application of the use of the social device of legitimation. The Achilles heel of Watson’s thesis, however, is brought into sharp focus by Esler: “If Watson is correct here, it would mean that Paul was attempting the form of recategorization that social theorists suggest is doomed to failure, namely, one that advocates the abandonment

49. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 19–20, follows the lead of Esler, *Community*, 16ff., who modifies the conceptualisation of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: The Penguin Press, 1967), 110ff: when the unity and shared history with the old group is broken, “legitimation,” which takes the form of explanation and justification, is needed.

50. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 109–22.

51. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 124–35.

52. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 135–42.

53. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 140.

54. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 141.

55. Francis Watson, *Paul*, 178.

of an existing ethnic identity.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, as will be demonstrated in my analysis of the argument of Romans 4, Paul appears more to be taking a mediating stance in resolving the dissension between Judean and gentile Christians than asking Judean Christians to abandon their ethnic identity as defined by the law of Moses.

2.2.3 Philip F. Esler

Using social identity theory, Esler argues that Abraham is a prototype of group identity and becomes a common “superordinate”⁵⁷ identity that unites the Judean and gentile Christians. As this recategorisation⁵⁸ does not require the two sub-groups to abandon their ethnic identities, it facilitates unity.⁵⁹ According to Esler, Paul promotes this thesis by first explaining “the origin and nature of Abraham’s righteousness” (4:1-8).⁶⁰ He then demonstrates that the blessing given to Abraham falls upon both the circumcised and the uncircumcised (4:9-12).⁶¹ Paul then proceeds to explain what Abraham’s prototypical role is not and the nature of Abraham’s trust (4:13-22).⁶² Finally, Paul concludes that the identity established above (4:1-22) applies to “those contemporary with Paul.”⁶³ Overall, Esler’s main thesis is convincing, and it clarifies Paul’s strategy in trying to unite the Judean and gentile Christians. A weakness of this study, however, is its tendency to fit the text of Romans 4 into the findings of social and cultural studies. For instance, Esler, without providing evidence, argues that it is only at 4:9 that Paul takes up the prototypical role of the

56. Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 178.

57. Esler, *Conflict*, 29, 190.

58. Esler, *Conflict*, 29.

59. Esler, *Conflict*, 177–78.

60. Esler, *Conflict*, 184.

61. Esler, *Conflict*, 188.

62. Esler, *Conflict*, 191–93.

63. Esler, *Conflict*, 193–94.

patriarch and that 4:1-8 is only foundational in that it explains “the cause and character of his [Abraham’s] righteousness.”⁶⁴ Also, to view 4:13-16 as demonstrating from a negative perspective what is not prototypical is not convincing as it could be argued that 4:9-12 also performs the same function. Neither is it clear that Paul’s description of Abraham’s trust in 4:17-22 has its main purpose in laying down common grounds for both Judean and non-Judean audiences. Prototypicality may be one of Paul’s lines of argumentation, but this needs to be demonstrated from the text. Esler also makes an important observation that Abraham was chosen as a prototype because of the “centrality of kinship in Mediterranean culture.”⁶⁵ Unfortunately, he only gives passing comments on that. Esler’s thesis that Abraham is a “superordinate identity” that unites Judean and gentile Christians represents a convincing attempt at using social identity theory to clarify and reinforce Paul’s strategy. Esler also mentions the role of kinship that results in the choice of Abraham as a prototype. These will be used to further explore Romans 4 in this research.

2.2.4 Robert Jewett

Jewett in his commentary on Romans attempts to incorporate into the study of the letter all methods of historical analysis, including “social scientific reconstruction of the audience situation . . . historical and cultural analysis of the honor, shame . . . systems in the Greco-Roman systems.”⁶⁶ For instance, he mentions the contribution of Neubrand and Esler in identifying Abraham as a “prototype of group identity,”⁶⁷ and that Abraham seals the new “in-group identity.”⁶⁸ He also comments that Paul maintains that God accepts those who are without honour (see his comments on 4:6, 7). In dealing with the division between

64. Esler, *Conflict*, 184.

65. Esler, *Conflict*, 190.

66. Jewett, *Romans*, 1.

67. Jewett, *Romans*, 308–9.

68. Jewett, *Romans*, 321.

“competitive factions,”⁶⁹ he interprets that the God in whom Abraham believed is the same as “the father of Jesus Christ who accepts and honours those who have no basis for honor.”⁷⁰ Jewett regards this act of God “[i]n an honor-shame society . . . [as] the ultimate honor one could receive.”⁷¹ He has, however, only given passing comments without demonstrating how such a Graeco-Roman cultural system drives Paul’s rhetoric forward in Romans 4.

3 Thesis Statement

In this dissertation, I shall demonstrate that Paul seeks, by the rhetoric of Romans 4,⁷² to ascribe honour to gentile Christians so that Judean Christians will not claim a superior honour status over them for the reason that gentile Christians do not possess the Mosaic law, Judeans’ ethnic identity marker.

Honour is ascribed to a person when God, the significant other, regards that person as righteous, that is, when the relationship between God and that person is characterised by righteousness. I shall argue that in Romans 4, Paul contends that gentile Christians are considered righteous by God for a two-fold reason. The first reason has a social basis. Paul crafts out a myth of origins for gentile Christians as part of their new Christian identity. In this way, they become descendants of Abraham and so inherit the righteousness that was ascribed to him by God.

The second reason has a religious basis. Death contains religious pollution.⁷³ Abraham’s dead body passes religious pollution onto his descendants who are present in him in form. This religious pollution results in dead descendants. The reason why Judean and, in

69. Jewett, *Romans*, 314.

70. Jewett, *Romans*, 314.

71. Jewett, *Romans*, 340.

72. Here, the term “rhetoric” is used in the sense meant by George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1984), 3, that it is that “quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes.” In this sense, every interpreter, including those who may not have specified his analytical model, is engaged in understanding the rhetoric of a biblical text.

73. See the section, “Death and Pollution,” in my chapter 4.

particular, gentile Christians can now become Abraham's descendants is because Abraham trusted his patron, God, to raise to life his dead body and his dead descendants. This raising to life is made possible by a broker, Jesus Christ, who accomplishes two things. First, he expiates religious pollution, that is, sin. Second, his resurrection life enables gentile Christians live an ethically righteous life before God. More precisely, they can now satisfy the righteous demand of the Mosaic law and so receive honour that is bestowed by the significant other, namely, God.

I shall make use of Sociorhetorical Interpretation, pioneered by Vernon Robbins, to understand the rhetoric of Romans 4, that is, its persuasive goal and its power to persuade. Four textures, the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, and ideological texture will be investigated. The rhetorolects (rhetorical dialects) will also be discussed. The above mentioned elements will not be discussed in turn. Rather, in order to better grasp the rhetoric in its persuasiveness, I shall, generally, discuss these elements in the course of a close reading of the text of Romans 4. Hence, the analysis of Romans 4 and its various paragraphs will proceed verse by verse. Generally, difficulties in the syntax will first be discussed. Only then can Sociorhetorical Interpretation be performed.

In chapter one, I shall briefly explain the different elements involved in Sociorhetorical Interpretation. In chapter two, I will examine the contextual framework of Romans 4. To do that, I shall first ascertain the implied rhetorical situation of Romans. Then, the preceding argument that leads into Romans 4 will be discussed. This will provide some understanding of the rhetorical strategy of Paul, the implied speaker, when he wrote Romans 4. Chapters three and four will discuss the rhetoric of Romans 4. Chapter five will then summarise how Paul's rhetoric responds to the problem of dissension between Judean and gentile Christians.

CHAPTER 1
APPROACH OF INTERPRETATION

1.1 Introduction

Terry Eagleton aptly emphasises that “[l]iterature . . . is vitally engaged with the living situations of men and women . . . [It] displays life in all its rich variousness, and rejects barren conceptual enquiry for the feel and taste of what it is to be alive.”¹ Vernon Robbins sharpens the focus when he comments that “texts are performances of language, and language is a part of the inner fabric of society, culture, ideology and religion.”² Likewise, *Romans* was written to people who lived in a particular social and cultural setting, and sought to bring about social action.³ Hence, for a text, including the rhetoric of *Romans* 4, to be properly understood, the insights of “literary critics, linguists, sociologists and anthropologists” need to be considered.⁴

The approach “Sociorhetorical Interpretation” pioneered by Robbins offers an interface for various disciplines to contribute their insights into a text.⁵ This approach will be

1. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 196.

2. Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 1.

3. Maurice Charland, “Rehabilitating Rhetoric,” in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, ed. John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 465, emphasises the need to situate rhetorical analysis within the context of “social formation.” Similarly, Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Braziller, 1950), 37–39; Karl R. Wallace, “The Substance of Rhetoric: Good Reasons,” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 49, no. 3 (1963): 239–49.

4. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 17.

5. Instead of entitling this chapter as “Methodology,” I have used the word “approach”: Vernon K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2009), 4, comments that the term “methodology” presupposes “a limited number of analytical strategies.” Sociorhetorical

adopted to investigate the rhetoric of Romans 4. Insights from Robbins' discussion on the textures of texts⁶ and rhetorolects will be discussed.⁷

1.2 Textures of a Text

Robbins describes a text as a “thick tapestry”⁸ which contains “multiple textures of meanings, convictions, beliefs, values, emotions and actions.”⁹ He delineates several textures, including the “inner texture,” “intertexture,” “social and cultural texture,” and “ideological texture.”¹⁰ The discussion below provides an overview of textures and sub-textures that are relevant to Romans 4.

1.2.1 Inner Texture¹¹

For analysis of the inner texture, the interpreter is confined to the environment delimited by the implied speaker and the implied audience.¹² In other words, inner texture

Interpretation, however, is an interpretive analytic that invites all disciplines to contribute their insights into a text. Thus, Duane F. Watson, “Keep Yourselves from Idols: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Exordium and Peroratio of 1 John,” in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, ed. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 281, remarks that Sociorhetorical Interpretation is more comprehensive than rhetorical analysis.

6. See Robbins, *Tapestry*; Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Valley Forge: Routledge, 1996).

7. Robbins, *Invention*.

8. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 18.

9. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 18.

10. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 21; a fifth texture, “sacred texture” is included in Robbins, *Exploring*, 3. This dissertation, however, will not investigate “sacred texture.” The reason is that the discussion on rhetorolects (see my analysis of the argument of Romans 4) covers what sacred texture does, namely, “locating the ways the text speaks about Gods or gods, or talks about realms of religious life” (Robbins, *Exploring*, 120).

11. Robbins, *Exploring*, 21–29.

12. See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 28–29, who adapts the narrative-communication situation of Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), 151; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983), 86.

analysis does not concern itself with language and information that is outside the text.¹³ Several possible sub-textures may be present in the inner texture. First, “repetitive texture” is present when the same word occurs more than once. These repetitions provide an overview of the passage, without establishing the precise relationship between the individual units.¹⁴ Second, “progressive texture” arises out of repetitions. By observing the relationship between repetitions or individual clusters of repetitions, one may discern the progression or general scheme of the speaker’s rhetorical strategy. Third, “opening-middle-closing” texture is delineated by observing the repetitive and progressive textures. By examining how the “closing” responds to the “opening,” and how the “middle” facilitates the transit from “opening” to “closing,” the speaker’s overall rhetoric may be discerned.¹⁵ Fourth, “argumentative texture” or rhetology¹⁶ investigates the inner reasoning or argumentation within the rhetoric. Declarative statements are not argumentative. When a speaker, however, provides reasons for a declarative statement,¹⁷ he or she is engaging in argumentation that seeks to persuade the audience.¹⁸ Fifth, “sensory-aesthetic texture,” can be found in the range of senses to which the text refers. One way of detecting this texture is by identifying “body

13. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 29.

14. H. J. Bernard Combrink, “Shame on the Hypocritical Leaders in the Church,” in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 2; David B. Gowler, “Text, Culture, and Ideology in Luke 7:1–10,” in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 96, regards the various textures as interacting with one another to “reinforce and build upon each other.”

15. See below, p. 167, for an example.

16. Robbins, *Invention*, xxvii.

17. Frans H. van Eemeren, “Argumentation Theory: An Overview of Approaches and Research Themes,” in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 9, posits that reasons may include pragmatic and logical considerations.

18. Anders Eriksson, “Enthymemes in Pauline Argumentation: Reading Between the Lines in 1 Corinthians,” in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker (New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 248.

zones” in the discourse.¹⁹ Humans interact with the environment by means of three zones: “a heart for thinking, along with ears that fill the heart with data; a mouth for speaking, along with ears that collect the speech of others, and hands and feet for acting.”²⁰ By being alert to terms that refer to the above three zones and understanding them in light of Mediterranean culture, how the sensory-aesthetic texture enhances the rhetoric can be better understood.²¹

1.2.2 Intertexture²²

Verbal signs (that is, the implied language) in a text sometimes evoke verbal signs in other texts.²³ In addition, the represented world of the text sometimes also evokes the represented world of other texts.²⁴ Several types of intertexture are possible: oral-scribal, cultural, social, and historical. Occurring frequently in Romans 4 is recitation, a sub-texture of oral-scribal intertexture.²⁵ In this texture, words from another text are either replicated, or replicated with some words omitted or changed.²⁶ At other times, the words of the text are completely omitted but its content is retained. By comparing the citation and, for instance, the LXX from which the citation was taken, the author’s emphasis may be clarified. Cultural intertexture refers to knowledge of a particular culture learned through the normal process of inculturation by people who are born and live in that culture or knowledge learned through education or direct interaction with people in the culture by those from outside the culture. It refers to “insider” knowledge. Thus, for instance, references to Abraham, David,

19. Robbins, *Exploring*, 30.

20. Robbins, *Exploring*, 30.

21. See below, p. 110, for an example.

22. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 96–143.

23. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 21–22.

24. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 32.

25. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 102, includes recitation, recontextualisation and reconfiguration.

26. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 106.

circumcision, the Passover festival, the Messiah, and God are cultural rather than social intertextures. A sub-texture of cultural intertexture is reference. This is “the occurrence of a word, phrase, or clause that refers to a personage or tradition known to people in a culture.”²⁷ Although this story or tradition exists in textual form (word, phrase, or clause), the author does not merely intend the reader to recall the text. Rather, the citation of the text should recall a story or a tradition.²⁸ Social intertexture refers to knowledge about customs and practices that everyone in a particular region, for instance, in the Roman world and the Hellenistic world, knows.²⁹ This knowledge is readily available to people through general interaction. It can be obtained simply by observing “the behaviour and public material objects produced by other people.”³⁰ This contrasts with cultural intertexture whose knowledge needs to be taught.³¹ Historical intertexture refers to particular events that happened at particular times and places.³² This intertexture “textualizes” a past experience into a particular event or a particular period of time. It differs from social intertexture which occurs as regular events in one’s life.³³

In analysing certain terms, for example, “death,” for their social intertextures, I will investigate them in light of Roman and Judean cultures. Understanding terms like “death” in light of particular cultures is reasonable, even necessary as human beings are shaped by the process of inculturation into the cultures in which they live. Geertz argues that

culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience, and guide their actions; social structure is the form that actions take, the

27. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 110.

28. Robbins, *Exploring*, 58. See my p. 134 for an example.

29. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 117. See my p. 209 for an example.

30. Robbins, *Exploring*, 62.

31. Robbins, *Exploring*, 62.

32. Robbins, *Exploring*, 63.

33. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 118. See my p. 76 for an example.

actually existing network of social relations. Culture and social structures are then but different abstractions from the same phenomenon.³⁴

Robbins disagrees with studies that limit intertextual interpretation of NT literature to the Hebrew Bible and Judean literature.³⁵ He insists that “[t]heoretically, the intertexture of any piece of literature may be with ‘every culture in the human world.’ It is impossible, however, to study everything at the same time. For this reason, we establish boundaries.” Robbins limits the boundary of intertextual studies for early Christian texts to texts, inscriptions, archaeological data, sculpture, paintings, etc., in the Mediterranean world.³⁶ The dominant culture in Rome would be Roman culture. Dominant culture is defined as “a system of attitudes, values, dispositions and norms supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region. Dominant cultures are either indigenous or conquering cultures.”³⁷ Roman culture was such a conquering culture that asserted influence over a broad territorial region. Furthermore, as Christianity emerged from the Judean community, we would also expect Judean culture to influence Christians, perhaps, as a subculture, which is defined as those things which “imitate the attitudes, values, dispositions and norms of a dominant culture and claim to enact them better than members of a dominant status. Subcultures are wholistic entities that affect all of life over a long span of time.”³⁸ Hence, Judean and gentile Christians in Rome, who lived in the ancient Mediterranean world would have been influenced by Roman and Judean cultures, and very probably Hellenistic culture to some degree.

34. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 145.

35. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 99.

36. Robbins, *Exploring*, 63.

37. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 168.

38. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 168.

1.2.3 Social and Cultural Texture

Social and cultural texture seeks to answer the question: “What kind of a social and cultural person would anyone be who lives in the ‘world’ of a particular text.”³⁹ To answer this question, it makes use of anthropological and sociological theories.⁴⁰ It explores “the social and cultural nature of the voices in the text under investigation.”⁴¹ Social and cultural topoi, including the core value of honour and shame in Mediterranean culture, challenge-riposte, patron-client relations, and purity codes will be used to shed light on the social and cultural textures in Romans 4. Also, works of sociologists and anthropologists will be utilised to understand aspects of ethnicity related to the dissension between Judeans and gentiles.

1.2.4 Ideological Texture

The ideological texture of a text operates within the relationship between the implied reader and the narrator. The particular way the implied reader and the real reader (or audience) receive a message is about ideology.⁴² Robbins follows Eagleton’s lead in describing ideology as

the ways in which what we say and believe connects with the power-structure and power-relations of the society we live in . . . those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power.

In other words, in Robbins and Eagleton’s conception, ideology maintains and produces power. Such ideological power is relevant especially in contexts of conflict and can be used

39. Robbins, *Exploring*, 71.

40. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 144. See below, p. 64, for an example.

41. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 144.

42. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 36–37. See below, p. 41, for an example.

to rationalise, legitimise, or delegitimise groups,⁴³ as in the case of the groups in Paul's letter to the Romans. Wanamaker develops Robbins' formulation of ideological texture by drawing on Thompson's conception of how ideology produces social power: "[i]n the sociology relevant sense of 'power', however, the power to act must be related to the institutional site from which it derives."⁴⁴ In the case of Paul, he mobilises power by building his ideology on Mediterranean cultural practices such as "imperial and civic politics, kinship, client and patron relationship."⁴⁵ This final point sharpens Robbins' conception of how the ideological texture in a NT text mobilises rhetorical power. Thus, detecting the underlying social and cultural intertextures helps to expose the institution from which ideological power is derived.⁴⁶

1.3 Rhetorolects

Different forms of discourse draw on "distinctive configurations of themes, images . . . topics, reasonings and argumentation."⁴⁷ For example, we might speak of political discourse or economic discourse in the modern world. While these discourses overlap at times, they are, nevertheless, distinct in their character and are used in different contexts and employ different rhetorics. The term rhetorolect, which is a Robbins neologism, refers to just such rhetorical dialects. The term rhetorolect is a contraction of "rhetorical dialect." Robbins postulates that six rhetorolects or rhetorical dialects were crucial in the formation of early Christian discourse. These six are wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, priestly, and miracle rhetorolects. These six rhetorolects blended into one another to create persuasive

43. John S. Kloppenborg, "Ideological Texture in the Parable of the Tenants," in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 67.

44. So John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 129; Charles A. Wanamaker, "'By the Power of God': Rhetoric and Ideology in 2 Corinthians 10–13," in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 199.

45. Wanamaker, "Rhetoric and Ideology," 199.

46. Russell B. Sisson, "A Common Agōn," in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 256, points out the need to go beyond scriptural intertexture to identify ideological interests.

47. Robbins, *Invention*, xxvii.

modes of discourse among early Christians. Christians generated discourses by either blending multiple rhetorolects within an overarching rhetorolect or blending particular rhetorolects in a persuasive manner.

1.3.1 The Problem of Classical Rhetoric

Interpreting the New Testament using theories of classical rhetoric was led by George A. Kennedy, Hans Dieter Betz, and Wilhelm Wuellner. An advantage of classical rhetorical analysis is that by categorising the overarching rhetoric as judicial, deliberative, or epideictic, the persuasive goal of the rhetoric can be identified.⁴⁸ The present way of doing rhetorical analysis, however, has a fundamental flaw. As Robbins has poignantly pointed out, the setting of early Christian rhetoric does not presuppose the law court, political assembly, or civil ceremony, the traditional settings associated with classical rhetoric.⁴⁹ In fact, these social institutions at times caused suffering for early Christians. To counteract the sufferings created by these institutions, early Christians developed rhetorical discourses whose social settings were related to “households, political kingdoms, imperial armies, imperial households, temples, and individual bodies of people.”⁵⁰ The early Christian discourses around these settings led Robbins to suggest his six rhetorolects of early Christian discourse. Thus, they can function as a corrective or complement to the use of the traditional rhetorical settings in the analysis of early Christian rhetoric.

1.3.2 The Nature of Rhetorolects

A rhetorolect is schemed as an idealised cognitive model (abbreviated as ICM). An ICM is a structure by which humans organise knowledge. Robbins formulates his ICM of a

48. Charles A. Wanamaker, “Epistolary vs. Rhetorical Analysis: Is a Synthesis Possible?” in *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Johannes Beutler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 285, is perceptive when he points out that “rhetorical analysis has the potential to look at the smaller units of meaning as well as the text in terms of their total persuasive effect.”

49. Robbins, *Invention*, 3.

50. Robbins, *Invention*, 3.

rhetorolect according to two theories. The first is critical spaciality theory. This theory relates the geophysical spaces experienced by humans with the mental spaces created by humans in order to give meaning to their experiences in life.⁵¹ The meaning is obtained through metaphorical reasoning where “experiential knowledge of places and spaces in the Mediterranean world” is blended with “the cosmos where it is presupposed that God dwells.”⁵²

The second is conceptual blending theory. This theory concretises the specifics for metaphorical reasoning to work so as to derive meaning for human experiences. Turner observes that “conceptual blending is a fundamental instrument of the everyday mind, used in our basic construal of all our realities, from the social to the scientific.”⁵³ The construction of how realities are construed is organised in terms of “cultural frames, which Lakoff calls ICMs and which this book calls rhetorolects.”⁵⁴ According to Fauconnier and Turner, conceptual blending or integration involves a minimum of four spaces: “two input spaces, a generic space, and a blended space.”⁵⁵ Robbins conceptualises rhetorolects in the following way: “Certain words and phrases evoke these [special cultural] memories in a manner that frames the reasoning about topics the discourse introduces to the hearers.”⁵⁶

The firstspace is created in the following manner. The human body when living in various social places in the world like a household, village, city, synagogue, kingdom, temple, or an empire, has sensory-aesthetic experiences. These experiences will then evoke special pictures and memories in the minds of those experiencing them which are contained in the

51. Robbins, *Invention*, 8.

52. Robbins, *Invention*, 107. See also George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 68–90.

53. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 93.

54. Robbins, *Invention*, 107.

55. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 279.

56. Robbins, *Invention*, 107–8.

firstspace.⁵⁷ The secondspace is created in the following manner. By means of cognitive and conceptual abilities, the human mind interprets the social places and actions that the human body experiences. This generic space contains processes like part-whole, similar-dissimilar, opposite, and cause-effect, to blend the firstspace and secondspace. The blending takes place in the thirdspace, which is also called the “space of blending.” The results of the blend are contained in the thirdspace.

These results that are contained in the thirdspace are termed by Robbins as “ongoing bodily effects and enactments.”⁵⁸ By that, Robbins is referring to the effects that a particular rhetoric has on the audience. This outcome may be the audience’s response, reaction, a new or renewed motivation, or mindset, emotion, etc. For instance, the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorolect is “to create people who produce good, righteous action, thought, will, and speech with the aid of God’s wisdom”; apocalyptic rhetorolect seeks to “call people into action and thought guided by perfect holiness” as only perfect holiness and righteousness can admit a person into God’s presence.⁵⁹

1.3.3 Description of the Six Rhetorolects⁶⁰

This section will briefly describe each rhetorolect in order to aid the interpreter in its identification. I shall begin with wisdom rhetorolect.⁶¹ The firstspace of wisdom rhetorolect is related to human experiences of the household. These experiences include household relationships, like parents who take on the role of teaching children God’s wisdom. Household experiences also include household activities in gardens, places of vegetation, vineyards, and fields.⁶² The secondspace pictures God as the heavenly Father. These two

57. Robbins, *Invention*, 108.

58. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

59. See Robbins, *Exploring*, 110–12, for the specifics of these “ongoing bodily effects and enactments” of the six rhetorolects.

60. Robbins, *Invention*, 110–12.

61. See below, p. 45, for an example.

spaces will blend in the thirdspace to produce in the minds of the audience where God the Father teaches wisdom to God's children. The result will be an audience who will produce good and righteous action, thought, will, and speech.

The firstspace of prophetic rhetorlect includes a political kingdom, and the speech and action of a prophet's body.⁶³ The prophet's speech confronts a resistive audience. The secondspace conceptualises the social setting of the firstspace as kingdom of God on earth or in God's cosmos. God functions as heavenly King over his righteous kingdom. The third space blends the firstspace and the secondspace so that the audience conceptualises God as King transmitting his word through prophetic action and speech. The resulting thirdspace is an audience who lives according to God's righteousness.

The firstspace of apocalyptic rhetorlect is a political empire, the emperor's household, and his imperial army. The human mind conceptualises the social setting in the secondspace where God is regarded as a heavenly emperor who commands his heavenly assistants to destroy all evil and enact righteousness. The firstspace and secondspace blends in the thirdspace. The resulting thirdspace is to get the audience to think and act according to perfect holiness as "only perfect holiness and righteousness can bring a person into the presence of God, who destroys all evil."⁶⁴ This perfect holiness is possible because of the apocalyptic state when "God's holiness and righteousness are completely and eternally present."⁶⁵ This state is also one in which death and sin are overcome.⁶⁶

The firstspace of precreation rhetorlect is the emperor (e.g., the Roman emperor) and his household. The secondspace is God's cosmos, where God is a loving heavenly emperor. This status of God is eternal: it exists before time and continually throughout eternity. People

62. Robbins, *Invention*, 132.

63. See below, pp.40-41, for an example.

64. Robbins, *Invention*, 110. See below, p. 66, for an example.

65. Robbins, *Invention*, 111.

66. Robbins, *Invention*, 436.

enter into a loving relationship with God by means of worshipping not only God but also his eternal Son. When the firstspace and the secondspace are blended in the thirdspace, it guides the audience towards a “community that is formed through God’s love, which reflects the eternal intimacy present in God’s precreation household.”⁶⁷ Love in the ancient Mediterranean world was not necessarily connected with “feelings of affection” but was about “the value of group attachment and group bonding.”⁶⁸

Miracle rhetorolect focuses on human bodies that are afflicted with diseases. Human bodies that are sick require an agent of God’s power who can heal that diseased body. Thus, the firstspace of miracle rhetorolect is a “space of relation” between an afflicted body and a healer empowered with God’s healing power. The secondspace conceptualises the above space of relation as God who can “function as a miraculous renewer of life.” The thirdspace blends the above described firstspace and secondspace to produce “renewal within people.”⁶⁹

The firstspace of priestly rhetorolect is human experiences in a temple, at an altar, or in a place of worship. The secondspace conceptualises the firstspace as God dwelling in a heavenly temple. Selected individuals, for example, Jesus, are visualised as priests. People are conceptualised as a holy and pure priestly community. The thirdspace blends the above mentioned firstspace and secondspace to motivate the audience to be givers of sacrificial offerings and receivers of holiness from God.⁷⁰

1.3.4 Using Rhetorolects

I shall use Robbins’ formulation of the six rhetorolects to do several things. First, I will identify the overarching rhetorolect of each section of Romans 4. Robbins has provided

67. Robbins, *Invention*, 111. See below, p. 71, for an example.

68. See Bruce J. Malina, “Love,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 127. He also notes that Paul views God’s love as a concern with “the larger problem of getting those who joined their Christian groups to become attached to each other, their new ‘neighbours.’”

69. See below, p. 237, for an example.

70. See below, p. 62, for an example.

a two dimensional matrix containing the three spaces for the above mentioned six rhetorolects.⁷¹ By checking against this matrix, the interpreter can identify the rhetorolect used. The presence of a certain rhetorolect can be detected by reading the passage under investigation and checking for elements that may be described in the firstspace, secondspace, or thirdspace of Robbin's matrix. A limitation of this matrix needs to be mentioned. An ICM is a structured mental space, an idealised model of some real life situation. This means that such a model may not fit what is experienced in reality. Rather, the fit ranges from best to worst fit.⁷² Thus, the interpreter needs to search for a best fit and not an ideal fit of the three mental spaces and then check against the thirdspace to determine the "bodily effects," that is, the desired response from the real audience after hearing a piece of rhetoric. In this way, the persuasive goal of each major section of Romans 4 can be determined. This fills the lacuna left by classical rhetoric due to the fact that the categories of classical rhetoric are not appropriate for determining the persuasive goal of a piece of NT rhetoric, as discussed above.

1.4 Conclusion

Sociorhetorical Interpretation contains a two pronged approach. First, a text is born out of factors that relate to society, culture, ideology, and religion. Hence, disciplines which investigate these various factors should contribute to the meaning of a text. Sociorhetorical Interpretation has the advantage of prodding the interpreter to utilise these multiple disciplinary approaches. At the same time, it discourages giving excessive weight to insights into a text shed by any one disciplinary approach. Second, Sociorhetorical Interpretation does not yield fragmented analyses. It provides an integrated environment where the multiple textures of a text can be correlated. Thus, this two pronged approach of Sociorhetorical Interpretation facilitates a rich and holistic understanding of a text.

71. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

72. Lakoff, *Women*, 70.

CHAPTER 2

RHETORICAL CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ROMANS 4

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will construct the rhetorical contextual framework of Romans 4 in order to understand the function of Romans 4 in this letter. I shall do this by first investigating the implied rhetorical situation of Romans. The implied rhetorical situation is what Stamps describes as “that situation embedded in the text and created by the text.”¹ This dissertation, however, does not seek to provide a definitive answer to the implied rhetorical situation of Romans as this would easily entail a whole dissertation. Only details sufficient to construct a working platform to understand the function of Romans 4 will be investigated. Second, I shall trace the argument in 1:16-3:31, to elucidate the issues that precipitate the need for Romans 4. Third, this chapter will show that the main ideas in Romans 4 are being worked out in 5:1-15:13. I will identify passages that, in my judgement, contain ideas central to Romans 4 and provide a brief analysis.

2.2 The Implied Rhetorical Situation of Romans

To construct the implied rhetorical situation of Romans,² I shall discuss briefly the *exordium* (1:1-15) and *peroratio* (15:1-16:27) as these two sections carry interpretive weight in constructing the rhetorical situation.³ The intent of my discussion is not to show how Paul

1. Dennis L. Stamps, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in the New Testament Epistles,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 199.

2. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 62, views Romans as a situational letter.

3. See below, p. 39.

the speaker uses the *exordium* to establish rapport with the audience or uses the *peroratio* to recapitulate his main points and stir up the audience's emotion. Neither *ethos* nor *pathos* will be extensively discussed. Rather, as places (in the *exordium* and *peroratio*) which contain *ethos* and *pathos* often betray the speaker's concerns, these places will be examined for their illumination of the rhetorical situation. In constructing the rhetorical situation, I shall also consider selected sections of Romans which, in my judgement, will shed light on the rhetorical situation.

2.2.1 About Rhetorical Situation

Rhetorical theorists recognise that for a discourse to be intelligible, the rhetorical situation or the social context that generates a discourse needs to be discovered.⁴ I shall use Bitzer's formulation of the rhetorical situation to identify the necessary parameters that generate Paul's rhetoric in Romans 4.⁵

2.2.1.1 Implied Rhetorical Situation

In discussing how a rhetoric in a text is generated, Stamps comments:

While it may be granted that any text, and an ancient New Testament epistle in particular, stems from certain historical and social contingencies which contribute to the rhetorical situation of the text, it is also true that a text presents a selected, limited and crafted entextualization of the situation. The entextualized situation is not the historical situation which generates the text and/or which the text responds to or addresses; rather, at this level, it is that situation embedded in the text and created by the text, which contributes to the rhetorical effect of the text.⁶

4. M. M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), refers to the rhetorical situation as a social event that gives rise to utterances; Tzvetan Todorov, *Symbolism and Interpretation*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 9, describes the rhetorical situation as a discourse that is generated by "not only linguistic elements but also the circumstances" that include the speaker, time and place.

5. Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1–14.

6. Stamps, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 199.

Aune points out that Stamps' "[e]ntextualization is an important concept, because the text is all that exists of an ancient communication situation."⁷ This means that the text is the only reliable resource from which we can elicit the ancient communication situation. Aligning the term "entextualized situation" with other terms used by many literary critics such as "implied author" and "implied audience," Aune re-labels "entextualized situation" as "implied rhetorical situation."⁸ The term "rhetorical situation" was first introduced by Lloyd F. Bitzer's in his landmark discussion on "rhetorical situation." Bitzer's method will be utilised to construct the "implied rhetorical situation" that gives rise to the rhetoric in Romans.

2.2.1.2 Lloyd F. Bitzer's "Rhetorical Situation"

Lloyd Bitzer defines "rhetorical situation" as follows:

a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action so as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.⁹

In this article, he also delineates three constituents of a rhetorical situation. The first is exigence. It is an "imperfection marked by urgency that can be changed only by the intervention of discourse"¹⁰ and is rhetorical "when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse."¹¹ The second is the audience. It is defined as hearers or readers who can be affected by discourse and become mediators of change. The

7. David E. Aune, "Rhetorical Situation," in *Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 424. Similarly, Lauri Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy, 1990), 70–75; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *CBQ* 49 (1987): 456.

8. Aune, "Rhetorical Situation," 424.

9. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 6.

10. Aune, "Rhetorical Situation," 422.

11. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 7.

third constituent is constraints. They consist of persons, events, objects, which are parts of the situation and have the power to “modify the exigence.” These constraints are classified as those that originate from the “rhetor and his method” and constraints generated by the situation. These three constituents, Bitzer contends, define a rhetorical situation.¹²

2.2.1.3 Validity of Bitzer’s “Rhetorical Situation”

It is not that rhetoricians have not recognised the relevance of the situation that generates a rhetoric. Aristotle, for instance, by categorising rhetorical discourses into epideictic, judicial, and deliberative, implicitly recognises the relevance of the situation.¹³ Rather, Bitzer has articulated the nature of a rhetorical situation and its key role in generating a rhetorical discourse.¹⁴ He insists that a “rhetorical discourse . . . does obtain its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it.”¹⁵ The situation “prescribes its fitting response.”¹⁶

Such a depiction of “rhetorical situation” causes Vatz to construe Bitzer as saying that “meaning resides in events.”¹⁷ Patton thinks that Bitzer has been misconstrued.¹⁸ Vatz’s (mis)construal about Bitzer’s view, however, is understandable as Bitzer reiterates the almost all-decisive role of the situation in effecting a discourse, and does not ascribe any clear role to the speaker in determining the purpose of a discourse.¹⁹ This leads Vatz to formulate an

12. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 8.

13. Aristotle, *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 15.

14. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 2.

15. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 3.

16. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 11.

17. Richard E. Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6, no. 3 (1975): 155.

18. For instance, John H. Patton, “Causation and Creativity in Rhetorical Situations: Distinctions and Implications,” *QJS* 65 (1979): 38, maintains that Bitzer’s position is not that of a “totally objectivist, bound to a realist philosophy meaning.”

antithesis of Bitzer's theory, that "situations obtain their character from rhetoric that surrounds them or creates them."²⁰ He argues that Bitzer effectively means that "the nature of the context determines the rhetoric."²¹ The problem is that, according to Vatz, "one never runs out of context [or] runs out of facts to describe a situation."²² Bitzer's and Vatz's positions create an antinomy.

Miller mediates between these two positions, stating that "the rhetor has creative latitude to interpret the significance of the exigence" within the limits set by the exigence.²³ His description of the process through which the speaker (rhetor) creates a "fitting response" to a rhetorical situation is instructive for understanding how Bitzer's and Vatz's positions can be maintained. Both speaker and hearer will construct their perception of the exigence by combining their own constraints and "perception of an action, phenomenon, or facts."²⁴ For the intentions of the speaker to agree with the hearer's expectations, however, what Miller terms as "subsidiary constraints" or "value judgements" of the speaker must be aligned with those of the hearer so that they have the same essential constraints.²⁵

Hunsaker and Smith introduce the term "issue" in their article. It is defined as "*a question occurring in a rhetorical context, in actual or potential form, which is relevant and*

19. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 8.

20. Vatz, "Myth," 159.

21. Vatz, "Myth," 156.

22. Vatz, "Myth," 156.

23. Arthur B. Miller, "Rhetorical Exigence," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 5, no. 2 (1972): 111. In a similar vein, Scott Consigny, "Rhetoric and Its Situations," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 7, no. 3 (1974): 178, describes the rhetorical situation as one which the rhetor must "structure so as to formulate and disclose problems." The rhetor, at the same time, is also constrained by the particularities of a "recalcitrant" situation which affects his strategy for resolving the exigence.

24. Arthur B. Miller, "Rhetorical Exigence," 117.

25. Arthur B. Miller, "Rhetorical Exigence," 117.

requires resolution [their italics].”²⁶ It originates from a privation or exigence.²⁷ The meaning of “issue” is effectively Miller’s “subsidiary constraint” or “value judgement.”²⁸ But unlike Miller, Hunsaker and Smith, by distinguishing “issue” from “constraint,” refine the point of interaction between the speaker and the audience: through rhetorical discourse, the speaker speaks to the audience to resolve an *issue* that stems from a rhetorical exigency.²⁹ The issue selected (by the speaker or audience) in turn is affected by two dimensions, namely, motivation, which relates to the personal needs or goals, and logic, which is deliberation over matters related to the motivation dimension.³⁰

The above discussion qualifies, and hence, validates the use of Bitzer’s understanding of rhetorical situation in this dissertation. The “issue” is a function of both the situation and the speaker/audience. Neither holds absolute sway over the selection of the issue. The process, as described above, through which the issue is generated verifies the above observation. Second, to decide on a rhetorical situation, a speaker has to first sift through the facts found in the historical background of the speaker/audience to pick out those that contribute to forming a rhetorical situation of the *speaker’s choice*. From here, the speaker in accordance with the motivation and logical dimensions, decides on the issue and the exigence.

2.2 Historical Background

As discussed above, a speaker will pick out facts found in the historical background to form the rhetorical situation of his choice. The question is what were the facts considered by the speaker, Paul. As the rhetorical situation is that which is “embedded in the text,”³¹ only

26. David M. Hunsaker and Craig R. Smith, “The Nature of Issues: A Constructive Approach to Situational Rhetoric,” *Western Speech Communication* 40, no. 3 (1976): 144.

27. Hunsaker and Smith, “Situational Rhetoric,” 146.

28. Arthur B. Miller, “Rhetorical Exigence,” 117.

29. Hunsaker and Smith, “Situational Rhetoric,” 154.

30. Hunsaker and Smith, “Situational Rhetoric,” 148–50.

historical details that are required for the text of Romans to make rhetorical sense would have been considered by Paul. Several observations point in the direction that the historical situation envisaged by Paul is that the real audience of Romans comprises both gentile and Judean Christians. Furthermore, the gentile audience are the majority and the Judean the minority.³²

Christianity in Rome probably started within the Judean community in the synagogues.³³ This observation is borne out by the evidence of Acts (11:19-21; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8).³⁴ Two references evince this point. In Acts 18:2, Claudius' edict in 49 CE evicted Judeans, among whom were Aquila and Priscilla. According to Suetonius and Acts 18:2, Judeans, who included this couple, were expelled from Rome over a conflict that was related to Christ.³⁵ If both Priscilla and Aquila were unbaptised Judeans, they presumably would have been opponents of Christ. Offering work and lodging to a Christian missionary, Paul (Acts 18:3), would then have been highly improbable. The logical conclusion is that Priscilla and Aquila were already Christians before they left the Judean community and the synagogue in Rome.³⁶ Converts to Christianity also included gentile Godfearers who worshipped in the synagogue. They were

31. Stamps, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 199.

32. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlv-liv. Also, Peter Lampe, *Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries: From Paul to Valentinus*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 72; Esler, *Conflict*, 113-14; Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 37-38.

33. As most agree, e.g., Lampe, *Christians*, 11; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlvi-l; Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 34; Jewett, *Romans*, 58.

34. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlvii.

35. Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4: "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit." Chresto probably refers to "Christus," the Latinised version of the Greek Χριστός. Most scholars, e.g., Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlvi; Esler, *Conflict*, 100. Lampe, *Christians*, 13, correctly explains the discrepancy: "[t]he explanation for the vowel displacement is quite simple: 'Chrestus' was for pagan ears a commonly known personal name; 'Christus' was not."

36. Lampe, *Christians*, 11-12.

“the main targets of the earliest Gentile Christian mission.”³⁷ After converting to Christianity, Christian Judeans and Christian Godfearers continued to worship in the synagogue with non-Christian Judeans and Godfearers. Lampe notes that among the gentiles who worshipped in the synagogue, proselytes were to be distinguished from Godfearers who, “as a rule, were socially better off, even up to the level of the Roman knights. They included fewer slaves than the proselytes did.”³⁸ This would mean that they were highly literate. Such Godfearers would include people like the Roman centurion, Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2).³⁹ According to Luke, these Godfearers had a knowledge of the Hebrew Bible (Acts 13:16ff., 8:27-35; 17:1-4). This last observation is also corroborated by Juvenal,⁴⁰ who mentions that Godfearers actively studied the Hebrew Bible.⁴¹ Thus, to assume that these Godfearers had a good knowledge of the Hebrew Bible would not be unreasonable.

The above state of affairs in the synagogue changed with the edict of the emperor Claudius in 49 CE when he expelled the Judeans from Rome. Acts 18:2 records that “all the Judeans” were forced to leave Rome. The extent of $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$ in Acts 18:2 is unclear. It is likely that this number included only the agitators and those who led the unrest.⁴² Two observations support my point. First, the edict, “Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit,” could also be translated: “he expelled from Rome the Jews [who were] constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.”⁴³ Second, this limited expulsion

37. Lampe, *Christians*, 69.

38. Lampe, *Christians*, 72; A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 262.

39. See Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 70–71. Luke describes Cornelius as one φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν (Acts 10:2).

40. Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.96–106.

41. Lampe, *Christians*, 70.

42. Lampe, *Christians*, 13–14.

43. Bruce N. Fisk, “Synagogue Influence and Scriptural Knowledge Among the Christians of Rome,” in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul’s Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 165.

provides a plausible explanation for the silence of Josephus and other historiographers about this expulsion.⁴⁴ Luke's description of Claudius' edict in Acts 18:2 as an expulsion of "all" (παῖς) could possibly be a hyperbole.⁴⁵ Thus, the scale of this expulsion was probably not massive. Such people who were expelled would have included Priscilla and Aquila since they very likely were advocates for Christ in the Judean synagogues of Rome.

The consequent leadership of the Christian community would have been largely gentile after the expulsion of Judeans.⁴⁶ Christians would also have had to worship in house churches after the expulsion. After the death of Claudius in 54 CE, Christian Judeans, like Priscilla and Aquila, returned to worship in Christian house churches which would have been largely gentile in composition.⁴⁷

The above discussion paints a likely historical situation where the Christian house churches in Rome consisted of a majority of gentile Christians. A part of these gentile Christians were Godfearers who had a good knowledge of the Hebrew Bible. Judean Christians would have formed the minority in the house churches.

That there were Judeans in the audience in the church of Rome is also borne out by Romans 16. Here, Paul sends greetings to a long list of Christians in the church in Rome. Of the twenty-six names listed most are gentiles. Five to seven of the names, however, are probably of Judean origin, either because of the names themselves or because these people could be identified as Judeans.⁴⁸ Such a depiction of the historical situation, as will be

44. Lampe, *Christians*, 14; Fisk, "Synagogue Influence," 165.

45. Fisk, "Synagogue Influence," 165. See Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1; 2:5; 3:18; 8:1, etc.

46. Lampe, *Christians*, 13–14; Jewett, *Romans*, 61.

47. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, liii; Lampe, *Christians*, 70; Moo, *Romans*, 13; Jewett, *Romans*, 42; Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 37.

48. See Lampe, *Christians*, 164–236, for a detailed analysis of the names in Rom 16:3–16. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 37, lists five: Aquila, Priscilla, Andronicus, Junia and Herodion (and possibly Mary; contra Lampe, *Christians*, 176). Esler, *Conflict*, 118, also identifies the above five names as Judeans for the following reasons. Aquila is a Judean (Acts 18:2) and his wife is probably a Judean too. Paul addresses Andronicus and Junia in 16:7, and Herodian in 16:11 as συγγενεῖς. They are probably Judeans as Paul uses συγγενεῖς

apparent when I trace the argument of Romans, makes rhetorical sense in relation to the content of Romans and should, thus, shape the rhetorical situation of Romans.

2.2.3 About the *Exordium* and the *Peroratio*

Scholars recognise that the *exordium* and *peroratio* shed light on the rhetorical situation of a rhetorical discourse. Esler comments that to “discover the apostle’s communicative strategy” it is necessary to read 1:1-15 and 15:14-16:27:

In both of these passages, often referred to as the “frame” of the letter, Paul is speaking expressly of the personal circumstances of himself and his addressees, while he also details his plans for the future. They contain statements in which he offers explicit reasons for writing the letter and which reveal a great deal of information about the identities, ethnicity, and social status of a number of Christ-followers in Rome.⁴⁹

Brandt underscores that the speaker in the *exordium* “must define himself, and he must define the problem.”⁵⁰ The *exordium* also predisposes the hearers to the rhetoric of the discourse by preparing them to be “well-disposed, attentive, and receptive.”⁵¹ It seeks to establish a favourable *ethos* for the speaker.⁵² The *peroratio* has two main objectives:⁵³ to recapitulate

in 9:3 to denote fellow Judeans. Esler also adds to the above five names Rufus because Judeans often adopted Rufus as “a sound-equivalent” name of the Hebrew name Reuben. Lastly, Paul mentions a woman who is “his mother—a mother to me also” (16:13). Esler thinks that Paul’s closeness to this woman seems to indicate ethnic connection.

49. Esler, *Conflict*, 109–11. In a similar vein, Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, Studies in Biblical Theology (London: S.C.M. Press, 1971), 6–7, reminds us that as “the data concerning Paul’s personal plans are located at the beginning and at the end of the letter, so too, we may find there the ground for his concern with the Roman brothers.”

50. William J. Brandt, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 51.

51. Cicero *Inv.* 1.15.20.

52. So Brandt, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation*, 53.

53. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. Davide E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek

the main arguments of the rhetoric and to move the audience emotionally to assent to the rhetoric.⁵⁴ Thus, the *exordium* and *peroratio* carry interpretive weight in constructing the rhetorical situation.⁵⁵

2.2.4 The *Exordium* (Rom 1:1-15)

Several observations converge to indicate that 1:1-15 forms the *exordium* of Romans. First, the unit contains a concentration of self-designating terms: Παῦλος (1:1), verbs in the first person (1:5, 8, 9 [2x], 10, 11, 13 [4x], 14) and first person pronouns (1:8, 9, 10, 12, 15). Such a concentration coheres with the purpose of an *exordium*: to create a favourable *ethos* for the speaker. This is further reinforced with the observation that “vv. 8-12 reveals [sic] the interplay between ‘me’ and ‘you’ . . . and v.12b concludes with ‘both yours and mine.’”⁵⁶ Second, 1:16-17 is a fitting heading for the exposition of the gospel that follows in 1:18ff. Hence, 1:15 should conclude the *exordium*.⁵⁷

2.2.4.1 Rom 1:1-7

Prophetic rhetorolect dominates 1:1-7. Several related observations demonstrate this. First, 1:1-7 is a description of the gospel. Second, this gospel is described as that which is promised through the prophets. Third, Paul regards himself as a slave and an apostle who is being set apart for this gospel (1:1). Together, these three observations imply that the main rhetorolect of 1:1-7 is prophetic. Also, Paul, by connecting himself to the gospel that was promised through the prophets, would be construed by the implied audience as that “selected”

Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §431.

54. Lausberg, *Handbook*, §434–39; Quintilian *Inst. Ora.* 6.1.1, 6.1–8, 6.1.52; [Cicero] *Rhe. Her.* 2.30.47.

55. Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul’s Dialogue with Judaism*, JSNTSup 45 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 69.

56. So Jewett, *Romans*, 117–18.

57. L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans*, JSNTSup 55 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 106–07, construes 1:14-15 as the end of thanksgiving and 1:16-17 as the body-opening.

human who takes on the role of prophet (secondspace of prophetic rhetorlect).⁵⁸ To mobilise ideological power as a prophet who commands attention to his letter to the Romans, Paul crafts his *ethos* in several ways. First, in the *Familia Caesaris*, slaves and freedmen helped the emperor to discharge his duties.⁵⁹ In other words, they formed the imperial bureaucracy. When read in light of the social and cultural intertexture underlying the topos “slave,” ideological power is mobilised when Paul describes himself as a slave who possesses authority. Also, Christ Jesus takes on the identity of Messiah as he is described as being a descendant of King David. Given that Paul is a slave of Christ Jesus it implies that he is a slave of the Messiah king prophesied in the Hebrew Bible. The verbal form, ἀποστέλλειν, of the noun ἀπόστολος can refer to people who are sent as “representatives of their monarch and his authority.”⁶⁰ By describing himself as an apostle, Paul taps into the ideological texture embedded in the word “apostle”: Paul, who is sent by the monarch Christ Jesus, possesses royal authority. This enables Paul to project his authority over distances through his letter.

Second, Paul also builds his *ethos* by claiming the authority of the gospel for his apostleship. That the participle ἀφορισμένος (1:1) describes not just the name “Paul” but also the term “apostle” is evinced by the fact that Paul concludes with a statement of his “apostleship” (1:5). This implies that the description of the gospel (1:2-4) substantiates the authority of Paul’s apostleship. First, this apostleship is described in what Moxnes labels as “God language,” where “God” is emphasised. That “God language” is present is evident from the fact that τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ is a rare construction⁶¹ and that the personal pronoun emphasises “God’s personal involvement.”⁶² In the same way, the prepositional phrase ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις emphasises God’s authority. The intent of “God language” can be elicited

58. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

59. Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 144–45.

60. Rengstorff, “ἀποστελλω, κτλ.,” in *TDNT*, 1:398.

61. Jewett, *Romans*, 103, observes that it occurs only in Luke 1:70.

62. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 10.

from how Paul describes the gospel: it was that which God “promised beforehand.” Paul, by using “God language,” is introducing into the text an ideological texture to forge continuity between the gospel contained in the Hebrew Bible, and that which he will later expound in Romans. Paul’s likely intent is to gain the attention of Judean Christians who are among the real audience.

The content of the gospel also lends authority to Paul’s apostleship and adds to his *ethos* in that this gospel is about Jesus Christ who is Lord.⁶³ Paul introduces an oral-scribal intertexture that is generally thought to have been a pre-Pauline/extra-Pauline confession.⁶⁴ As this confession is known to the implied audience of Romans, it mobilises ideological power: Paul’s prophet-like call (the secondspace of prophetic rhetorolect) to be the special emissary of Jesus Christ is based on the identity of the son of God as described in the confession. If the Romans accept the validity of Paul’s call and position, then an asymmetrical relation of power is created by the introduction to the letter. The identity of Jesus Christ is specific, in that he is the son of God who exists in a state of power since the resurrection.⁶⁵ The nature of this existence in power is “according to the Spirit of holiness.”

63. Ian E. Rock, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans and Roman Imperialism: An Ideological Analysis of the Exordium (Romans 1:1–17)* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 121, argues that this nature of the gospel “rationalises, legitimises, and even universalises the ideology/theology” of Christians.

64. Scholars view differently the origin of the confession in 1:3-4. Robert Jewett, “The Redaction and Use of an Early Christian Confession in Romans 1:3–4,” in *The Living Text: Essays in Honor of Ernest W. Saunders*, ed. Robert Jewett and Dennis E. Groh (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1985), 99–122, sees redactional activities in what he conceives as pre-Pauline or extra-Pauline creedal confession; Archibald M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 28, and Matthew W. Bates, “A Christology of Incarnation and Enthronement: Romans 1:3–4 as Unified, Nonadoptionist, and Nonconciliatory,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 109, do not detect redaction. Christopher G. Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David: Paul’s Messianic Exegesis in Romans 1:3–4,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 661–81, thinks that 1:3-4 is novel and is Paul’s exegesis of Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7, as does Ernest Best, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 10–11.

65. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 14; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 12; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957), 20; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 62; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 235, attaches the prepositional phrase ἐν δυνάμει with υἱοῦ θεοῦ and not the participle ὁρισθέντος. Contra Frederic L. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the*

Minimally, this means that Jesus' powerful existence is characterised by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶ Considering that the word holiness (ἀγιωσύνη) used to qualify the Spirit occurs only two other times in the NT in the context of ethical obligations,⁶⁷ the power of the Spirit emphasised here is in the area of ethical holiness.⁶⁸ Thus, Paul the speaker argues that his apostleship is one that preaches a Christ who is endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit. This apostleship enables Paul to produce in the gentiles (ἔθνη) a trust or loyalty⁶⁹ that will result in obedience to God.⁷⁰ Esler explains the use of the phrase ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν as follows:

Romans (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 79; Jewett, *Romans*, 107; William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 9.

66. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 15.

67. 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 3:13.

68. Jewett, *Romans*, 106–7: “[t]he qualification of the spirit as the ‘spirit of holiness’ made clear that the divine power celebrated in the confession entailed moral obligations.” Similarly, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 15; Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 483, who further suggests that the genitive ἀγιωσύνης that qualifies the Spirit should be read as “the Spirit who gives/supplies holiness.”

69. Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul at the Crossroads of Cultures: Theologizing in the Space Between*, JSNTSup 456 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 166, comments that “what is expressed in πίστις terminology has to do with loyalty, trust and faithfulness. This is not merely a ‘holding for true or real’ state of mind, but something that clearly is only actualized in concrete activities.”

70. It is possible that the genitive is exegetical, that is, “obedience” which is “faith.” It is more likely, however, that it is a subjective genitive, that is, a “trust” which produces “obedience” is intended. Two observations evince this. First, since 1:5 is part of the *exordium*, we would expect the ideas of trust and obedience present in 1:5 to be worked out more clearly in the main body of the letter. We find this to be the case; trust and obedience/works are often two distinct terms in the letter. One should not, therefore, collapse the two terms into one. Second, the immediate context also supports a subjective genitive: the Roman Christians form part of those who are called for the ὑπακοήν πίστεως (1:5). This group of Christians are those whom Paul longs to see so as to “impart some spiritual gift” in order to εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς (Rom 1:11). Jewett, *Romans*, 124, notes that “this verb is used elsewhere in a metaphorical manner to describe Paul’s work of ‘making firm’ the trust of his congregations in spite of afflictions and uncertainties (1 Thess 3:2, 13; 2 Thess 2:17; 3:5).”

First century Judeans divided their world into two realms distinguishable on (what we would describe as) the geographic and religious dimensions of ethnic criteria. There was Judea—the sacred homeland of the people and the site of its capital city and the temple of its God—where they were in a preponderant majority and then there was the rest of the Mediterranean region, inhabited by numerous foreign peoples (ἔθνη) . . . The peoples so categorized, moreover, did not call themselves in this way [ἔθνη]; they called themselves “Greeks,” “Romans,” and so on . . . Accordingly, Paul’s reference at 1:5 to his work “among all the foreigners [ἔθνη],” the first ethnic expression in the letter, immediately characterizes the situation as one seen from a Judean perspective . . . It is impossible to exclude a geographic dimension from Paul’s mission. His apostleship entailed preaching the gospel outside Judea in the lands inhabited by idolatrous non-Judean peoples (but which also contained minority populations of Judeans).⁷¹

Esler’s contention is also supported by Elliot⁷² and Donaldson⁷³ who insist that the term τὰ ἔθνη does not refer to gentile individuals but to gentile nations: it should contain an “ethnic-national sense.”⁷⁴ Paul regards himself as an apostle to the nations,⁷⁵ “to the peoples of this earth at large.”⁷⁶

Thus, when Paul says in 1:5-6 that he seeks to produce obedience in the gentiles (ἔθνη), “among whom are you also,” he is referring to the Christians who are living in Rome,

71. Esler, *Conflict*, 113.

72. Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 46.

73. Donaldson, “Gentile Christianity,” 449–51, points out the problem with translating τὰ ἔθνη as “Gentiles”: “But while ‘Gentiles’ captures the element of non-Jewishness, the possibility is obscured that (non-Jewish) nations are in view.” He adds that even when small groups of individuals to whom are referred by the term τὰ ἔθνη, these groups represent nations (e.g., Acts 11:1; Rom 15:6).

74. Donaldson, “Gentile Christianity,” 451.

75. Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM Press, 1959), 52–54.

76. Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 102 (cited by Neil Elliott, *Arrogance*, 46).

a region that is outside Judea. The audience, thus, includes a majority of gentile Christians and a minority of Judean Christians.⁷⁷ By the clause ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς (cf. 1:13b), Paul asserts his apostolic authority over the Roman Christians.⁷⁸ This description of his apostleship to the gentiles in 1:1-5 needs to be applied to the Roman Christians because 1:1-5 prepares for his planned visit mentioned in 1:8-15. In light of the above discussion, the real and implied audience of Romans are likely to include Judean and gentile Christians.

2.2.4.2 Rom 1:8-15

Paul, to stir up *pathos* to further establish rapport with the implied audience, uses wisdom rhetorolect to reason with the implied audience without being confrontational, and hence, offensive. That wisdom rhetorolect dominates 1:8-15 is shown by Paul addressing them using a familial term, ἀδελφοί (1:13), since wisdom is particularly located in the home and in family life. Also, his intention of visiting them is to obtain some καρπός, an agricultural term which correlates with the firstspace of wisdom rhetorolect, from amongst them (1:13). By bringing wisdom rhetorolect into the text after the foregoing prophetic rhetorolect, Paul is attempting to first demand respect (1:1-7) before using wisdom rhetorolect to reason with and motivate them. He does this by commending their trust.

Paul's attempt to invoke the *ethos* of the implied audience, in order to increase their level of trust in him, is further heightened by mentioning in 1:9-10 and 1:13 his numerous attempts to visit them. *Pathos* is invoked in 1:13 by addressing the audience as ἀδελφοί. This commendation expressed through *pathos* is not a general one but one that has its object in 1:12 where their trust is mentioned the only other time in the *exordium*. Here, Paul seeks to persuade the implied Roman audience that he is eager to be encouraged by their trust in

77. Esler, *Conflict*, 114: "Nothing in this excludes the fact that Judeans regularly formed part of this congregation. Nor would any Judean or non-Judean Christ-followers in Rome listening to the letter as it was read deduce from this expression that the Judean members were excluded." See also, below pp. 53-54, where I demonstrate the presence of Judean Christians in the real audience: In Romans 16, amongst the people to whom this letter is addressed, at least five of them are probably Judeans. These people include Aquila, Priscilla, Andronicus, Junia, and Herodion (see p. 38).

78. Godet, *Romans*, 83.

God. He also tells them that he desires to encourage them to trust God by his own trust in God. This mutuality heightens *pathos*. Important for helping to identify the exigence of Romans (as I will later explain) is the observation that Paul is concerned not just about mutual encouragement. In 1:11-12, Paul's first concern is to strengthen the Roman Christians' trust in God (1:11). This newly strengthened trust will in turn be effective for providing what Paul calls "mutual encouragement" to himself. That this order is intentional on Paul's part is corroborated by the use of the phrase τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν. Cranfield remarks that this phrase

amends the effect of what has been said by expressing a complementary truth . . . Paul's desire to see them in order to be the means of their receiving a blessing will only be rightly understood, if it is seen as part of his desire for a mutual παράκλησις between him and them.⁷⁹

In other words, the intention of Paul's future visit to the Roman Christians is two-fold. First, Paul will strengthen them when he visits them. This strengthening of their trust in God, as I shall show below, is fulfilled in part by the Letter to the Romans. Second, only after their trust in God has been strengthened will they be able to provide encouragement, including material aid, to Paul for his planned evangelistic expedition to Spain.

I shall now proceed to show Paul's objective in strengthening the Roman Christians is fulfilled in part by the Letter to the Romans. Paul's desire to encourage the Roman Christians to trust God is couched in various terms. Paul desires to impart to them a "spiritual gift" so as to strengthen the trust of the implied audience (1:11).⁸⁰ That Paul's intention in 1:13 to obtain some "fruit" (1:13) among them continues the same concern of 1:12 is intimated by two observations. For one, the statement "I want you to know" serves to elaborate about what has just preceded.⁸¹ Also, Paul's hope that he will obtain some fruit (1:13) and to impart to

79. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 80.

80. His hope to be mutually encouraged in faith also equates (τοῦτο ἐστιν) the preceding imparting of gift for the purpose of establishing the implied audience.

81. The clause θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν occurs twice in Romans (1:13; 11:25). As in 1:13,

them some spiritual gift (1:11) are all to be accomplished at his planned visit (1:11).⁸² The means by which Paul uses to achieve the goals mentioned in 1:12-13 is explained in 1:14-15, as evinced by three observations. First, each pair “Greeks and barbarians,” and “wise and foolish,” are introduced by the pair of particles τε and καί. This pair of particles indicates that each pair of groups described in 1:14 make up the larger group mentioned in what has just preceded in 1:13, namely, “gentiles.”⁸³ In other words, 1:14 elaborates on how Paul will obtain the “fruit” discussed in 1:13. Second, Paul’s eagerness (πρόθυμον) in 1:15 corresponds to his desire in 1:11, as signified by the verb ἐπιποθῶ. It is reasonable to think that the objects of Paul’s eagerness (1:15) and desire (1:11) are the same. Third, Paul’s endeavours in 1:11-13 and 1:14-15 are all directed at the Roman Christians. In other words, that which Paul hopes to do amongst the Roman Christians in 1:11-15 is ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι (1:15). That the verb εὐαγγελίσασθαι entails a preaching of the gospel is corroborated by 1:16-17, “for I am not ashamed of the gospel,” which serves as the heading for the exposition of the gospel that follows in 1:18ff. This implies that what Paul hopes to do when he visits the Roman Christians in the future is actually fulfilled minimally by his letter to the Romans. Elliott shares my view:⁸⁴

the same clause in 11:25 indicates that what Paul said in 11:24 is being elaborated in 11:25: the “natural branches” that will be “grafted back to their own olive tree” (11:24) is explicated by the event when “all Israel will be saved” (11:25).

82. Robert L. Eoster, “The Justice of the Gentiles: Revisiting the Purpose of Romans,” *CBQ* 76 (2014): 688, notes that “[t]he letter to the Romans provides direct evidence that καρπός in 1:13 refers to faithful obedience and not evangelistic fruit.” See, e.g., 6:21-22; 15:26.

83. For the same construction and usage, see also 1:16; 2:9; 2:10; 3:9. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 83–84, concurs with my interpretation.

84. Elliott, *Rhetoric*, 87; recently, Neil Elliott, *Arrogance*, 45. Similarly, Günter Klein, “Paul’s Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans,” in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1977), 34: “if for Paul the content expressed in Romans and his concrete plans for his intended missionary work in Rome are intimately related, Romans 1:15ff. and 15:5ff. are simply two ways of expressing the very same apostolic task.” See also A. Roosen, “Le Genre Littéraire de l’Épître Aux Romains,” in *Studia Evangelica II* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 466: “une équivalence entre cette lettre et la grâce apostolique de l’évangélisation.” J. Paul Sampley, “Romans in a Different

‘Evangelising’ the Romans is absent from Paul’s future plans, not because that was never really his intention, but because that intention *has been achieved* between chs. 1 and 15, that is, *by the letter itself*. Romans is written as a surrogate for the visit Paul has long desired to make (1.10-15) under the constraint of his obligation as apostle to *all* the Gentiles, including the Roman Christians. The letter *is* Paul’s εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

These people whom Paul hopes to visit are a part of the larger group of gentiles (ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν) who are described in 1:14-15 as Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, and those who are in Rome. This final point indicates once again that a part of the real and implied audience, namely, gentile Christians, is a main focus in this letter.

The above discussion has important bearings on the exigence of Romans. As I shall argue in the discussion on the *peroratio* (see the following section), the above discussion on 1:11-15, when read together with 15:23-24, sheds light on the purpose Romans: to prepare for Paul’s evangelistic expedition to Spain.

2.2.5 The *Peroratio* (Rom 15:14-16:27)

The section 15:14-16:27 constitutes the *peroratio*⁸⁵ as evinced by the observation that elements included in this section are typical of his letter endings.⁸⁶ More importantly, as will be shown, this section exhibits the two main functions of a *peroratio*, namely, to recapitulate the main arguments and to influence the emotions of the implied audience.⁸⁷ To achieve the

Light: A Response to Robert Jewett,” in *Pauline Theology III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 115, puts it succinctly: “Romans is not merely or even primarily written ‘for the sake of missions’: *it is mission at work*.”

85. Jewett, *Romans*, 900, basically agrees that 15:14ff. constitute the *peroratio*. He construes, however, the sections 16:17-20a and 16:25-27 as non-Pauline interpolations. See also, Wilhelm Wuellner, “Paul’s Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans,” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 339–45, who regards 14:14-16:23 as the *peroratio*. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 854, regards, 15:14-16:27 as the conclusion to the letter and recalls the opening 1:8-15.

86. See Moo, *Romans*, 884, for a comparison of the elements present in between 15:14-16:27 and other Pauline letters.

87. David E. Aune, “Peroration,” in *Westminster Dictionary*, 347. Lausberg,

above mentioned functions of the *peroratio*, Paul uses wisdom rhetorolect as it is non-confrontational. That the dominating rhetorolect is wisdom is demonstrated by Paul addressing them in this section as ἀδελφοί (15:14, 30; 16:14, 17). I shall now discuss places which contain the two above mentioned functions to shed light on the rhetorical situation of Romans.

The *peroratio* also exhibits the two-fold purpose of Paul's future visit to the Roman Christians mentioned in the *exordium*. First, Paul's intention to strengthen the Roman Christians' trust in God is recapitulated in 15:14-16. Wuellner remarks that Rom 15:14-15 functions to recapitulate a "full statement of his thesis."⁸⁸ That this part of the *peroratio* is tied to the *exordium* is shown by Paul's reiteration (1:5-6; 1:13-14) that he is called to be an apostle to the gentiles and that Romans is written with his apostolic authority. This observation helps to identify the scope of "some points I have written to you" (15:15), namely, the section 1:16-15:13 that intervenes between the *exordium* and *peroratio*. Paul's intent is to minister to the gentile Christians in Rome so that they "may be pleasing, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (15:16) by means of his letter to the Romans. This corroborates what Paul has reiterated in the *exordium*, namely, that by his visit (the purpose of which, as I argued above, is fulfilled in part by this letter), he hopes to impart to them "some spiritual gift in order to strengthen them" (1:11), and that he "might have some fruit" among them (1:13). In this way, Paul's objective for his future visit, namely, to encourage them to trust God (1:12), is fulfilled in part by Romans.

Second, the other part of the mutual encouragement mentioned in the *exordium* in 1:12 (συμπαρακληθῆναι διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως) is fulfilled by 15:23-24: the Roman Christians will encourage Paul. That both passages, 15:23-24 and 1:12, are related is likely. First, the *peroratio* of which 15:23-24 is a part, often recapitulates the main point(s) of the *exordium* of which 1:12 is a part. Second, as Jewett notes, Paul being satisfied (ἐμπλησθῶ

Handbook, §434–35. Wuellner, "Rhetoric," 339–45, asserts that the two basic functions of the *peroratio*, namely, the recapitulation is present in 15:14-15 and 15:16-29, and *pathos* in 15:30-16:23.

88. Wuellner, "Rhetoric," 339.

ὕμῳν) by the Roman Christians echoes the mutual encouragement of trust Paul speaks of in 1:12.⁸⁹

Also, important for understanding the purpose of Romans is the relationship between the Roman Christians' trust and that of Paul mentioned in 1:11-12. As I argued above in my analysis 1:1-12, the trust in God of the Roman Christians that would encourage Paul is the state after Paul has strengthened them by his future visit, and after they have heard the message of Romans. This observation leads us to the purpose of Romans: Paul writes to strengthen the trust of the Roman Christians and to obtain their support for his future evangelistic expedition to Spain. This support includes some material help (15:24).⁹⁰ That Paul is concerned that he receives material support from the Roman Christians is demonstrated by his stirring up *pathos* for his evangelistic expedition. Paul sandwiches between his statements of his intended expedition to Spain (15:23-24; 15:32) his statement about his approaching visit to Jerusalem (15:25-31) where he will deliver aid to the Judean Christians there. Relevant to our investigation is the fact that Paul spells out the significance of the gift that he is about to deliver to Jerusalem. He explains that the gentiles owe it to the Judean Christians to provide aid to them because the gentile Christians share in τοῖς πνευματικοῖς. This adjectival substantive is used two other times in Romans,⁹¹ one of which refers to Paul hoping to impart some πνευματικόν gift (1:11) to the implied audience. Paul's intention in telling the implied audience about his impending visit to Jerusalem is to use the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia as an example. What this means is that just as gentile Christians in Macedonia and Achaia reciprocate the πνευματικόν gift given by the Judean Christians in Jerusalem, the gentile Roman Christians too should reciprocate the πνευματικόν gift (1:11) which Paul, a Judean apostle, will bring when he visits the Roman gentile

89. Jewett, *Romans*, 926.

90. Jewett, *Romans*, 925; Schlier, *Der Römerbrief*, 872.

91. The adjective πνευματικός occurs a total of three times in Romans: 1:11; 7:14; 15:27.

Christians. This act of reciprocation is built upon a social-cultural texture of friendship.⁹² Considering, however, that Paul positions himself as someone who possesses apostolic authority and that he asserts this authority on his implied audience, this friendship should be construed as functioning in a patron-client relationship, or what Marshall describes as “patronal friendship.”⁹³ Thus, the Roman Christians are expected to return Paul’s favour (or grace) by supporting his evangelistic expedition to Spain, a factor that forms part of the rhetorical situation of the letter. Thus, Achaia evokes *pathos*. Paul’s appeal for the Roman Christians’ prayer in 15:30 serves two purposes. First, it acts to cement the relationship between the dissenting Judean and gentile Christians by appealing to, as Dunn puts it, the shared “Lordship” Jesus Christ,⁹⁴ or as I argue later, Jesus as the superordinate figure.⁹⁵ Paul also appeals to the love of the Spirit as expounded in 5:5. The use of the verb συναγωνίσασθαι containing the prefix συν- serves the “draw them into an alliance over against the potential opposition from Judea and the Jerusalem church.”⁹⁶ Second, this request for prayer also creates *pathos* and recapitulates Paul’s sincere desire mentioned in the exordium (1:13), and to avoid a repeat of his past failed attempts to visit them. Third, the

92. John T. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 320–27, citing Aristotle, makes several observations about friendship which characterise Romans: “friendship . . . involves mutuality and reciprocity” (p. 320; cf. Rom 1:12); “of the three forms of friendship, the highest is that which is based on mutual admiration of character” (p. 326; cf. Rom 1:8); “it seeks the good of the friend . . . they help each other morally by not only striving to prevent one another from doing wrong but also by correcting one another when they do err” (p. 327; cf. Rom 1:11). He comments that Romans contains friendship language (p. 339).

93. Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations with the Corinthians*, WUNT 2.23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 144, comments that “[p]atronal friendship had the appearance of equality between the two parties but in reality it was an unequal relationship.” Fitzgerald, “Paul,” 328, observes that “the Greco-Roman world witnessed the emergence of several ‘unequal’ friendships, that is, friendships between people from different socioeconomic groups.”

94. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 878.

95. See below, p. 261.

96. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 878.

ultimate aim of this prayer is that he might be “refreshed” or encouraged by the Roman Christians. This recalls 1:12 of the *exordium* and his earlier statement in 15:24. Thus, Paul’s purpose of requesting their prayers is to be able to visit them and to have them support his mission to Spain.

The long list of people in 16:3-16 to whom Paul sends greetings is unusual and indicates that it is purposeful. The recurrence of the second person plural ἀσπάσασθε (16 times in 14 verses) creates a sensory-aesthetic texture that evokes *pathos*. This moves the implied audience to act cordially towards other Christians.

Most scholars either regard 16:17-20 as unrelated to what has preceded,⁹⁷ or at best, only loosely related to the content of Romans 16.⁹⁸ But as Esler comments,

[I]f one holds as the fundamental canon of interpretation that the main resource we have for judging the plausibility of the interpretation of any aspect of a Pauline letter, including the context into which it was sent, is the letter itself, it is relatively easy to construe these verses as largely summarizing points that Paul has made earlier in the letter.⁹⁹

This explains why there are common topoi between the earlier parts of the letter and 16:17-20: Paul’s appeal to his implied audience to beware of those who cause divisions (16:17) recalls his earlier injunctions not to quarrel but to keep peace (11:17, 20; 12:16; 14:1-5, 10, 13, 19); Paul’s attack on those who serve their stomachs (16:18) parallels his rebuke of those who cause others to stumble by the food they eat (14:15); his description of such people as those who deceive by “smooth talk” and “flattery” recalls his instruction to his audience to avoid quarrels over opinions (14:1).¹⁰⁰ Thus, the focus of 16:17-20, that the Roman

97. Thus, Jewett, *Romans*, 986–88, who regards 16:17a-20 as a non-Pauline interpolation; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 745; Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings*, JSNTSup 101 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 228.

98. Thus, Moo, *Romans*, 929; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 901; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 797–98.

99. Esler, *Conflict*, 126.

Christians should avoid dissension, forms part of the rhetorical situation. When viewed contextually, 16:17-20 should form the main part of the rhetorical situation or more precisely, the exigence of the rhetorical situation. This is revealed by its location in the letter in that before Paul ends his letter with his usual greetings from his fellow workers, he reiterates his main concern of this letter.¹⁰¹

2.2.6 Conclusion

For a discourse to be intelligible, the rhetorical situation or the social context that generates a discourse needs to be discovered. Bitzer identifies three constituents that clarify the rhetorical situation: the exigence, the implied audience, and the speaker (the constraint). To understand the rhetorical situation of Romans, I have investigated the *exordium* (1:1-15) and the *peroratio* (15:14-16:27) as they contain information related to the rhetorical situation. This section provides a summary of the above investigation of the *exordium* and *peroratio* in terms of the exigence, the implied audience, and the speaker.

2.2.6.1 The Implied Speaker

The implied speaker is Paul (1:1). His apostolic authority lies in the nature of the gospel that he preaches (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ [1:3]; δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν . . . ἀποστολήν [1:5]) and which Paul writes about in Romans (1:5). The gospel concerns the nature of Jesus (1:3): specifically, Jesus exists in a state of power that is characterised by holiness (1:4), that is, a life characterised by righteousness. The nature of his apostolic authority allows him to legitimately assert this authority over his implied audience.

2.2.6.2 The Implied Exigence

Paul expresses and reiterates his desire to visit the Roman Christians so as to bring to them some spiritual benefits. This objective is couched variously: Paul hopes to strengthen them (1:11), provide them mutual encouragement (1:12) and to have some fruit among them

100. Esler, *Conflict*, 126–28.

101. So Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 908; Moo, *Romans*, 933.

(1:13). What he intends to do during the visit will be fulfilled by preaching to them the gospel (1:15). It is fulfilled in part by Romans itself (1:16ff.). In the *peroratio* (15:15-16), Paul reiterates the above point that he is an apostle to the gentiles (cf. 1:5) in the “priestly service of the gospel” and hopes to present to God an offering of the gentiles by the gospel that he has just written (15:15). Paul lays the ground for his objective by using what Moxnes calls “God language.” This emphasises to the gentile Christians that their trust is in continuity with that which is recorded in the Judean Scriptures. Specifically, this benefit is that which he enunciates at the closing of the letter, which is to enable them to avoid dissension (16:17-20). The *probatio* also hints at a dissension between Judean and gentile Christians: in 11:13-24, gentile Christians are reminded not to boast over Judeans;¹⁰² in 14:1-15:13, “the strong,” namely, gentile Christians are told not to cause the “weak,” who probably are Judean Christians, to stumble.¹⁰³ Furthermore, in 1:18-3:20, Paul seeks to prove that Judeans do not have a reason to boast over gentiles because of their superior righteousness as no one is righteous (3:9-10).¹⁰⁴ The nature of the gospel, as described in 1:2-3 and 1:16-17, about which Paul writes, seems to indicate that the nature of this dissension entails ethical righteousness.¹⁰⁵ The nature of the gospel that Paul brings to the implied audience, as described in 1:2-3, is about Jesus Christ who is empowered by “the Spirit of holiness.” The emphasis on the Spirit as that which imparts holiness seems to imply a rhetorical situation that entails ethical righteousness. Furthermore, the description of the gospel as one that brings righteousness in the relationship between Christians, as God’s clients, and God as their patron (1:16-17), again hints at a deficiency of ethical righteousness, which is synonymous with ethical holiness. Paul’s ultimate purpose in removing the dissension, or in the words of the *exordium* to strengthen their trust in God, (1:12), is that they might be able to support him in his evangelistic expedition to Spain.

102. See below, pp. 98-99.

103. See below, pp. 101-105.

104. See below, pp. 57-62.

105. See below, pp. 56-57.

2.2.6.3 The Implied Audience

Paul is constructing his *ethos* in the *exordium* when he describes his apostolic authority (1:1-5a). By asserting this authority over gentiles (1:5), he intimates that at least a part of the implied (and real) audience is gentile. This is also corroborated by the fact that they are one part of a larger group of people of whom “the rest of the gentiles” are a part (1:13). Paul also describes the implied audience as “saints” (1:7). Hence, they are gentile Christians. His desire to visit the implied audience stems from his obligation to preach the gospel to Greeks, barbarians, wise and foolish, who together constitute a part of the gentile world. This observation again indicates that the implied audience are gentile Christians. That, however, does not mean that Judean Christians do not form part of the implied (and real) audience. Several observations support my view that, beside an implied (and real) gentile Christian audience, the implied (and real) audience of Romans consists also of Judean Christians.¹⁰⁶ First, as I have argued, the list of names in Romans 16 to whom the letter is addressed, contains names of Judean origin.¹⁰⁷ Second, as I will argue in my overview of 14:1-15:13, in applying the message of 1:18-11:36, Paul urges reconciliation between the “weak” who are Judean Christians, and the “strong” who are gentile Christians.¹⁰⁸ This implies the presence of both groups in the church in Rome. Third, as I will contend in my analysis of 2:1-29, the Judean interlocutor in 2:17 must represent the views of a real Judean (Christian) audience in order for Paul’s rhetoric, which involves honour, the core value of Mediterranean culture, to work.¹⁰⁹

2.3 The Argument of Rom 1:16-4:25

As letters were read out to the audience, proceeding from the beginning to the end, the

106. See also above, pp. 43-44, where I argue against construing ἔθνη in 1:5 as constituting evidence for a wholly gentile real audience.

107. See above, p. 38.

108. See below, pp. 101-105.

109. See below, p. 61.

implied audience would naturally understand Romans 4 in light of what precedes it. Hence, to understand the rhetorical goal of Romans 4, I shall trace the argument of 1:16-3:31, and explain how its rhetoric and dominating issues precipitate the need for the rhetoric of Romans 4.

2.3.1 Rom 1:16-17

The γάρ in 1:16 is causal and introduces the reason in 1:16-17 for Paul's desire to visit the Roman implied audience in 1:8-15: the gospel imparts salvation. That 1:16-17 is connected to 1:8-15 is indicated by common topoi: εὐαγγέλιον (1:16 and 1:9); the δύναμις of the gospel and Paul's gospel which is characterised by the power of the Spirit of holiness (1:16; 1:4) and is to be preached also to the Greeks (1:16; 1:14). In other words, Paul's desire to visit the audience (1:10-11) and then to impart "some spiritual gift to [them] in order to strengthen [them]" finds its basis in 1:16-17: the power of the gospel to bring salvation to "Judeans first and also to the Greeks."

This comes as a surprise as Paul previously described the implied audience of the gospel as belonging to a group delineated by "Greeks and barbarians" and "wise and foolish" (1:14). The observation that from this point on Paul no longer focuses on this group but on issues pertaining to breaking down of barriers between Judeans and Greeks indicates that 1:14 serves to prepare for 1:16-17. This means that the pair "Judeans and Greeks" is somehow related to the pair "Greeks and barbarians" and "wise and foolish." Dunn comments that Greeks classified the world as comprising "Greeks and barbarians," or synonymously as "wise and the foolish." Both terms, "barbarians" and "foolish," are derogatory terms that Greeks used to describe people other than themselves.¹¹⁰ "'Jew and Greek' is the Jewish equivalent to the Gentile categorization of the world given in v 14, only here with 'Greek' replacing 'Gentile,' reflecting the all pervasiveness of Greek culture."¹¹¹ In the same vein, Ehrensperger also observes that the pair "Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Ἕλληνας, in particular,

110. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 32-33.

111. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 40.

are different ways of life based on different traditions of belonging.”¹¹² The term “Ἕλληνες does not refer to an ethnic group but to the Greek παιδεία that led to a civilised way of life.¹¹³ Greek παιδεία “combined with Roman values such as *virtutes* and *mores*, provided the means by which to achieve *humanitas*, the way of life most appropriate for civilized peoples in the perception of the Roman elite.”¹¹⁴ The implication is that when Paul says that he has an obligation to preach the gospel to “Greeks and barbarians,” he implies that the gospel can resolve cultural problems that disrupt relationships between “Greeks and barbarians.” Furthermore, when Paul describes the gospel as “the power of God that brings salvation” (1:16), the power refers to that which can save Judeans and Greeks from some constraints related to ethical concerns.¹¹⁵ Whatever the precise concerns are, the above observation points in the direction that Paul is dealing with a situation where Judeans and Greeks are embroiled in some kind of a competition of one faction over the other. This observation is borne out by the content of the letter where Paul seeks to reconcile these two groups later in his argument. This gospel is capable of effecting salvation for Judeans and Greeks because it reveals the righteousness of God (1:17) that comes through trust, as the expression ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν indicates.

2.3.2 Rom 1:18-3:20

The presence of the prophetic rhetorolect is indicated by several observations. Rom 1:18-32 begins with the threat of God’s wrath (1:18) against those who know the truth and yet suppress the truth. Using the diatribe style, Paul indicts the interlocutor of his sins and the punishment that will follow (2:1-29). Paul then rounds off his indictment with further accusations taken from the Hebrew Bible, including the psalms and prophets. By using

112. Ehrensperger, *Paul*, 122.

113. Ehrensperger, *Paul*, 65.

114. Ehrensperger, *Paul*, 65.

115. Jewett, *Romans*, 138–39, observes that Paul “frequently speaks of salvation in terms of preservation from divine wrath in the last judgment” and deliverance “from the present evil age.”

prophetic rhetorolect and the pointed indictments that accompany this rhetorolect, Paul generates *pathos* in the implied audience to convict them of their own state of sinfulness. Also, prophetic rhetorolect allows Paul to take on the role of a prophet. This raises the *ethos* of Paul as the speaker. In this way, the use of prophetic rhetorolect provides Paul access to ideological power that effectively reproves the implied audience of their sins. With this note, I shall analyse the details of 1:18-3:20.

It is important to bear in mind the connection of 1:18-3:20 with the preceding context. Paul had expressed his wish to visit the Roman Christians earlier in the preceding passage. His objective is described in 1:8-15 by a series of related wishes, which include the desire to impart to them some spiritual gift (1:11), which in turn will bring mutual encouragement (1:12), and the desire to reap some fruit among the Roman Christians. Paul's means for achieving these objectives is through the power of the gospel. How Paul is going to achieve that is by means of the gospel because the gospel is powerful. This leads to the theme of Romans in 1:16-17 and its elaboration in the main body (1:18-15:13). Thus, the exposition of the gospel has as its objective the reaping of some fruit among the gentile Roman Christians. This fruit is specific. According to 1:16-17, it involves several aspects. It includes salvation and this salvation is attainable because the gospel creates a righteous relationship between Christians and their patron, God. This righteousness is essential for salvation because 1:18 says that God is angry because of the unrighteousness of humankind. From this point onwards, Paul begins his long rhetorical presentation (1:18-15:13) on how this righteousness, that is, a righteous relationship between God the patron and Christians the clients, can be achieved.

Paul devotes the first section (1:18-3:20) to removing Judeans' reliance on the law of Moses for righteousness. This enables Paul to conclude in 3:20 that Judeans cannot claim that the Mosaic law establishes a righteous relationship between God who is the patron and Christians who are the clients. Paul's main intention in writing this section is not simply to indict the entire human race for having broken that righteous relationship through having sinned against God their patron by deviating from his just requirements. Paul's focus is to divest Judeans of their reliance on observing the law of Moses for establishing this righteous

relationship with God.¹¹⁶ That this is his main concern is demonstrated by several observations. First, the *inclusio* bracketed by δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἀποκαλύπτεται (1:17) and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται (3:21) delineates a complete unit 1:18-3:20. The change from “the righteousness of God in it is being revealed” (1:17) to “but now the righteousness of God that is apart from the law has been manifested” (3:21) indicates the focus of the intervening section (1:18-3:20) has to do with the law of Moses. This implies that 1:18-3:20 addresses a Judean concern. Second, common among the three sections (1:18-32; 2:1-16; 2:17-29) is the motif that knowledge of the law of God (which includes the general law [cf. 1:14] and the Mosaic law) brings with it also knowledge of sin. Thus, the pericope 1:18-3:20 begins with the programmatic statement in 1:18 that emphasises that God’s anger is revealed against those who suppress the truth, that is, those who know the truth and yet refuse to submit to the truth. The difference among the three sections is a gradual tightening of the proverbial hangman’s noose on the Judean interlocutor.

This gradual tightening of the “hangman’s noose” starts with 1:18-32 where Paul indicts gentiles who know the truth about God but refuse to acknowledge God. Interpreters have correctly argued that Paul uses Judean apologetic motifs against gentiles.¹¹⁷ By enumerating specific sins gentiles commit, Paul stirs up *pathos* in the implied audience so that they will agree with his indictment. Paul’s intent, however, is to prepare for his indictment of the Judean interlocutor in 2:1 as indicated by the particle of inference διό.¹¹⁸

This leads to the next stage of the argument in 2:1-3:30. Scholars recognise that Paul makes use of the diatribe style where he debates with an imaginary interlocutor.¹¹⁹ Such a

116. Contra Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 104; Moo, *Romans*, 92; Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 121–22, who think that Paul simply seeks to indict the entire human race.

117. E.g., Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 109; Moo, *Romans*, 97; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 56–70.

118. Out of its six occurrences in the book of Romans, five (1:24; 4:22; 13:5; 15:7; 15:22) are clearly inferential.

119. E.g., Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 87, 93–98, who states that characteristic of a diatribe is to address the imaginary person “with a vocative of some sort,” or typically, “there

mode of rhetoric has the advantage of making the interlocutor take on the identity Paul requires for his rhetoric to work. At the same time, it allows Paul to make “dialogical objections and false conclusions for the purpose of indictment,” as seen in this section.¹²⁰

Paul indicts the interlocutor on the basis that the interlocutor condemns the very sins he himself commits. This lively style of debating with an imaginary interlocutor and indicting him of sin heightens *pathos*, in emphasizing the gravity of sin. Paul in indicting this interlocutor includes the Judeans when he states that God renders retribution for sins for “the Judean first and also the Greek” (2:9). Furthermore, the section beginning with 2:17 simulates the Judeans judging the gentiles.¹²¹ Some interpreters think that the interlocutor referred to in 2:1 cannot be a Judean as the interlocutor will not agree that he is guilty of idolatry in 1:21-24.¹²² The phrase *τὰ αὐτά* (“the same things”), however, could refer to the nearest list of vices in 1:28-32. Dunn comments that

[a] line of argument which accused Jews of idolatry and homosexual practice would be unlikely to commend much support, either from the judgmental Jew or from the God-worshipping Gentile . . . But the list of 1:29-31 largely consists of vices into which an individual can slide without being fully aware of it.¹²³

This also finds evidence in the fact that the phrase *τὰ τοιαῦτα* occurs only three times in Romans. In two of these occurrences (2:2; 2:3), it refers to the nearby *τὰ αὐτά* in 2:1, that is, the sin of judging a person for sins that one also commits. Thus, that the phrase *τὰ αὐτά* refers to the sins enumerated in the nearby passage 1:28-31 is probable. The condemnation of

is a sudden turning to address the fictitious interlocutor.” Also, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 78; Jewett, *Romans*, 196.

120. David E. Aune, “Diatribes,” in *The Westminster Dictionary*, 129.

121. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 40, observes that “Jew and Greek” is the Judean equivalent of the way gentiles view the world as in “Greek and barbarians” (1:14). Thus, in Judeans’ perspective, “Greeks” equates “gentiles.”

122. Esler, *Conflict*, 151; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 54, circumvents the difficulty by regarding the *διό* as an early marginal gloss and that it is not inferential.

123. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 80; Moo, *Romans*, 131.

the Judean interlocutor in 2:1 is certain because the law that he knowingly violates will condemn him. In a similar way in 2:17-29, the law of Moses that the Judeans know and teach but yet violate, will condemn them. Stowers, who construes a wholly gentile real audience for Romans,¹²⁴ regards the Judean in 2:17-29 as a “fictitious interlocutor.”¹²⁵ Such a conceptualisation is untenable as it divorces Paul’s rhetoric from the honour-shame culture, the core value of Mediterranean culture. The purpose of the rhetoric of 2:17-29, and for that matter, the whole of 1:18-3:20, is to lead to the conclusion in 3:19-20: so that “every mouth may be silenced.” Specifically, it is to stop Judeans from extracting honour from gentiles through a game of challenge and riposte. This requires real time interaction between Judeans and gentile Christians in the tussle for honour. Hence, Paul uses the motif of knowing the law and yet breaking it as an indicting device to gradually tighten the proverbial hangman’s noose on the Judeans who rely on the law of Moses for acquiring righteousness. Paul’s main concern, however, is not with just indicting the Judeans who rely on the law of Moses for righteousness (3:20) but to divest them of any reason to feel superior to the gentiles. This is evinced by several observations. First, the interlocutor(s) in 2:1-16 and 2:17-29 are characterised as people who have a sense of superiority over gentiles. The Judeans “boast in God” because God has given them the law of Moses. In the honour/shame culture system of the Mediterranean world, it means that the Judeans’ honour is received from God, their patron, who has given them the law of Moses. In return, the Judeans (the clients) have an obligation to bring honour to their patron, God. But when they use this to boast towards the gentiles in a bid to increase their share of honour,¹²⁶ they are shamed, and this in turn leads to their patron being shamed. That this is likely the case explains the scenario described in 2:22 where by breaking the law, “they dishonour God” (2:23) and bring shame to God.

124. Stowers, *Rereading*, 30.

125. Stowers, *Rereading*, 144.

126. See, Moxnes, “Honour and Righteousness,” 69, who also thinks that “[i]n Romans 2:17-24 Paul describes a situation of a competition for honour: Jews claim honour (by boasting) over other people on the basis of status, a claim which is founded both on inheritance and a knowledge of God and law (2:17-20).”

Furthermore, a riposte by the gentiles is possibly described here in 2:19, when the gentiles instead turn around to judge the Judeans when they (the gentiles) obey the universal moral law. Second, and more importantly, Paul begins his concluding paragraph for this section in 3:9-20 with a rhetorical question: “Therefore what? Are we better off?” (3:9). The self-evident response is that Judeans are no better off in terms of honour that has value before God than the gentiles. Paul does conclude that both Judeans and gentiles are ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν. It is important to note, however, that Paul’s point is not simply that. Rather, his point is not directed at the gentiles but at *the Judeans*: that they too are ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν. This is precisely the point of 3:9 which introduces the paragraph 3:9-20. Paul also concludes with “every mouth may be silenced” (3:19). The “mouth” probably refers to that of the above interlocutor in 2:1-16 who judges and in 2:17-29, the interlocutor who teaches the gentiles so as to gain honour. That Paul is directing his indictment at Judeans is the reason why he concludes with a statement about the law of Moses upon which Judeans rely: “therefore, by the deeds required by the [Mosaic] law, no flesh will be made righteous” (3:20). Such an emphasis also accounts for the frequent Judean/Greek refrain (1:16; 2:9; 2:10; 3:9) which emphasises that Judeans are no less guilty of sin, which incurs shame, than gentiles.

2.3.3 Rom 3:21-31

Having indicted the Judean and also gentile Christians for their sins with the consequence of incurring shame, and hence, a lack of a righteous relationship with the patron God, the question that would trouble the minds of the implied audience remains: how can a person establish a righteous relationship with their patron God so as to gain honour that has value before God? At this point, Paul brings in the priestly rhetorlect as evinced by the topoi of sin (3:23), blood and atonement (3:24-26), and circumcision (3:30). The shift from the previous prophetic rhetorlect to priestly rhetorlect mobilises ideological power by motivating them to accept a solution to their condemnation due to sin. It motivates them to want to abandon reliance on the Mosaic law and rely on Jesus who provides atonement for sin. The section below explains the details.

Several observations help to pin down the emphasis of 3:21-31. This passage begins with a two-fold thesis statement that righteousness has been manifested “apart from the law” (χωρὶς νόμου), and that it is also “testified by the law (ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου) and the prophets” (3:21). At the end of the first part of the argument (3:21-26), Paul begins the second (3:27-31) with a rhetorical question whose answer is “the boast” is removed on the basis of trust that comes “apart from the law” (χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου). The addition of ἔργων in the latter expression does not amount to a substantial difference but is introduced for a play of words to contrast the subsequent νόμου πίστεως (3:27). This phrase, which recalls the thesis statement in 3:21, implies that the conclusion in 3:27-28 is reached via the argument in 3:22-26 that the expiation by Jesus’ blood (3:25) makes righteous with God the person who trusts Jesus Christ (3:26) as broker. Hence, Paul reinforces the thesis statement (3:21) that this righteousness in relationship with God is “apart from the law” (χωρὶς νόμου). Paul, however, does not say (although he obviously implies it) in 3:27 that this righteousness is obtained apart from the Mosaic law, as in the thesis statement. What he does say is “the boast” to gain honour is removed by virtue of the fact that this righteousness comes χωρὶς νόμου. In a Mediterranean culture where honour and shame are core values, honour is considered a limited good.¹²⁷ In this passage, when Judeans boast because they possess honour, that honour must be obtained at the expense of somebody else, in this case, gentiles.¹²⁸ Thus, Paul in 3:27 is saying that Judeans cannot boast towards gentiles, and hence, gain honour. This conclusion in 3:27 should not be construed as a minor point but one that advances his foregoing rhetoric (1:18-3:20).¹²⁹ Paul does this to undermine Judeans’ reliance on the law for righteousness in order

127. Jerome H. Neyrey, “Limited Good,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 122–27, comments that limited good is a social construct of the ancient peasants that all good things of this world exist in limited supply. The most precious of goods in antiquity is honour.

128. Joseph Plevnik, “Honor/Shame,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 106–15.

129. Gathercole, *Boasting*, 236, notes that the boast in 3:27 is a Judean one discussed in 2:17 and 2:23, that God would vindicate Israel against the gentiles. Contra C. E. B. Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to the Romans,” *JSNT* 43 (1991): 96, who argues that construing it as a Judean boast is an anti-climax. Cranfield has not adequately captured Paul’s preceding rhetoric in 1:18-3:20 which was directed specifically at Judeans

that they may not “boast” (2:17; 2:23) against the gentiles.

In the second part of the argument (3:27-31), it is important to note that 3:29-30 does not seek to simply reinforce 3:28 that one is made righteous by trust and not deeds required by the Mosaic law. Rather, 3:29-30 is responding to the entire thesis in 3:27-28, that is, Paul is reinforcing his assertion that Judeans cannot boast towards the gentiles (3:27). When 3:29-30 is read against 3:27-28 and not just 3:28, the reason why Paul uses the idea of “one God” (3:30) becomes intelligible. Esler comments that “Paul appeals to the fundamental Judean belief in monotheism . . . to legitimate his claim that righteousness through faith comes to Judeans and non-Judeans.”¹³⁰ His (Paul’s) assertion removes the boast of the Judeans towards the gentiles.

The social and cultural texture underlying “righteousness” gives ideological texture to “righteousness.” This ideological texture will enable us to understand how Judeans use it to gain honour from gentiles. Judeans construe righteousness as an essential ingredient of their ethnic identity. This causes Judeans to perceive those who are not Judeans, or in social identity terminology, “outgroups,” as unrighteous.¹³¹ Esler’s comments, based on Tajfel’s understanding of group identity, on how such a perception of righteousness affects Judean-gentile relationship, is apt:

righteousness: (1) said something to Israelites about the substance of the identity (the cognitive dimension); (2) made them feel good about belonging to it (the emotional dimension); and (3) gave them a criterion against which to make negative judgments concerning outgroups (the evaluative dimension).

The consequence is that gentile Christians were cast in the role of “outsiders” by Judean Christians, and it is this which Paul seeks to correct by creating a unified identity

who boast in the law against gentiles.

130. Esler, *Conflict*, 169. Similarly, Moxnes, *Theology*, 223, opines that “God is one” serves “an argument for the inclusion and co-existence of both Jews and non-Jews in the same community, on the basis of faith.”

131. Esler, *Conflict*, 167.

between Judean and gentile Christians.¹³² To achieve this, he has to realign the Judean Christians' understanding of righteousness. In 3:27-31, Paul explains that "God is one" (3:30), which implies that he is the God of both Judeans and gentiles. This requires God to ascribe righteousness to both Judeans and gentiles in the same way. Otherwise, it would lead to two classes of Christians, namely, those who had achieved righteousness by means of observing the Mosaic law, and those who had to have righteousness bestowed from God directly.

This righteousness, however, is not just a social identity marker. It is also an ethical relational construct as two observations show. First, it is ethical as evident in how "righteousness" is juxtaposed against 1:18-3:31. Here, the revelation of the δικαιοσύνη of God in 1:17 is immediately contrasted with the revelation of God against ungodliness and ἀδικίαν, a word belonging to δικ- cognates. This ungodliness and unrighteousness is further described as a refusal to honour God according to what may be known about God and his decrees (1:18-32). It is further described as knowingly violating God's law (2:1-29). In removing the boast of Judeans towards gentiles (3:9), and hence, the Judean ethnic identity marker, Paul cites the reason that no one is δίκαιος (3:10) and that all have fallen short of God's ethical requirements (3:10-18).

Second, righteousness is also relational, as the above observations show, in that it is couched in terms of what angers or pleases God. It is measured against God's ethical requirements and forms the basis of humankind's relationship with God. This relational aspect becomes clearer when the social and cultural texture, namely, patronage-client relationship that underlies righteousness is exposed. Paul's description of God as the God of both gentiles and Judeans should be interpreted in light of a patron-client relationship. Righteousness, then, should also be read in light of this patron-client social and cultural texture. Hence, righteousness is a relational construct. In summary, righteousness should be construed as a social, relational, and ethical construct. This righteousness, as explained

132. Also, Anthony J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 109.

above, becomes a wedge that disrupts the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians. This takes Paul to the rhetoric of Romans 4.

2.3.4 Rom 4:1-25

Before I explain Romans 4, the primary subject of this dissertation, I shall briefly recall the preceding argument. To impart to the implied audience “some spiritual gift” (1:11), that is, to “reap some harvest among” the gentile and Judean Christians, Paul uses the gospel that he is presently in the midst of writing to them (1:16-15:13). Paul mobilises ideological power to achieve two related objectives. First, he wants his implied audience to give attention to this gospel, which is about Jesus Christ (1:3-4). Second, by understanding better the gospel about Jesus Christ, he wants to show that Judean Christians should not rely on the Mosaic law. To achieve this two-fold objective, Paul begins with apocalyptic rhetorolect to motivate them to desire the eschatological salvation which includes future glory (Romans 8).¹³³ He then indicts the Judean Christians in the implied audience of sin using prophetic rhetorolect in order to show that they need a solution for their condemnation from God. This brings in the priestly rhetorolect that emphasises that holiness, and hence, salvation comes through trust in Jesus Christ and not the Mosaic law. Up to this point, the subject of how Paul’s gospel reconciles the two dissenting parties, namely, Judean and gentile Christians has not been holistically articulated. At this juncture, Paul uses wisdom rhetorolect to articulate “wisdom” for the purpose of “searching and seeking” for understanding.¹³⁴ This wisdom is later further espoused in subsequent chapters (Romans 5-15) using various rhetorolects. Wisdom rhetorolect is especially appropriate in the case of Romans: Paul hopes to produce in the implied audience “righteousness and goodness,”¹³⁵ that is, to move the implied audience

133. See Robbins, *Invention*, 109, where the speaker of the rhetoric, by use of apocalyptic rhetorolect, seeks to persuade the audience (specifically, in the thirdspace of the minds of the audience) that they will receive eschatological salvation.

134. James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 17; Benjamin G. Wright, III and Lawrence M. Wills, eds., *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 51–54; Robbins, *Invention*, 125.

to respond favourably to his rhetoric while at the same time keeping confrontation with the implied Judean Christian audience to a minimum.¹³⁶ He hopes to remove the Judean Christians' boast towards the gentile Christians, a boast resulting from their possession of the Mosaic law and the righteousness that they think it confers. Paul, however, cannot confront the Judean Christians head-on as the Mosaic law is a key ethnic identity marker for them. This is where wisdom rhetorlect offers an edge over the other rhetorlects like prophetic, apocalyptic, or precreation: wisdom rhetorlect is non-confrontational. The presence of wisdom rhetorlect in Romans 4 is indicated by the topos of forefather. I shall now discuss pertinent details of Romans 4.

Using a diatribe, Paul engages in an intra-Judean debate with a Judean interlocutor with the implied audience, comprising Judean and gentile Christians, listening to the debate. Paul articulates a question posed by the Judean interlocutor: "What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?"¹³⁷ This question is directed at the implied audience, Judean Christians, who think that Abraham by his human efforts, that is, deeds related to the Mosaic law, became the forefather of Judeans.¹³⁸ This question is rhetorical in that it expects a negative response from the implied audience, comprising Judean and gentile Christians, that Abraham did not become the father of Judeans Christians by human efforts. Paul's refutation takes several stages.

First, Paul undermines the deeds required by the Mosaic law in 4:2-8.¹³⁹ He cites the Judean sacred scripture, Gen 15:6 (LXX), to show that Abraham became the father of Judean

135. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

136. See the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorlect in Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

137. See below, pp. 121-130, for my translation of 4:1.

138. Stowers, *Rereading*, 242, notes that "[w]orks of the law" is explicitly the issue in 3:20, 21-27; 4:2, 4-6 . . . 'according to the flesh' is better understood as 'by human efforts' and thus as cohering with the issue of justification by works [of the Mosaic law]." Similarly, Jewett, *Romans*, 308: "κατὰ σάρκα . . . deals with the question of whether Abraham performed works of the [Mosaic] law prior to being set right by God."

139. See below, p. 139.

Christians by trust in his patron God and not by deeds of the Mosaic law. The implication of Gen 15:6 is made clear by 4:4-5 where Paul shows that trust precludes deeds required by the Mosaic law. To the same end, Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) is cited in 4:6-8 to show that blessedness is a result of receiving a righteous relationship with God that precludes deeds of the Mosaic law.

Second, Paul in 4:9-12 undermines circumcision, the epitome of the Mosaic law by showing that Abraham received righteousness, that is, a righteous relationship with God, his patron, many years before he was circumcised. Paul's purpose, however, is not only to undermine circumcision as a means to obtaining righteousness. In 4:2-8, he has removed reliance on the deeds of the Mosaic law, and hence, proved that righteousness cannot be acquired. Specifically, it cannot be acquired by means of the deeds of the Mosaic law. This implies that righteousness, that is, a righteous relationship with God, must be ascribed. On the basis of 4:2-8, Paul now shows how righteousness can be ascribed, namely, by becoming a descendant of Abraham (4:11b). Gentiles can become Abraham's descendants because he was regarded as righteous (4:10) by God when he was in a state of uncircumcision; Judeans can become Abraham's descendants because his righteousness was affirmed by circumcision (4:11a). In this way, both groups can receive righteousness.

Third, in 4:13-16, Paul undermines the role of the Mosaic law by showing that the law invokes God's wrath, and hence, would nullify the promise of Abraham's fatherhood. Hence, to become a descendant of Abraham, one has to trust Abraham's patron, God.

Fourth, having removed the deeds of the Mosaic law (4:2-8), circumcision (4:9-12), and the Mosaic law itself (4:13-16) as means by which a person becomes Abraham's descendant, Paul now explains in 4:17-25 how trust in the patron God achieves the two-fold objective of Abraham becoming a father (fatherhood), and the ascription of Judeans and gentiles as Abraham's descendants. Abraham's trust in his patron, God, enables his dead body to have descendants. Specifically, he trusted God to remove religious pollution, that is, sin in his dead body and in the bodies of his future descendants who were present in Abraham's body in seminal form.¹⁴⁰ God removed this pollution by Jesus' death which

expiates this pollution. Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection enables all, including Judean and gentile Christians, to live a righteous life. In this way, Judeans and especially gentiles can now become righteous with God so that Judeans can no longer flaunt their special position towards gentiles. The rhetoric in Romans 4, thus, provides a full circle response to 4:1, namely, that Abraham, and hence, his family, Judean Christians cannot boast vis-à-vis gentile Christians.

2.4 Outworking of Romans 4

The conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25 is that all who trust God, the one who raised Jesus from the dead, are made righteous in their relationship with their patron, God. As I shall argue in my analysis of 4:23-25, this trust gains the resurrection life of Jesus for both Judean and gentile Christians.¹⁴¹ This life enables Judean and gentile Christians to live an ethically righteous life that is, minimally, congruous with the requirements of the Mosaic law. In this way, Judean and gentile Christians maintain a righteous relationship with God, their patron. As a result, both groups gain honour in the eyes of the significant other, God. The dissension between the two groups is, thus, alleviated.

In this section, I shall demonstrate that this conclusion is being worked out in greater detail in selected sections of 5:1-15:13, which in my judgement, contain topoi related to the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. My contention is corroborated by the presence of apocalyptic rhetorolect which is the overarching rhetorolect of 1:18-15:13. The third space of this rhetorolect,¹⁴² which contains the desired response of the implied audience, is to move them to pursue resurrection and eternal life in a new realm of well being.¹⁴³

That the overarching rhetorolect of 1:16-15:13 is apocalyptic is demonstrated by several observations. In 1:16-17, the gospel is described as “the righteousness of God [that]

140. See below, p. 237.

141. See below, p. 254.

142. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

143. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

is revealed” (1:17). The verb ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι has eschatological overtones.¹⁴⁴ Also, this gospel mentioned in 1:16-17 is elaborated in what follows in 1:18-15:13. This observation implies that the overarching rhetorolect of 1:18-15:13 should be the same as that of 1:16-17. This view point is corroborated by 1:18 where the revelation of God is mentioned together with “the wrath of God” and is aligned with God’s final judgement.¹⁴⁵ This revelation of God’s righteousness is further described in 3:21 as that which is recorded in the Hebrew Bible and now finds fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Again, this description of the revelation of God’s righteousness contains eschatological overtones, and is “the eschatological turning point in the history of salvation.”¹⁴⁶ The above observations indicate that in 1:16-17, and hence, also in the description of the gospel in 1:18-15:13, Paul is predominantly using apocalyptic rhetorolect.¹⁴⁷ The above contention also finds evidence in how Paul finishes the description of the gospel before he begins to address specific issues of the Roman Christians. In Romans 8, Paul discusses the final (eschatological) glorification of Christians. Furthermore, the ending (15:7-13) of the *peroratio* also contains eschatological language regarding the fact that a time will come when both gentile and Judean Christians will praise the Lord under the kingship of Christ (15:12).¹⁴⁸ This is a time also when the eschatological hope given to Judean and gentile Christians is realized (15:12-13).

The observation that the dominant rhetorolect is apocalyptic has another important implication for this study. Bloomquist states that

[o]ne of the things that appears to me to have been clarified in the years-long discussion over rhetorolects (begun among us in earnest in the early 2000s) is the

144. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 43; Moo, *Romans*, 24–25.

145. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 54.

146. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 165.

147. Robbins, *Invention*, 432–33, comments that “the apocalyptic center of Paul’s argumentation in Romans is the revelation of the righteousness of God.” J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 13, describes Paul’s gospel as “an apocalyptic gospel.”

148. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 845–51; also, Schreiner, *Romans*, 758–59.

following: rhetorical discourses as defined by Robbins both arise from and create discourse cultures . . . [they] create new cultures.

In view of the fact that cultural features demarcate one ethnic group from another,¹⁴⁹ Paul, by using apocalyptic rhetorlect (with other supporting rhetorlects) and the rhetoric in 1:16-8:39, is essentially attempting to reconfigure the ethnic identity of the dissenting groups, the Judean and gentile Christians. The identity that he hopes to create is described in Romans 8, as signalled by the eschatological $\nu\bar{\nu}$ (8:1).¹⁵⁰ Through the use of apocalyptic rhetorlect, Paul will have constructed, by the end of his rhetoric, an identity which carries with it honour for both Judean and gentile Christians. In this way, dissension between them due to the quest for honour is removed. I shall now discuss the relevant sections of 5:1-15:13.

2.4.1 Rom 5:1-21

While Romans 4 concludes the discussion on wisdom about how a person becomes righteous with God as patron, Romans 5 now uses precreation rhetorlect to mobilise ideological power to urge the implied audience to depend on Jesus Christ and receive eternal life. That precreation rhetorlect dominates Romans 5 is evinced by the topoi “king” in 5:2 (secondspace), Jesus Christ as broker in 5:1 (thirdspace), and Christians as receivers of eternal life in 5:21 (thirdspace). The details of Romans 5 will now be discussed.

The inferential $\omicron\bar{\nu}$ indicates that what follows in 5:1ff draws out the implications of the argument of Romans 4. Christians are made righteous by their patron God, by trust in God (5:1a). As a result, there is peace between God as their patron, and Christians as God’s

149. Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Oslo: Johansen & Nielsen Boktrykkerd, 1969), 14: “some cultural differences are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored.” See also, Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage, 1997), 11: “ethnic cultural differences are a function of ‘groupness.’”

150. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 415: “the $\nu\bar{\nu}$ is, as usual, eschatological (as in 3:26; 5:9, 11; 6:19, 21; 8:18, 22; 11:5, 30-31; 13:11; 16:26; as also $\nu\bar{\nu}\iota$ in 3:21; 6:22; 7:6, 17).” Similarly, Moo, *Romans*, 472; Jewett, *Romans*, 479. Corroborating this view, see Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 373: “The reference of the $\nu\bar{\nu}$ is . . . to the gospel events themselves: ‘now’—that is, since Christ has died and been raised from the dead”; Ulrich Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, BEvTh (München: Kaiser, 1968), 88.

clients. The implied audience now has access to the royal favour or grace of God, the king (5:2a), and hope.¹⁵¹ This hope is glory, that is, honour that comes from God (5:2b). Thus, all Christians, including gentile Christians, gain honour which has value before the only significant other, God. Both Judean and especially gentile Christians can now rightly boast. This resolves the problem of Judean Christians flaunting their pride towards gentile Christians (3:27-31). This righteousness that gained Christians access to God's favour was brokered by the Lord Jesus Christ (5:2b). Specifically, Jesus' death expiates sin and Jesus' resurrection enables Christians, including gentile Christians to live a righteous life that gains Christians God's favour (5:2a) and hope.

This hope is attained through *θλῆψις* (5:3). The mention of *θλῆψις* at first reading comes as a surprise as nothing that preceded prepares the audience for this. Esler's comments are helpful:

Their membership of the Christ-movement involved them in a loss of honor among outgroups. In an honor-shame culture such as this, the afflictions that Paul has just mentioned would inevitably have been accompanied, perhaps occasionally constituted, by attempts to blacken their name.¹⁵²

These afflictions, in the context of Romans, refer minimally to those tussles for honour exerted on gentile Christians by Judean Christians in Romans 1-3. Here, Paul turns the table around to the advantage of the gentile Christians by arguing that *θλῆψις*, by the process described in 5:3-4, enables Christians, including gentile Christians to realise hope (5:4), which entails "sharing the glory of God" (5:2). In this way, Paul denigrates the Judean Christians' boast toward the gentile Christians. In a bid to further reinforce the certainty of the hope of glory that Christians including gentile Christians will receive, Paul draws the implied audience's attention to another facet of Jesus' death (4:24) in expiating sin. The reason why the above discussed hope does not diminish in the face of affliction (Judean

151. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 248; Jewett, *Romans*, 349; Schreiner, *Romans*, 254; Moo, *Romans*, 300.

152. Esler, *Conflict*, 198.

Christians' tussle against gentile Christians for honour) is because of the degree of God's love, that is, God's attachment to his clients as demonstrated by Jesus dying for Christians "while we were still sinners" (5:6-8).¹⁵³ This degree of love, together with the twice repeated phrase πολλῶ μᾶλλον (5:9, 10), is intended to create *pathos* in the implied audience. They help to further persuade the implied audience of the efficacy of Jesus' death in expiating sin (5:10a), and his resurrection life in enabling Christians to live a righteous life, thereby resulting in salvation (5:10b). In this way, Paul, by the above rhetoric, seeks to convince the implied audience of the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25, that trust in God brings glory. The boast of the Judean Christians toward the gentile Christians would, hence, be removed.

By διὰ τοῦτο, Paul indicates that what follows in 5:12-21 seeks to draw out the implication of 5:1-11. Specifically, Paul seeks to elaborate on the benefits of the favour that God gives. This favour is granted to those who are made righteous by trust in God who raised Jesus from the dead (5:1-2; 4:24-25). The problem at hand is death as a judgement passed on sin (5:12-14). Paul's *logos* is that the accomplishments of one man, Jesus Christ, counteract the misdeed of one man, Adam. Specifically, the favour from God is more than sufficient to nullify the consequences of Adam's sin and the condemnation that follows (5:15-17).

The last paragraph, 5:18-21, summarises what has preceded in 5:12-17. That 5:18-21 is a final summary is evident since the paragraph begins with the connective phrase, ἄρα οὖν. Furthermore, the terms that occur in 5:12-17 are found in this final section: κατάκριμα (cf. 5:18 with 5:16); παραπτώματα (cf. 5:18 with 5:15 [2x], 16, 17); δικαίωμα (cf. 5:18 with 5:16); ζωή (cf. 5:17 with 5:18); χάρις (cf. 5:20 with 5:15 [2x], 17); ἁμαρτία (cf. 5:20 with 5:12 [2x], 13 [2x]); βασιλεύω (cf. 5:21 with 5:14, 17 [2x]). This final statement in the concluding pericope emphasises the result of the one act of Jesus Christ, the broker, that Christians can now attain ζωὴν αἰώνιον, which is a position of honour (cf. 2:7). Hence, trust in God, who raised Jesus from the dead (4:24-25), brings Christians, including gentile Christians, honour and thereby removes Judean Christians' boast toward gentile Christians.

153. Malina, "Love," 127–30.

2.4.2 Rom 6:1-14

Rom 6:1-23 can be divided into two parts: 6:1-14 and 6:15-23. Two observations point in this direction. First, both 6:1 and 6:15 contain a rhetorical question that begins with τί οὐν. Second, 6:1-14 is dominated by the topoi of death/life, while 6:15-23 focuses on the topoi of bondage/freedom. Rom 6:1-14 will be the centre of the discussion as it builds on the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25 that Christians are now able to live righteous lives, and therefore, be regarded as righteous, because they possess the resurrection life of Jesus.¹⁵⁴ That 6:1-14 and Romans 4 are correlated is, prima facie, shown by the repeated appeal to the fact of Jesus' death and resurrection in Romans 6.

Before examining pertinent details, I shall ascertain the dominant rhetorolect of 6:1-14 in order to shed light on its rhetorical goal. That the rhetorolect is priestly is evident from several observations. Rom 6:1-4 opens with a rhetorical question posed by an interlocutor. It is answered with topoi related to sin, Christ's death and dying (to sin). Also, the idea that Christians, as recipients of holiness and purity, are now to live a life that is free from bondage to sin (thirdspace), recurs in this section.¹⁵⁵ The ideological power produced by the use of priestly rhetorolect here responds to the problem raised by Romans 5: if favour (grace) and not the Mosaic law overcomes the problem of sin, does that mean Christians can continue to sin? The use of priestly rhetorolect makes use of the notion of Jesus as "Priest-Messiah."¹⁵⁶ Specifically, the rhetoric of 6:1-14 makes use of the conclusion of Romans 4 that Jesus' death expiates sin, and his resurrection enables Christians to live a life that maintains a righteous relationship with God, their patron. This exerts ideological power on the implied audience to arrive at the conclusion that the human body is a "receiver of beneficial exchange of holiness

154. Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119 (2002), 103, concludes in his analysis of Rom 6:1-11 that "ethical renewal is best expressed by the word 'life' (6:2, 4, 10, 11, 13)."

155. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

156. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

and purity.”¹⁵⁷ With this, I shall discuss how the conclusion of Romans 4, namely 4:23-25, is being worked out in the argument of 6:1-14.

Paul begins 6:1-14 with the rhetorical question posed by an interlocutor: “What shall we say? Shall we remain in sin in order that favour may abound?” (6:1). This question does not seriously imply that Paul thinks that the implied audience believes that sin will produce a level of favour that exceeds the level of sin.¹⁵⁸ The true intent is made clear in what follows in Romans 6: Paul is addressing a mindset which encourages Christians to continue to sin. This thesis is re-stated in 6:2 by introducing the social intertexture of the Roman practice of master-slave relationship. Christians are metaphorically dead to the master, sin, and thus, cannot maintain their relationship with sin. To contend against the erroneous mindset that a Christian can continue in sin, Paul uses the topoi of death and life. Rom 6:4 forms the thesis of Paul’s rebuttal in 6:3-14. This thesis which centres on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is basically the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25.

In 6:3-5, Paul reminds them of the fact of their baptism.¹⁵⁹ “Baptism” has a social intertexture where baptism would be construed by Paul’s implied audience as what 6:3b explains, “baptized into his death.”¹⁶⁰ This ritual also contains an ideological texture. The

157. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

158. Jewett, *Romans*, 395: “By posing the libertinistic option in so ridiculous and insidious a form, Paul effectively opens the issue of the incongruity of persons saved by grace who fail to live the new life.” Cf. also Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 192: “he also asks another rhetorical question [implying] that it is inconceivable that those who have died to sin should continue to live in it.”

159. Moo, *Romans*, notes that “[b]y the date of Romans, ‘baptism’ had become almost a technical expression for the rite of Christian initiation by water.” See also his footnote 38 where he observes that in Paul’s eleven occurrences of the word βαπτίζειν, all but one denote water baptism. Contra James D. G. Dunn, “Salvation Proclaimed: VI. Romans 6:1–11: Dead and Alive,” *ExpT* 93 (1982): 261, who interprets it as a metaphor for incorporation into the body of Christ.

160. See the discussion in Florence M. Gillman, *A Study of Romans 6:5a: United to a Death Like Christ’s* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University, 1992), 37–42, for the possible understandings of Paul’s implied audience about baptism. She observes the chiasm in 6:3, “we were baptized into Christ, into his death we were baptized,” and is probably right to conclude that Paul’s implied audience understood the Christian baptism as one that

rite of baptism would cause the participant to experience and affirm as real the significance of the ritual of baptism,¹⁶¹ that Christians have died with Christ to sin. This baptism into Christ's death also contains a historical intertexture, in that the death of Christ and his resurrection were conceived as one event. This implies that the rite of baptism also communicates to the Christians that they have been raised with Christ from the dead. On the grounds that they have metaphorically died to the power of sin and received resurrection life, they are able now to "walk in newness of life" (6:4). As mentioned previously, 6:4 constitutes the main rebuttal of the rhetorical question in 6:1. What follows in 6:5-14, elaborates on 6:4, as indicated by the causative γάρ in 6:5. The verb περιπατεῖν (6:4) contains a social intertexture that recalls the Hebrew verb הלך and denotes a lifestyle. To walk in "newness of life" with its underlying social intertexture of life after death creates an ideological texture that demands Christians to live a lifestyle that has a clear break with sin. This lifestyle conforms to a corporate identity as intimated by the proliferation of first person plural verbs. These first person plural verbs assert ideological power on the implied audience to conform to the new corporate identity characterised by the new lifestyle. Thus, by reminding the implied audience of the ritual of baptism, Paul exerts ideological power on the implied audience to convince them that they have died to sin and have been raised with Christ in some decisive and meaningful way. The twin reality of the conclusion in 4:23-25 is, thus, impressed upon Judean, and especially gentile Christians, that they are able to live a righteous life without abusing the abundance of favour (5:20-21) that comes with trust in God (4:23-25).

identifies the Christian with Christ's death. Cf. Brook W. R. Pearson, "Baptism and Initiation in the Cult of Isis and Sarapis," in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSup 171 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 51, who observes that in the cult of Isis and Osiris, baptism identified the believer with the death of the god Osiris in the Nile.

161. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, 1965), 463–65.

Death is made sure by the fact of the crucifixion in 6:6-10. The social intertexture underlying crucifixion mobilises ideological power to impress upon the implied audience that the life of sin is over. This social intertexture reinforces the conclusion in 4:23-25 and mobilises ideological power to assure the implied audience that because Jesus' death on the cross is sure, sin is totally expiated. Thus, the body of sin is destroyed (6:6), and Christians are "freed from sin" (6:7). Paul then applies this two-fold reality to the audience in 6:11-14. They should not yield to the previous master, sin, thus, becoming its instruments for doing unrighteousness, but yield to the new master, God, so as to become his instruments for performing acts of righteousness. This maintains a righteous relationship between God the patron and Christians as God's clients. Christians need not serve the previous master, sin, because, as Paul says in 6:14, the authority of sin that comes from the Mosaic law that indicts a person of sin, has been annulled.¹⁶²

2.4.3 Rom 7:1-6

In 6:15-23 the rhetorical question posed by the interlocutor in 6:15 that Christians are free to sin in the absence of indictment by the Mosaic law is clearly refuted. At this point, Paul returns to where he left off in 6:14.¹⁶³ Paul maintains that the power of the Mosaic law has been annulled. That Paul in 7:1-6 is picking up the argument he left off at 6:14 is evinced by the common topos, "law," in 6:14 and 7:1-6.

But before examining the details of the argument of 7:1-6, the sense of the Mosaic law being non-binding needs to be clarified. Several lines of evidence point in the direction that it is not in the sense, as some scholars construe, that a Christian no longer needs to obey the moral part of the Mosaic law.¹⁶⁴ That the moral aspect is intended is indicated by Paul's citation of the tenth commandment of the decalogue. Rather, Paul means that the Mosaic law

162. See also Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 320, who describes ὑπὸ νόμον as the "law as condemning sinners."

163. Moo, *Romans*, 409-10, thinks that "7:1-6 continues the stress of 6:15-23 on the necessary ethical implications of the believer's transfer into the new realm of grace."

164. So Fee, *Empowering*, 504; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 189-90.

no longer has the ability to indict Christians for their sins so as to enslave them to sin. First, the statement in 6:14, which introduces the rhetoric of 7:1-6, explains that sin is able to enslave a person because that person is under the authority of the Mosaic law. This implies that the power of the Mosaic law in 7:1-6 must be read in conjunction with the power of sin and not in isolation from the power of sin. Second, that which the “I” wishes to perform and agrees that it should perform is the Mosaic law (7:15-22). Third, when Paul says that Christians are discharged from the Mosaic law, they also enter into the new life of the Spirit. This life is discussed immediately after Romans 7 in 8:3, where the requirements of the Mosaic law are said to be fulfilled by those who walk according to the Spirit. Thus, the Mosaic law is not annulled in the sense that Christians no longer have to obey it. The opposite is true. Christians still have to fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic law if they are to maintain a righteous relationship with God.¹⁶⁵ With this introductory note, I turn to discuss 7:1-6.

In 7:1-6, in order to mobilise ideological power to impress upon the implied audience that they have been released from the indictment due to non-compliance with the Mosaic law, Paul introduces into his rhetoric apocalyptic rhetorlect. This rhetorlect creates in the minds (in the thirdspace) of the implied audience “God Almighty [with] multiple heavenly assistants to God,”¹⁶⁶ who will transform the created world into a “totally righteous and holy space.”¹⁶⁷ The presence of the rhetorlect is indicated by the centrepiece “law” which invokes the imperial army to punish those who violate the law. In line with apocalyptic rhetorlect, Paul introduces a social intertexture of Roman law, where marriage in the Roman society was

165. See E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 93–122.

166. Vernon K. Robbins, “Rhetoric and Culture: Exploring Types of Cultural Rhetoric in a Text,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, vol. 90, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 90 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 90:109.

167. Robbins, *Invention*, 327.

monogamous and adultery was punishable by law.¹⁶⁸ Käsemann is probably right to insist that the law referred to in 7:1-3 is unlikely to be the Mosaic law but the Roman law.¹⁶⁹ First, a large part of the real audience are gentiles, and they will naturally perceive marriage as a state institution rather than an institution established by the law of Moses. Second, Josephus remarks that Judeans then condoned polygamy. In such a culture, the Hebrew Bible is unlikely to constitute evidence for monogamy.¹⁷⁰ Thus, probably the marriage laws first formulated by Augustus in the *lex Iulia et Papia* are referred to here. These laws were later supplemented and corrected by a comitial statute, the *lex Papia Poppaea* in 9 CE. For instance, a woman guilty of adultery was forbidden to remarry and had to wear the toga as a symbol of her shame.¹⁷¹ Paul uses this social intertexture to point out that a woman is discharged from the marriage law upon the death of her husband (7:3). Important for understanding the role of the Roman law is the observation that the marriage law is not annulled. Rather, it is the *power* of the law *to indict* the woman for the crime of adultery that is annulled. In the same way, when Paul says that Christians “have died to the law,” he refers not to the annulment of the Mosaic law but its power to indict Christians of sin. Relevant for our discussion is the basis of this annulment of the power of the Mosaic law. Paul says in 7:4 that this is possible through (διὰ) the two-fold fact of Christ’s death and resurrection (τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι). This basis, together with common vocabulary, (νεκρός, ἐγείρειν) recalls

168. Lesley Adkins and Roy Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2004), 377.

169. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 187. See also Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 172, who think that “law” here does not refer to the Mosaic law but to “a general principle” of all laws.

170. Josephus *Ant.* 17.14, condones polygamy, saying that it is “our ancestral custom that a man may have several wives at the same time.” In such a culture, the Hebrew Bible was unlikely to constitute evidence against polygamy.

171. Thomas A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 143. The death penalty was also later meted out for adultery according to sources before the death of Constantine. See also Judith E. Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 81–83, for an explanation of the Augustan law on marriage.

4:23-25. Thus, the conclusion of Romans 4 underlies the argument of 7:1-6. The outworking of 7:4, which is also in essence the conclusion in 4:23-25, is elaborated in 7:5-6. Here, Paul contrasts two kinds of life. An examination of the contrast reveals the similarity of 4:23-25 and 7:4.

These two lives are what the analogy of the Roman marriage law was pointing to, namely, life with the first (and now deceased) husband and life in a new marriage. The first life is analogous to the life described in 7:5 which is lived in sin and empowered by the Mosaic law. This leads to death. Paul says in 7:4 that through the death of Christ Christians now belong to another (ἕτερος). The question is to whom or what did Christians belong to earlier, before conversion, and then later after conversion? Most scholars think the referent from which Christians are set free is the Mosaic law.¹⁷² This interpretation, however, is untenable. For one thing, the marriage analogy (7:1-3) requires three components to work, namely, the first husband, the second husband, and the marriage law. Also, in Romans, the two kinds of life contrasted are almost always one that is lived in the power of the flesh or sin (Romans 1-3, 6-7, and 8), and one that is lived for God (Romans 6) or lived in the power of the Spirit (Romans 8). Furthermore, what follows in 7:5 brings into the discussion the component σάρξ (and its attached “sinful desires”). The component σάρξ is characterised as a master in Romans 8. Thus, the other (ἕτερος) in 7:4 should be contrasted not with the Mosaic law but sin, which Paul later clarifies in 7:5. According to my contention in respect to 4:23-25, the basis as to why Christians can now belong to another (ἕτερος) through Christ’s death is because his death expiates sin. The second kind of life is analogous to the one described in 7:6, where life is lived apart from the power of Mosaic law which indicts a person of sin. This life is one lived “in the new life of the Spirit” which is later explained in

172. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 362; Jewett, *Romans*, 435. Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 336, interprets 7:4 as being “set free from the condemnation pronounced by the law”; contra Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 175, who suggest that ἐν ᾧ in 7:6 is referring to the “old state” or “old man.” He observes that “whenever ‘death’ is spoken of, it is primarily this ‘old state’ or ‘old man’ which dies . . . it was this sinful old state which brought man under the grip of the Law.” Similarly, Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Epître Aux Romains* (Paris: Gabalda, 1916), 164: “Paul remonte plus haut, à la chair au vieil homme; c’est la mort à cet état qui nous a délivrés de la Loi.”

8:2 as a life that fulfils the requirement of the Mosaic law. Here, in 7:4, this new life is characterised by fruit borne for God. According to 7:4, fruitfulness for God is possible because Christ has been raised from the dead. According to the conclusion in 4:23-25, it is the resurrection life of Christ that is given to Christians, which enables them to bear fruit for God (7:4, 6). Ideological power is, thus, mobilised to persuade the implied audience that it is reasonable that Christians too are now “discharged from the [Mosaic] law” in the sense that it can no longer indict them of sin and thereby enslave them to sin (7:6a). Instead, the implied audience, including gentile Christians, are free to live “the new life of the Spirit” (7:6b). The boast of Judean Christians toward gentile Christians is, thus, removed.

2.4.4 Rom 7:7-25

Before I explain the pertinent details of 7:7-25, several preliminary matters need to be clarified. First, in 7:6, which concludes the pericope 7:1-6, Paul deduces that Christians are discharged from the Mosaic law. Here, Paul describes the law as that which holds a person captive. Two observations indicate that Paul expects his implied audience to understand him as implying that the law somehow empowers sin, and that it should be viewed negatively. First, that 7:1-6 continues the argument left off in 6:14 is shown by repetition of the common topos “law” from 6:14 in 7:1. Here, with the words, “sin will not lord over you because you are not under the power of the law,” Paul seems to imply that the Mosaic law promotes sin. Similarly, the words in 7:5, “the desires of sin which worked through the [Mosaic] law,” seems to be implying that the law is instrumental in creating the desires of sin. This positive correlation between sin and the Mosaic law leads Paul to pose the rhetorical question: “Is the [Mosaic] law sin?” This sets the stage for 7:7-25.

Second, as I will argue in 4:23-25, Christians’ trust in Jesus Christ brings them the resurrection life of Jesus.¹⁷³ Considering that this point was first discussed at length in Romans 4, it is reasonable to think that the argument that involves the juxtaposition of “body

173. See below, p. 254.

of death,” and “Jesus Christ our Lord” as the person who will save the “I” in 7:25, builds upon the argument of Romans 4.

Third, 7:7-25 is a *προσωποποιεία*, that is, speech-in-character discourse.¹⁷⁴ Stowers notes that this form of discourse was made popular by Euripides’ *Medea*, where the figure of Medea gained popularity because “Medea stood for foreigners who corrupted the purity of the citizen body, and her saying about *akrasia* connoted the moral degeneracy that mixing with foreigners would supposedly bring.”¹⁷⁵ This finds an apt application to the gentile implied audience who do not possess the Mosaic law, and whom Judeans regard as unclean, and hence, not worthy of honour. In this *προσωποποιεία*, the climax is in the exclamation made by the “I” in 7:24-25 where the “I” expresses his agony at being unable to fulfil the law. This mode of discourse also invites the audience to identify themselves with the “I” as the discourse is basically a soliloquy.¹⁷⁶ Thus, *pathos* is created in the implied audience. Understanding that 7:24-25 contains the climax of this cultural discourse also coheres with the dominant rhetorolect used, apocalyptic rhetorolect. Its presence is evinced by the topos “law,” the centre piece of 7:7-25, which invokes the imperial army to punish those who violate the law. This creates in the secondspace God and his heavenly assistants who are ready to enforce righteousness and holiness in the world.¹⁷⁷ This use of apocalyptic rhetorolect invokes in the thirdspace of the implied audience that those who violate the law will be punished. This reinforces the agony felt by the “I.” With this note, I shall explain the rhetoric of 7:7-25. I shall focus on how 7:7-25 leads to the need for the salvation that Jesus Christ will provide for the “I.”

To refute the rhetorical question in 7:7a, Paul defends the Mosaic law by arguing that it clarifies the nature of sin in 7:7b. The reason why the Mosaic law empowered sin was

174. Stowers, *Rereading*, 264–84.

175. Stowers, *Rereading*, 271. In Euripides’ *Medea*, Medea contemplated and struggled with the thought of killing her children out of anger and revenge.

176. Stowers, *Rereading*, 271.

177. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

because it took advantage of an “opportunity” (ἀφορμὴν). This opportunity refers to what Paul has just explained. The Mosaic commandment in manifesting sin for what it is, also creates an “opportunity” for sin to take hold and “produced in me all kinds of covetousness” (7:8). The consequence was that the “I” died (7:11). Thus, Paul concludes that the Mosaic commandment is good (7:12).

How, then, can the Mosaic law which is good result in death (7:13)? Paul’s answer is that the problem lies with the inability of the “I” to obey the Mosaic moral law. The “I” agrees that the Mosaic law is morally good (7:16). Note that the “I” also seeks to obey it. This speaks against the annulment of observing the Mosaic law for Christians. The “I” knows not only that the commandment is good but also that obeying the commandment is good as is signified in the clause “for to will good is present with me” (7:18). The word “law” in 7:21 should be construed as the Mosaic law.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, “the law of sin” should also be regarded as referring to the Mosaic law. This understanding is basically that the Mosaic law was exploited or distorted by sin as Paul explained earlier in 7:7-11.¹⁷⁹ The consequence was that the “I” was convicted of sin, and thus, died. The “I” struggles because, on the one hand, it desires to perform the Mosaic law of God (7:22). On the other hand, this same Mosaic law is being exploited by sin to battle against the Mosaic law that is in the mind of the “I,” a law that the “I” knows it should obey (7:23a). Consequently, the “I” comes under the indictment of the Mosaic law because it is being exploited by sin (7:23). The desire to obey the commandment should be used to interpret the cry of agony of the “I” in 7:24 and

178. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 302, argues that the τὸν νόμος should refer to the Mosaic law as the main thrust of 7:7-25 is to defend the Mosaic law. Also, 7:10 and 7:21 are structurally similar and would imply that τὸν νόμος is parallel to ἡ ἐντολή.

179. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 395. Similarly, E. Lohse, “Ο Νόμος τοῦ Πνεύματος τῆς Ζωῆς: Exegetische Anmerkungen zu Röm 8,2,” in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz: Festschrift für Herbert Braun zum 70*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Herbert Braun, and Luise Schottroff (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), 285–86; Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law,” *JSNT* 32 (1988): 106–7; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11*, *JSNTSup* 57 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 240–41; Bruce L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul*, *NovTSup* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 240–41.

the exclamation of victory in 7:25. When the “I” asks, “who will save me from this body of death,” it is referring to its inability to obey the commandments of the Mosaic law that brings death upon the “I.” At this point, Paul brings into his rhetoric Jesus Christ who enables the “I” to obey the Mosaic moral law (7:25a). After his exclamation of victory, however, Paul adds that “therefore, I myself am serving with the mind the [Mosaic] law of God but with the flesh the law of sin” (7:25b). In essence, this means that the Mosaic law which is being exploited by sin indicts the “I” of sin and enslaves it to sin.

Scholars view the concluding note in 7:25b as problematic. Jewett, for example, sees this note as “a marginal gloss added by Paul himself that was probably intended to be placed between v. 23 and v. 24.” Käsemann perceptively comments that “[i]t would indeed be illogical if after v. 25a there were a flashback to the time before the change of aeons.”¹⁸⁰ The following explanation unties this conundrum. After being saved by Jesus Christ, the “I” now serves a new master, the Mosaic law of God. An unresolved problem remains, however. The flesh, that is, the human capacities, continues to be under the authority of the Mosaic law which is exploited by sin.¹⁸¹ Dunn explains: “The balance of v 25b therefore is not an expression of salvation still to begin, but of the process of salvation under way and still to be completed.”¹⁸² Such a state of tension, however, will be resolved at Romans 8. The above analysis shows that the problem the “I” seeks to resolve is its inability to obey the Mosaic law. Also, the solution to its problem, “Jesus Christ,” is that which Paul explained in the conclusion, 4:23-25, of Romans 4, namely, that Christ has expiated sin and provides resurrection life for Christians to live a life that minimally fulfils the requirements of the Mosaic law.

2.4.5 Rom 8:1-39

I explained above in 7:7-25 that the “I’s” inability to fulfil the requirements of the

180. Käsemann, *Commentary*, 211.

181. Schreiner, *Romans*, 392.

182. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 399.

Mosaic law leads to condemnation, namely, death in the body (7:24). In this section, I shall show that the condemnation is resolved by the rhetoric of Romans 8. This rhetoric, as will be shown, builds on the conclusion of Romans 4, specifically, 4:23-25. Before looking into the details, several preliminaries need clarification.

The dominant rhetorolect in Romans 8 is apocalyptic as indicated by the presence of the thirdspace of apocalyptic rhetorolect, namely, “resurrection and eternal life in a ‘new’ realm of well-being.”¹⁸³ The rhetoric of this chapter utilises the topos *πνεῦμα* for its rhetorical invention. This topos introduces a social and cultural intertexture which undergirds the thirdspace of the apocalyptic rhetorolect. Hodge’s observations on how Greeks understand *πνεῦμα* are instructive:

Medical writers explain that *pneuma* is the vital substance of the body, responsible for sight, hearing, smell and touch. *Pneuma* is also the crucial procreative element . . . In its finest form, *pneuma* constitutes the very particles which make up the soul and is responsible for the ability to reason . . . Particularly interesting is the Stoic theory of *krasis* or blending, in which *pneuma* permeates other objects or beings, effecting change in the matter through which it passes.¹⁸⁴

In other words, *πνεῦμα* is regarded as the agent that is able to transform that body, in a fundamental way, into new beings.¹⁸⁵ In this way, this social intertexture underlying *πνεῦμα* reinforces Paul’s use of apocalyptic rhetorolect. This mobilises ideological power to convince the implied audience that, through the Spirit, Christians can now participate in resurrection and eternal life “in a new realm of well-being.”¹⁸⁶ With this note, I shall now enter into my discussion proper.

183. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

184. See Caroline J. Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 74–75, for references of these ancient records.

185. Hodge, *If Sons*, 75.

186. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

The “I” has just expressed its agony of being condemned in 7:24. This prospect of condemnation, says the “I,” finds resolution in the salvation provided by Jesus Christ. The question that remains is how Jesus Christ is going to save it. Using apocalyptic rhetorolect, Paul responds to the problem of condemnation raised by the rhetorical question in 7:24, with the claim that “the [Mosaic] law (νόμος) of the Spirit” can set Christians free from “the law of sin and death” (8:2). The word νόμος should not be translated as “principle, rule, or norm.”¹⁸⁷ Rather, as explained above, the “law of sin” refers to the Mosaic law that is exploited by sin with the consequence that a person is indicted for sin.¹⁸⁸ Here, in 8:2, the “law of the Spirit” should also be construed in a similar way if Paul’s rhetoric is to be relevant in answering to the problem of 7:7-24. Thus, “the law of the Spirit” (8:2) is the Mosaic law that is used by the Spirit to counteract the “law of sin.” The result is that the Spirit enables Christians to fulfil the demands of the Mosaic law and sets them free from their previous master, the Mosaic law that is exploited by sin.¹⁸⁹ Hence, Christians are saved from the Mosaic law that condemns them to death and the agony of “I” in 7:14-25 is alleviated.¹⁹⁰

187. E.g., Fee, *Empowering*, 522. In a similar vein, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 376, interprets νόμος as “authority and constraint.”

188. See above, p. 83.

189. Scholars who correctly construe “law” not as a “principle” but as the Mosaic law include Schreiner, *Romans*, 400: “the Mosaic law is in the realm either of the Holy Spirit or of the powers of sin and death. If the law is appropriated in the realm of the Spirit and by faith, then one is liberated from using the Mosaic law in such a way that it leads to sin and death.” In the same vein, see Jewett, *Romans*, 481; Snodgrass, “Spheres,” 98–99, who notes that interpreters should view the law as functioning in spheres of influence. In 8:2, the law functions in the realm of the life-giving spirit, and hence, frees a person from sin (so Snodgrass, “Spheres,” 107). So also, Ferdinand Hahn, “Das Gesetzesverständnis im Römer- und Galaterbrief,” *ZNW* 67 (1976): 47–48; Brendan Byrne, “*Sons of God*”- “*Seed of Abraham*”: *A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background*, *AnBib* 83 (Rome: Pontiff Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 92; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 416–17; Hübner, *Law*, 144–49. This framework of spheres of influence can be refined in terms of the prevailing Mediterranean culture of what John J. Pilch, “Domination Orientation,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 48–49, calls “domination orientation” where the party that dominates seeks to gain honour from the person dominated.

190. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 423, reaches a similar conclusion that “Paul deliberately and provocatively insists on the continuity of God’s purpose in the law and through the Spirit.” So also, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 384, and Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: Outline of His*

Moo incorrectly thinks that “the just demand is fulfilled in Christians not through their own acts of obedience but through their incorporation into Christ.”¹⁹¹ But this goes against what follows. In the statement “we are not walking according to the flesh but according to the Spirit,” the metaphor “walk” signifies action. Furthermore, it is precisely because the Spirit enables the believer to perform deeds of the Mosaic law that the agony of the “I” could be removed because the agony of the “I” in Romans 7 is due to its inability to perform the Mosaic law.¹⁹² In 8:5-8, Paul uses wisdom rhetorolect to explain why those who walk after the Spirit fulfil the Mosaic law: they are resolved to do the things of the Spirit and not the things of “the flesh.”¹⁹³ But why is the Spirit able to help Christians fulfil the Mosaic law? Paul describes the Spirit in two ways. First, he dwells ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (8:2), that is, the Spirit belongs to Christ Jesus. Second, this Spirit belongs to the Christ Jesus who “condemned sin in the flesh” (8:3), taking up the theme of 4:23-25, where Paul claims that Jesus’ death expiated sin. Thus, the reason why the Spirit that belongs to Christ is able to help Christians live (περιπατεῖν) a life that meets the just requirements of the Mosaic law (8:4) is because of Christ’s death. This ability to obey the Mosaic law determines the state of the relationship between Christians and their patron, God, because it shows what the mind,

Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 278–88, who argues that “[t]he work of the Spirit consists precisely in the working out of the law in the life of believers.”

191. Moo, *Romans*, 484.

192. Rather than adopting the views of some, e.g., Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 11; and Michael Goulder, *St. Paul Versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 35–37, that Paul is inconsistent, it is more reasonable to go along with Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 57, 64–65, who proposes an analysis based on a dynamic view of his letters. For instance, some of Paul’s “eccentric theological statements” can be read in light of the ancient rhetorical technique of “vituperatio” where the author uses standard labels to denigrate his opponents—in the case of the Letter to the Galatians, Judeans who uphold the law. For the technique of “vituperation,” see A. Du Toit, “Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography,” *Bib 75* (1994): 403–12.

193. That wisdom rhetorolect is present is evinced by the binary structure of positive and negative statements.

that is, the settled understanding, is intent upon.¹⁹⁴ The mind that is set on the flesh results in condemnation, that is, “death” (8:6) because it shows that the person refuses to submit to God’s Mosaic law (8:7-8).

The above interpretation verifies once again my contention that the role of the Spirit here is to enable Christians to obey the Mosaic law. It is this that will remove condemnation (8:1). Conversely, those who obey the Mosaic law show that they set their minds on the things of the Spirit. The reason why they are able to do this is because they have the Spirit of Christ (8:9). The result of having the Spirit is spelt out in two parallel statements in 8:10a and 8:10b. These two statements lack clarity due to their brevity, as is characteristic of wisdom rhetoric. Rom 8:10a states that the body produces death because of sin. Rom 8:10b insists that this state of affairs is reversed when the Spirit produces life because of the deeds of righteousness. This means that the Spirit results in Christians receiving life because the Spirit helps maintain a righteous relationship between Christians and their patron God. How this comes about is explained in 8:11 which builds on the conclusion in 4:23-25.

Several observations support my contention. First, not only is the topos about resurrection as in 4:23-25, the vocabulary used is also the same: ἐγείρειν, νεκρός. Second, the two parallel statements of 8:11 make the point that the Spirit is the critical factor for Christians to receive resurrection life: the Spirit gives life; the Spirit belongs to God who raised Jesus from the dead. In the first statement, Paul underlines the fact that the Spirit must indwell Christians. The second statement views life as being given by the Spirit (ζωοποιήσει . . . διὰ . . . αὐτοῦ πνεύματος). This Spirit, however, is described as belonging to God. In other words, the Spirit of God, instead of just simply God, is the critical factor for Jesus to rise from the dead. This construal is due to Paul’s focus in Romans 8 on the work of the Spirit. God, however, still features prominently in Jesus’ resurrection. Third, both parallel statements of 8:11 describe God, the giver of resurrection life, as the one who raised Jesus from the dead. This description is a clear allusion to 4:24.

194. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 425.

In my analysis of 4:23-25, I will argue that Jesus functions as the broker of resurrection life which enables Christians to live a righteous life in their relationship with God as patron. This point coheres with 7:25 (which leads into the argument of 8:1-11) where the “I” thanks God for saving it from condemnation due to its inability to fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic law. The salvation that the “I” thanks God for is brokered by Jesus Christ (χάρις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The Spirit who gives resurrection life to Christians enables them to live righteous lives. As a result, Christians enter into a state of “life” (8:10; cf. 2:7), which is a position of honour. These Christians are also people who are “led by the Spirit” (8:14), that is, people who obey the Spirit. As they are now able to live righteous lives, they no longer live in fear of condemnation due to bondage to sin (8:15). This resolves the agony of the “I” in 7:2. Instead, they are considered “children of God” (8:15-16) and are destined for glorification, which in Mediterranean culture is a position of honour (8:17). Thus, all Christians enter into a position of honour. This removes the boast of Judean Christians toward gentile Christians and furthers the rhetorical purpose of Romans 4.

The work of the Spirit in 8:1-17 also achieves the final glorification of Christians in 8:18-30. The topos on suffering (πάθημα) that begins the new section in 8:18-39 seems a bit abrupt. Except for a brief mention of “affliction” (θλιψις) in 5:3-5, this topos occurs nowhere else in Romans. When “suffering” in 8:18 is read in light of 8:18-30, however, this word refers to eschatological sufferings.¹⁹⁵ By that, Paul is basically returning to resolve the eschatological tension of the “now/not yet” problem of 7:25b where he speaks of serving “the flesh with the [Mosaic] law of sin.” Paul’s thesis statement in 8:18 is elaborated as a desire to be set free from the “bondage of corruption” which entails shame, into a state of the “glory of the children of God” (8:19-21), which gains Christians honour.¹⁹⁶ That the Spirit plays a central role in the final glorification is evident. Presently, Christians are in bondage to decay

195. Jewett, *Romans*.

196. John Duncan, “The Hope of Creation: The Significance of ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι (Rom 8.20c) in Context,” *NTS* 61 (2015): 414–15, comments that the glory or honour to which Paul refers is the “decisive eschatological manifestation of the divine glory that triumphs over Sin and Death through the appearance of glorified believers in their resurrected bodies.”

(8:18). This bondage that hinders the final glorification of Christians is being alleviated with the presence of the Spirit as the first fruit of a harvest, namely, the “redemption of our bodies” (8:23). This same Spirit will bring in the full harvest when Christians receive glorified bodies (8:30). How this Spirit assists in the final glorification is explained in 8:26-27 where the Spirit intercedes for Christians.

The result of the Spirit’s intercession is spelt out in 8:28. Several observations support this. First, some scholars maintain that the most natural understanding of πάντα is as the subject of the verb συνεργεῖ.¹⁹⁷ This, however, goes against the observation that when πάντα is the object of a personal verb, it “almost always precedes the verb,” as is the case in 8:28.¹⁹⁸ Also, in Pauline usage, πάντα never functions as the subject of an active verb.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the verb συνεργεῖν takes on a personal subject in Paul’s other two usages.²⁰⁰ Second, God could possibly be the unexpressed subject²⁰¹ of the verb συνεργεῖ.²⁰² Another possibility, however, is to take the unexpressed subject as the Spirit. This is likely in view of the fact that the Spirit has been taking centre stage in what precedes (8:1-27).²⁰³ A social and

197. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 481; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 243; KJV.

198. Fee, *Empowering*, 588.

199. So Fee, *Empowering*, 588, where he also notes the exception of 1 Cor 6:12 and 10:13. These two exceptions, however, are not real instances of πάντα taking on an active verb since Paul was providing a rhetorical response to the slogan “all things are permitted.”

200. Fee, *Empowering*, 588. Besides 8:28, Paul uses the verb only in 1 Cor 6:16 and 2 Cor 6:1.

201. Although the reading containing ὁ θεός has the support of P⁴⁶, and B, the reading without it has more varied support. This shorter and more difficult reading could also have prompted an Alexandrian editor to insert ὁ θεός for clarification.

202. RSV, NIV, F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 166. Similarly, Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Epître Aux Romains*, 213–14, insists that God should be the subject of συνεργεῖ, and that “[c]e doit être une addition, pour la clarté, conforme au sens.”

203. So Matthew Black, *Romans*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 118; NEB; Fee, *Empowering*, 589; Jewett, *Romans*, 527; James P. Wilson, “Romans Viii, 28: Text and Interpretation,” *ExpT* 60 (1948–49): 110–11.

cultural texture that underlies the providence of God strengthens the plausibility of this view. The Spirit's enablement works in tandem with the providence of God. In the Mediterranean culture of this period, goods were limited, and what one received in life was a matter of fate.²⁰⁴ More precisely, goods needed to be bestowed by the ultimate patron, God. From Paul's perspective, for these goods to be received, the Spirit needs to broker the deal. Only then, all things, in particular, the sufferings mentioned above in 8:18, will work towards the "good" of Christians in 8:28. The above discussed social and cultural texture also mobilises ideological power by persuading the implied audience that by depending on the Spirit, Christians and especially gentile Christians are able to overcome the eschatological sufferings, which include the agony that the "I" experiences in Romans 7. In this way, Christians can fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic law and be regarded as righteous in their relationship with God their patron.²⁰⁵ This gains gentile Christians honour.

Thus, my argument above shows that the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25 undergirds the work of the Spirit in 8:1-17 (see especially 8:3 and 8:10-11). This same Spirit also works for the final glorification of Christians in 8:18-30 which in turn brings honour to both Judean and especially gentile Christians. This "good" finds culmination in the series of what God will do in the eschatological future, namely, the glorification of Christians (8:30), which gains them honour.

With this note, Paul in 8:31-39 is ready to address the problem of 7:25 and the condemnation of 8:1. Paul exclaims that Christians are in a favourable position with God, their patron, and that no one can undermine their well being (8:31). This well being refers

204. Bruce J. Malina, "Fate," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 49.

205. My understanding coheres with Paula Fredriksen, "Paul's Letter to the Romans, The Ten Commandments, and Pagan 'Justification by Faith'," *JBL* 4 (2014): 804–8, where she explains that Paul's "justification by faith" refers to pagans who were enabled by the Holy Spirit to fulfil the Mosaic law, "specifically, the Law's Second Table, δικαιοσύνη." See also Paula Fredriksen, "Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul's Gospel," *NTS* 56 (2010): 252: "This insistence that none other than the god of Israel be worshipped ultimately came from the first table of the Law. It was defining; it was non-negotiable; it was uniquely Jewish. For all of the reasons reviewed above, then, but most especially for this one, the last way we should describe Paul's gospel to the Gentiles is to say that it was 'Law-free'."

specifically to being protected from an indictment of unrighteousness (8:33a). The reason why Christians will not be indicted for an unrighteous relationship with God their patron is because “God makes righteous” the relationship between God’s self and Christians (8:33b). This righteous relationship is possible because Jesus acts as the broker between God and Christians when he died and rose from the dead (8:34a). That the emphasis is on his role as a broker is corroborated by his intercession on behalf of Christians (8:34b). The role of Jesus as broker recalls the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25. Owing to Jesus’ intercession or his role as broker, Christians are assured of God’s love (8:39). In Mediterranean culture this love means that God is completely attached or devoted to Christians, and it ensures the final glorification or honouring of Christians.²⁰⁶ With this note, Paul has completed his demonstration that both Judean Christians and especially gentile Christians are highly honoured by God. Thus, the problem first enunciated in Romans 1-3 that gentile Christians do not possess honour in the eyes of God, their patron, was first foundationally addressed in Romans 4 and fully resolved by the end of Romans 8.

2.4.6 Rom 9:1-11:36

In Romans 4, Paul argues that a righteous relationship between God as patron and Christians as God’s clients does not come by the deeds of the Mosaic law. Instead, a righteous relationship between the patron God and his clients, Christians, comes by trust. This trust mediates resurrection life to a Christian, and thus, enables a Christian to live a life of righteousness. Specifically how a Christian is enabled to live a righteous life is elaborated in Romans 5-8. This thesis (first enunciated in the conclusion of Romans 4 in 4:23-25 and then expounded in Romans 5-8) becomes the rallying point by which Paul removes the boast of Judean Christians, as the possessors of the Mosaic law, towards gentile Christians.

In any tussle for honour between parties of social equals, a challenge calls for a riposte.²⁰⁷ Thus, the arrogance of the Judean Christians to which Paul responds using the

206. Malina, “Love,” 128.

207. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 40.

rhetoric of Rom 1:18-8:39 will be met with a riposte by gentile Christians. The nature of this riposte can be elicited from how Paul addresses the arrogance of the gentile Christians in Romans 9-11. I shall identify and explain the sections in Romans 9-11 where Paul builds on the conclusion of Romans 4 to speak to this rhetorical exigence that gentiles should not boast of their superiority to Judeans.

Several observations point in the direction that 11:13-25 contains the rhetorical exigence:²⁰⁸ the gentile Christian audience consider Judean Christians as inferior. First, as Stowers cogently argues,²⁰⁹ the combined particles $\mu\epsilon\nu\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$ (11:13) should be taken together as in 9:20 and 10:18. Together, they indicate that what follows provides an adversative or corrective to what has just preceded. Considering that this is the only place where Paul explicitly addresses his implied audience, it is reasonable to think that 11:13-25 contains the rhetorical exigence of Romans 9-11. Second, the main concerns of Romans 9-11 are also reinforced in 11:13-25: Paul's main goal in 9:1-10:21 is to show that the promise of God to save Israel has not been nullified (9:6). He reiterates this point in 11:1-12. Other supporting themes present in Romans 9-11 are also found in 11:13-25: Israel's unbelief (9:30-33; cf. 11:15, 20); the need for trust (10:6-17; cf. 11:20, 23). With the contextual framework of 9:1-11:36 set, I shall show how 9:30-10:13 builds upon the conclusion set out in 4:23-25.

Rom 9:30-10:13 seeks to respond to the question: why did Israel not receive righteousness, that is, a righteous relationship with God the patron, despite the fact that they sought after it? In this section, Paul uses precreation rhetorolect. Its presence is shown by Paul's description of Christ as one who mediates a righteous relationship between God and humankind (thirdspace), as a stone that is part of a physical house (firstspace), and a stone

208. Stowers, *Rereading*, 294–95, takes the admonition to the gentile Christians to be “a climactic moment in the letter’s rhetoric.” This implies that the letter’s rhetoric addresses the issue in 11:13-25. Stower’s thesis is plausible but remains to be more thoroughly debated. His thesis, however, supports my point: 11:13-25 is the pressing need of, minimally, Romans 9-11. See also, Johann D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9–11*, SBLDS 176 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 107–14, who follows Stowers and my contention.

209. Stowers, *Rereading*, 288–89.

that brings triumphs over the enemies of God. This hints at God as eternal emperor (secondspace).²¹⁰ The use of precreation rhetorolect mobilises ideological power to persuade the gentile implied audience of the need for Christ to broker a righteous relationship for them with God, the divine patron. Thus, the use of precreation rhetorolect correlates with the conclusion in 4:23-25, where Christ functions as a broker.

Paul begins by stating an ironical fact in two almost antithetical statements: “the gentiles who did not pursue righteousness obtained righteousness” (9:30) but “Israel who pursued a law of righteousness (νόμον δικαιοσύνης) did not arrive at the law” (9:31). Several clarifications are needed. First, the phrase νόμον δικαιοσύνης in 9:31 should be interpreted in light of 9:30: Israel is basically pursuing the same δικαιοσύνη which the gentiles have obtained. Otherwise, Paul’s objects of comparison with regards to the gentiles and Israel are not compatible. Paul has phrased it this way to emphasise Israel’s rigour in their pursuit of ὁ νόμος. The same reasoning applies to the word νόμος in εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν (9:31) which should also refer to righteousness that comes from the Mosaic law. Second, in 9:30-31, Paul contrasts the fact that gentiles have attained righteousness (9:30), with the fact that Israel did not succeed in fulfilling the Mosaic law (9:31). This contrast implies that the requirements of the Mosaic law must be fulfilled for one to obtain righteousness. This point is in line with my contention in 4:23-25 that righteousness is attained when one fulfils the requirements of the Mosaic law.²¹¹

The reason why Israel did not receive righteousness was because Israel “did not strive for it [righteousness] on the basis of trust [in God]” (9:32b). Important for our discussion is the observation that this trust has God, the patron, as its object. This point is similar to the trust discussed in 4:23-25, whose object of trust is also God. The reason why Judeans refused to enter into a relation of trust with God was because Christ the broker was a stumbling block for them (9:32b-33). To reinforce his point, Paul introduces an oral-scribal intertexture into

210. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

211. Cf. my analysis of 7:6 on p. 77, where I posit that being discharged from the Mosaic law does not mean that a Christian is no longer obliged to fulfil its requirements.

his rhetoric (9:33).²¹² This intertexture not only explains Israel's rejection of Christ, but more importantly, it exerts ideological power on the implied audience by asserting that Christ is the key if one "will not be put to shame" (9:33).

With the vocative ἀδελφοί to evoke the audience's *pathos*, Paul indicates that 10:1-4 continues the discussion started in 9:30-33, albeit in a more emphatic way. He again expresses his desire for his fellow Judeans to be saved (10:1) and gain honour. Israel did not receive salvation because they have not submitted to God's righteousness, that is, Israel has rejected the righteousness that God, their patron, provides. Submission to God's righteousness requires Israel to do two things. First, this righteousness is given to "everyone who trusts" God (10:4). Second, this trust in God requires Israel to accept Christ as their broker. The reason why Christ is a worthy broker is because τέλος νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην (10:4). Some construe the meaning of τέλος as cessation. Rom 10:4 would then mean that Christ is a worthy broker because in some sense he has annulled the Mosaic law.²¹³ This interpretation is untenable as, according to the argument in 9:30-33,²¹⁴ the Mosaic law needs to be obeyed and not annulled.²¹⁵ More likely, the word means "goal" or as some

212. See above, p. 19.

213. Räisänen, *Paul*, 53–56, recognises that "[t]here is no critique of the law here" in 9:30-33. Thus, no negative connotations are attached with the role of the law here. This understanding speaks against the meaning of τέλος as termination in the argument that follows in 10:1-4. That said, however, he argues that since 10:1 begins a new unit of thought as signalled by the vocative ἀδελφοί, 10:4 should be read in light of the polemical contrast between "righteousness from the law" and "righteousness from faith." This makes construing the meaning of τέλος as termination reasonable. Räisänen's understanding of Paul's argument, however, is flawed. First, the vocative ἀδελφοί does not signal a break in argument. The reverse is true: it is Paul's way of drawing out the *pathos* of his implied audience in order to further his argument in 9:30-33. Second, the focus of 10:1-4 is not to contrast the "righteousness from the law" and the "righteousness from faith." Rather, Paul is contrasting their τὴν ἰδίαν (δικαιοσύνην) ζητοῦντες στήσαι and their need to submit to God's means of attaining righteousness which is by means of Christ, the broker. Thus, there is nothing negative about the righteousness that comes from fulfilling the Mosaic law. See also, Käsemann, *Commentary*, 283; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 589, thinks both meanings, termination and fulfilment are present in this word.

214. See my argument above on p. 94.

215. Stowers, *Rereading*, 304, observes that "the text [in 9:30-31] gives not the

understand it, “fulfilment.”²¹⁶ The latter interpretation also coheres with the social and cultural texture that underlies Christ’s role as a broker in 9:32-33. As a broker between Christians and God, he needs to stand on a higher plane of honour in order to be a worthy broker. Christ as the broker, described in 10:4, must be able to help both gentiles and Judeans fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic law since this is the problem discussed in 9:30-33. This last point that Christians must trust God and depend on Christ as broker is explained in 10:5-13, as the causative γάρ in 10:5 indicates.²¹⁷

By introducing into the text an oral-scribal intertexture, Lev 18:5, Paul emphasises that if one looks to the Mosaic law for righteousness that person is also required to do the deeds of the Mosaic law. The “righteousness that comes by trust” in God (10:6), however, does not require impossible deeds such as ascending to heaven to bring Christ down or descending into the abyss to bring Christ up, before a person can put his trust in God (10:6-7). In fact, righteousness that comes through trust in God requires no deeds at all as signified by what is involved: the mouth and heart, that is, the mouth confesses and the heart trusts (10:8-11). The respective social and cultural textures that underlie “mouth” and “heart” also need to be highlighted if we are to understand how 10:6-9 explains Christ as broker. In the

slightest hint of anything negative about the law, Israel’s goal. It [the law of righteousness] is parallel to the gentile goal of righteousness without the law.” This observation, however, should not be taken to imply that the Mosaic law need not be fulfilled. Rather, the Christian is now enabled by trust in Christ to fulfil the Mosaic law through the help of the Spirit: “Christ reversed the curse on the gentiles, which made their flesh weak, being . . . not able to do what the law requires (8:4) . . . the Spirit gives the gentiles a new mind (8:5-6), allowing them to submit to God’s law (8:7) . . . Now enabled to submit to God’s law, gentiles are reconciled to God (8:7)” (pp. 282-283). See also Jewett, *Romans*, 485, who acknowledges that “those set right by faith and thus freed from the law would be involved in fulfilling the Mosaic law seems contradictory, standing in tension with earlier Pauline letters, but this verse is consistent with the effort throughout *Romans* to demonstrate the continuity of God’s purpose in the law and through the Spirit.”

216. See Jewett, *Romans*, 619, who argues that τέλος has fulfilment for a meaning in its various occurrences in the LXX, Plutarch, and Josephus.

217. It is possible, as Jewett, *Romans*, 622–23, suggests, that 10:5 begins a Hebrew *Pesher*. His suggestion, however, that Paul intends to show that “the law itself points to faith in Christ and provides no foundation for justification by works” is not borne out by the text.

Mediterranean culture the heart refers “to the human capabilities of thinking, judging, evaluating and the like and doing all of these with feelings.”²¹⁸ Thus, for Paul, “heart” is the human capability where trust (here in 10:9, the object of trust is God) is exercised. As for the social and cultural texture that underlies “mouth,” the speech that the mouth utters has great importance. It is the means by which honour, the most sought after limited good in the Mediterranean world, is gained.²¹⁹ A social and cultural texture underlies the word κύριος. In the ancient Roman setting, clients were to address their patrons as “lord” or *dominus*.²²⁰ In 10:9, Christians by addressing with their mouths (στόμα) Jesus as Lord (κύριος), are rendering honour to Christ as a patron-broker.²²¹ That said, however, Christ’s foremost function is that of broker since 10:1-13 is Paul’s response to the Judeans’ rejection of Christ’s brokerage in 9:30-33. A social and cultural texture underlies the juxtaposition of mouth and heart. The Mediterranean culture allows equivocation, that is, one does not have to perform what the mouth utters.²²² For this reason Paul adds the role of the heart.²²³ My point is that these statements about the roles of the mouth and heart in 10:9 should be read in parallel. Thus, Christ’s role as patron-broker is closely connected to the Judean Christians’ trust in

218. Bruce J. Malina, “Eyes-Heart,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 68.

219. Jerome H. Neyrey, “Equivocation,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 63.

220. See the satire written between CE 95-98 (Edwin Post, *Selected Epigrams of Martial: Edited, with Introduction and Notes* [Boston and New York: Ginn and Company, 1908], x), by the Roman poet, Marcus Valerius Martialis (born between CE 38-41). In this satire (6:88), a client who did not address Caecilianus his patron as *dominus* (lord), forfeited 100 *quadrantes* (about 6 sesterces). This money was a *sportula*, a payment (which could take the form of food or money) made by the patron to his client.

221. Nelson P. Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders: The Apostles in the Ritual of Status Transformation in Acts 1–2*, JSNTSup 58 (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 58, notes that Jesus in acting as a broker between Israel and God, also functions as a patron to his (Jesus’) clients.

222. Neyrey, “Equivocation,” 63–68.

223. Neyrey, “Equivocation,” 67, recognises the prevailing Mediterranean culture of “equivocation” but also adds that what the Mediterranean world is more concerned about is “the intention of doing something or the plan of doing, which can serve as a substitute for achievement.”

God, as described in 10:9 after the exegetical ὅτι. Some scholars contend that the verb πιστεύειν refers to belief in a body of knowledge.²²⁴ The emphasis, however, should be on the object of trust, namely, God. Several observations bear this out. First, the emphasis of the rhetoric of 9:30-10:13 is trust as opposed to the deeds of the Mosaic law. In particular, the clause πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην in 10:10 which explains 10:9, refers to trust in God, as clarified by the citation of scripture in 10:11, λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ (God). Second, 10:9b resembles 4:24-25 as evinced by the common vocabulary πιστεύειν, ἐγείρειν, νεκρός and the discussion about Christ’s resurrection. My discussion above has shown that Christ’s role of brokering righteousness from God to Christians builds upon Christians trusting God on account of the fact that he raised Jesus from the dead. This foundational belief is the conclusion in 4:23-25.

At 11:13, Paul explicitly addresses the gentile Christian implied audience toward whom the rhetoric of Romans 9-11 has been directed all along. Paul enunciates his main thesis in 11:12 that if Israel’s failure to be saved means riches for the world of the gentiles, then, when all Israel is saved, the results will be even greater. What this entails is explicated in 11:15: the greater result is ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν (11:15). This may come as a surprise as what has preceded apparently does not prepare us for this idea about “life out of the dead.” I agree with the view that this refers to the “final resurrection at the end of the age/history.”²²⁵ It is, however, difficult to ignore the repeated overtones that come from the preceding passages which talk about resurrection out of the dead and the attached newness of life (Romans 4, 5, 6, 7:24-25 and 8). In that sense, the phrase ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν is not a new idea here. Furthermore, the word νεκρός is also used in 4:25. Hence, the implied audience would have remembered this repeated stress. Paul’s point would be that not only is Israel heading for a climactic resurrection from the dead, but more so, a newness of life in holiness. That this is Paul’s emphasis in ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν is evinced by what follows which discusses holiness in

224. So most commentators, e.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 630; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 609; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 290–91.

225. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 658; similarly Moo, *Romans*, 695–96; Jewett, *Romans*, 681.

terms of the first fruit, lump, root and branches (11:16). Some commentators see a break between 11:15 and 11:16.²²⁶ This goes against several observations. First, as mentioned above, 11:15 and 11:16 share a common idea about holiness. Second, the structures of both verses are too similar to break them apart: εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ κτλ. (11:15), and εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ κτλ. (11:16). More importantly, 11:15 and 11:16 both explain Paul's pride in his ministry to the gentiles (11:14). Thus, Paul in 11:13-16 demonstrates to the boasting gentiles that Judean Christians have received a resurrection life that is characterised by holiness, and hence, have a righteous relationship with their patron, God. This is the conclusion of Romans 4. In this way, Judean Christians have gained honour in the eyes of the only truly significant other, God. This constitutes for the Judean Christians an appropriate riposte to the boast of the gentile Christians.

With 11:17-32, Paul finally spells out his point: to the gentile Christians, Paul warns them not to boast (11:18). He then follows this up with a warning (11:19-24) and a correction that "all Israel will be saved" (11:25-29). Furthermore, the gentile Christians should not boast over the unsaved Israelites because they have been the instruments through which the salvation of God reached the gentile Christians (11:30-32). With that, Paul's rhetoric breaks forth into a praise for the "riches, wisdom and knowledge of God" (11:33-35). This praise should be read in light of where Paul started in 9:1: his grief that a majority of Israelites are not saved. What this implies is that the rhetoric of Romans 9-11 has reversed grief into praise.

2.4.7 Rom 12:1-2

Most scholars agree that the section 12:1-15:13 forms the moral exhortation of the letter as there is a decided shift from "indicative" to imperative.²²⁷ This section can be

226. Incorrectly, Moo, *Romans*, 696. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 681, who does not specify a connection with what precedes. Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 671, who sees the connection as Paul attempting to "express the strength of his hope."

227. E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 744, who notes that commands are found only a few places in chapters 1-11: 6:11-13, 19; 11:18-20. Likewise, Jewett, *Romans*, 724; Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 592; Esler, *Conflict*, 308.

divided into two main sections: general exhortations (12:1-13:14) and specific exhortations (14:1-15:13). That this entire section is dominated by wisdom rhetorolect is apparent from several observations. In 12:1-2, which introduces the moral exhortations that follow, Paul address his implied audience as ἀδελφοί (12:1). This evokes *pathos* in the implied audience so that they will take heed to obey the exhortations. Also, the implied audience addressed belong to a household as indicated by the verb προσλαμβάνειν, which means welcoming a person into a household (14:1).²²⁸ Both are familial terms that recall the firstspace of wisdom rhetorolect. Furthermore, the exhortations also often take a binary form, that is, “reasoning and argumentation based on identification and differentiation. Identities and differences are assumed, asserted, or explained by using opposites, contraries, and adversatives.”²²⁹ According to the third space of wisdom rhetorolect, Paul seeks by the rhetoric of 14:1-15:13 to produce in the implied audience a body of righteousness, that is, a life characterised by righteous living.²³⁰ This coheres with the intent of the exhortations in 14:1-15:13.

The focus of 12:1-15:13, as most commentators agree, is encapsulated by 12:1-2.²³¹ I contend that 12:1-2 builds upon the conclusion in 4:23-25. Several observations confirm my point of view. First, the conjunction οὖν is inferential. The question is, however, how far back this conjunction reaches. This brings me to my second observation. The goal of 12:1-15:13, as contained in the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorolect, is to persuade the implied audience to perform righteous deeds. Here, in 12:1 the body (σῶμα) is described as θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ Θεῷ. The kind of lifestyle that Paul exhorts the implied audience to demonstrate in 12:1-2 recalls the resurrection life described in Romans 6, which enables Christians to live a holy life. This ability to live a holy life, as I have argued earlier in my discussion on Romans 6, is predicated upon 4:23-25: the resurrection life of Jesus enables

228. BDAG, “προσλαμβάνω,” 883 ❹.

229. Robbins, *Invention*, 136.

230. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

231. E.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 724; Moo, *Romans*, 748; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 707.

Christians to live a holy life.²³² The body (σῶμα) that is now alive resolves the body that was dead due to the indictment of sin by the Mosaic law in Romans 7. This body is now saved by the Spirit as Paul explained in Romans 8. As I argued earlier in my discussion on Romans 8, the salvation work of the Spirit is predicated upon 4:23-25. Thus, a lifestyle that is characterised by holiness, as described in 14:1-15:13, builds upon the conclusion of Romans 4, specifically 4:23-25.

2.4.8 Rom 14:1-15:13

The problem in 14:1-15:13 involves two groups: the “weak” (14:1) and the “strong” (15:1). The issue involves eating and drinking (14:3, 6b, 14-15, 17, 20-23) and observance of certain days (14:5, 6). The people belonging to these two groups are Christians (14:8). Also, Marcus makes an important observation that Paul connects the “weak and the strong” in 14:1-15:6 with “the Judeans and non-Judeans” in 15:7ff with a strong connective διό. This connection of identities (“the weak and the strong” with “Judeans and non-Judeans” respectively) is further reinforced by Paul’s description of Christ as being the servant of the circumcision and of the gentiles (15:8-9). Immediately, Paul again cites a Septuagint passage that urges the gentiles to rejoice with God’s people, the Israelites. The weak are described as those who abstain from certain food, thus eating only “herbs,” and the strong are those who eat “all things” (14:2). They are categorised as those who are “weak in the faith” while the strong are those who are strong in the faith as signified by πιστεύει in ὃς μὲν πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα (14:2). The strong connection between 14:1-15:6 and 15:7ff. implies also that the Mosaic law is in view. We shall examine how Paul resolves this dissension between the weak, who are the Judeans, and the strong, the non-Judeans.

He urges the strong to welcome the weak, as in welcoming them “into one’s household” (14:1).²³³ The word προσλαμβάνειν (“welcome”) occurs a total of four times in

232. See above, p. 74.

233. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 689.

Paul's writings, three of which occur in this passage.²³⁴ The strong should not be arrogant toward the weak for being weak in faith because they do not eat (14:1-3). This recalls Paul's earlier admonition to the gentiles "not to boast" over the Judeans (11:18). Neither should the weak judge the strong (14:3). In light of 14:4, such judgement by the weak or the strong is tantamount to judging those from the other group as being unable to "stand" (14:4) blamelessly before God as a servant stands before his master. The one who enables him "to stand," however, is the Lord (14:4). When read in light of Romans 4, the Lord enables the "weak" and the "strong" to stand through Jesus who has expiated sin and given to Christians a righteous life. This life enables both Judean and gentile Christians to live righteous lives. Whether one should eat or not, the guiding principle is: each should act according to how one is persuaded in his or her *voũç* (14:5). The word *voũç* recalls the *voũç* in 7:23 that was captivated by the law of sin and which was later set free from the law of sin to serve the law of God (7:25). This liberation is possible because, as explained in Romans 6-8, the Spirit enables Christians to fulfil the law. Since Romans 6-8 is premised upon Romans 4, 14:5 also builds on Romans 4.²³⁵ Furthermore, that individual does it for the Lord because one ought to live for the Lord (14:6-9). This recalls again the previous argument of Romans 6 which stresses freedom from bondage to sin, and a life to be lived for righteousness. Paul then nullifies all forms of judgement, either of the weak against the strong, or vice versa. The reason is given in 14:10-12. This is not a new reason but a re-casting of the previous argument:²³⁶ both the weak and strong should stop judging one another as no one has a right to do that because Christians now live their lives to please God and are, thus, accountable to God alone. With a pun *ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κρίνατε* (14:13), Paul tells the implied audience what it is that they should be concerned with: "not to put a stumbling block or a hindrance" in their

234. Its only other Pauline usage is in Phlm 17. This passage implies that Onesimus was a slave of Philemon, who had absconded from Philemon's household. But Onesimus, under Paul's patronage, was now going to return to the house of Philemon, his master, this time as a brother.

235. See above, pp. 74-84.

236. Esler, *Conflict*, 351; in the same vein, Moo, *Romans*, 846.

fellow Christian's way (15:13). Paul is convinced that the food that gentiles eat is not unclean.²³⁷ That said, however, Paul also contends that if a Christian is aggrieved as a result of another Christian eating that food, the Christian who eats is not showing *ἀγάπη* to the aggrieved Christian. Although "our good act" (14:16) which refers to the act of eating is not in itself evil, this act of eating becomes a source of dispute. Such an act is incompatible with the way Christians ought to live in God's kingdom, a kingdom that should be characterised by "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). This triad of righteousness, peace, and joy must be read against the present backdrop where the Judean Christians emphasise the rejection of certain foods and drinks and the observance of certain days. This means that the emphasis here is righteousness, and its outworking is described by *εἰρήνη καὶ χαρά*. The outworking of this righteousness is a cordial relationship between various parties, in this case Judean and gentile Christians, and edification (14:19). Seen in this perspective, righteousness is an ethical construct. Fulfilling its requirement is made possible by what was accomplished in Rom 4:23-25. The opposite is Paul's concern: the stumbling of the weak (14:20-21). The prepositional phrase *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ* probably modifies all three elements *δικαιοσύνη, εἰρήνη καὶ χαρά* (14:17). That means that the desired situation of 14:18-21 is the work of the Holy Spirit that fulfils *δικαιοσύνη*. This again recalls the work of the Holy Spirit in chapter 8 which is premised upon the argument of Romans 4.²³⁸ In this way, the Mosaic law is fulfilled, and Judean and gentile Christians attain righteousness. With 14:22-23, Paul reiterates what he started in 14:1: the strong in trust should strive "not for the purpose of judging over opinions," that is, the strong are to maintain their trust towards God (14:22) and not impose their views on those weak in trust.

Paul sounds like he is ending the rhetoric he started in 14:1 when he writes 14:22-23. But at 15:1, his attention turns once again to exhorting the strong. This time, however, his

237. John M. G. Barclay, "'Do We Undermine the Law?' A Study of Romans 14:1–15:6," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. J. D. G. Dunn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 300, comments that "[t]his constitutes nothing less than a fundamental rejection of the Jewish law in one of its most sensitive dimensions."

238. See above, pp. 74-84.

objective is different as the discussion that follows show. He urges the strong, that is, the gentile Christians, to bear with the weaknesses of the weak, the Judean Christians, just as Christ did (15:1-3). He backs this injunction with a Septuagint citation and explains that this passage was written to bring to the readers “patience” and “comfort” so that they might have “hope” (15:4). Most commentators think that “hope” (ἐλπίς) refers to salvation²³⁹ and also agree that the mention of “hope” comes as a surprise.²⁴⁰ What follows clarifies the content of “hope”: in 15:5, using the terms “patience” and “hope,” Paul indicates that their objective is to unite the Judean and gentile Christians so that they may glorify God. When 15:5 is read in parallel with 15:4, the above objective forms the content of ἐλπίς. Hence, Jewett is probably right to say that “the use of the definite article . . . indicate[s] a specific hope is in view here. It is the hope in the conversion of the nations which will involve ‘the uniting of the church of Jews and Gentiles.’”²⁴¹ This hope is achievable because it “derives from a solidly reliable, interpersonal relationship” with God, the patron of Christians,²⁴² “providing resources for the congregation to overcome their conflicts and reproaches so that they will be able to participate responsibly in the mission to the end of the world.”²⁴³

With that, Paul concludes with the same word, προσλαμβάνω, that he began with in 14:1. This time, however, he addresses both the gentile Christians and the Judean Christians, to receive each other for the glory of God which refers back to what has just been mentioned in 15:4-6. He bolsters his exhortation with the example of Christ who became a servant of

239. E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 869–71; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 736; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 383.

240. Moo, *Romans*, 869, opines that “[t]he introduction of hope at this point might also seem to be a detour in Paul’s argument;” Käsemann, *Commentary*, 383, reads “hope” as a “surprising motif in the context.”

241. Jewett, *Romans*, 883.

242. John J. Pilch, “Trust (Personal and Group),” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 202.

243. Jewett, *Romans*, 883.

both the “circumcision” and the gentiles (15:7-9). He also urges this unity of Judean and gentile Christians with citations from the Septuagint (15:10-12).

The discussion above has demonstrated that the conclusion in 4:23-25 forms the basis of the rhetoric that follows in 5:1 to 15:13. With this, I shall investigate the rhetoric of Romans 4.

CHAPTER 3
THE RHETORIC OF ROMANS 4
PART ONE

3.1 Introductory Matters

This chapter and the next will examine the rhetoric of Romans 4. The main discussion will be divided into two parts. In this chapter, I will focus on the issues that frame the rhetoric of Romans 4, following which I shall examine the rhetoric of Rom 4:1-8. The next chapter, chapter 4 of this dissertation, will analyse Rom 4:9-25.

Romans 4 is a diatribe where Paul engages an imaginary Judean interlocutor¹ with the implied audience comprising Judean and gentile Christians listening to the debate. Paul seeks by the rhetoric of Romans 4 to resolve an exigence created by a two-fold factor. First, Judean Christians claim to possess righteousness because they possess the Mosaic law. Second, they use this righteousness to boast against gentile Christians. This creates a rift between Judean and gentile Christians. To heal this rift, Paul responds with a rhetoric of Abraham's faith or trust in God. The opening question (4:1) asks the Judean interlocutor: is he able to argue for the case that Abraham received righteousness by human efforts, making him (Abraham) the ancestor of the Judeans? Paul then launches a two-fold rhetorical strategy (4:2-16; 4:17-25) to refute such a claim.

First, Paul undermines the possibility of gaining righteousness through human efforts (4:2-16). He achieves this rhetorical objective by showing the non-congruence between deeds of the Mosaic law and God's favour (4:2-8), and by using the topos "circumcision"

1. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199; Nancy Calvert-Koyzis, *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God: The Significance of Abraham Traditions for Early Judaism and Christianity*, JSNTSup 273 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 134; Stowers, *Rereading*, 231, 234; Stowers, *Diatribes*, 155–84; Jewett, *Romans*, 26; contra Elliott, *Rhetoric*, 158; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 227; Ben C. Dunson, *Individual and Community in Paul's Letter to the Romans*, WUNT 332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 131.

(4:9-12). At the same time, Paul also crafts a myth of origins for both Judean and gentile Christians. He argues that the righteousness that gained Abraham his fatherhood came by trust in or loyalty to God as patron.² In this way, Abraham becomes the father of gentile Christians so that they can inherit righteousness from him (4:11b). Likewise, Judeans who imitate Abraham's trust in or loyalty to God as patron are his descendants and also gain righteousness (4:12). Paul then continues to undermine the role of the Mosaic law in attaining righteousness by framing his rhetoric using the topos "promise" (4:13-16).

Second, after undermining human efforts, Paul introduces the role of trust (4:17-25). Trust in or loyalty to God made Abraham righteous so that God made alive Abraham's dead body. Consequently, he could have descendants. In 4:23, Paul stops engaging the Judean interlocutor and speaks directly to the implied audience, namely, the Judean and gentile Christians. He concludes that as result of Abraham's trust in, that is, loyalty to God, both Judean and gentile Christians may gain righteousness (4:23). This righteousness will be realised if they trust God who raised Jesus from the dead. Such a trust in God resolves the problem of trespasses and enables a person to live a righteous life (4:24-25).

My analysis of chapter 4 will proceed as follows. Each paragraph will first be delimited and then, where relevant, analysed for its various textures and rhetorolects. Generally, analysis will proceed by a close reading of the text. But before we enter into the analysis of each paragraph, several comments are needed.

3.1.1 The Immediate Context

In the previous section where I traced the argument of Romans to locate the function of Romans 4, I argued that the preceding context, 1:18-3:31, addresses a two-fold problem. First, Judeans are relying on the deeds of the Mosaic law to obtain righteousness. Second, Judeans also view the Mosaic law as a Judean identity marker and use it to boast against the gentiles (3:7-31).³ This adds honour to their family of Judeans. For the rhetoric of Romans 4

2. Bruce J. Malina, "Faith/Faithfulness," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 72–5.

3. Räisänen, *Paul*, 171, reads the issue of 3:27-30 as "the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God," in which "the works of the law are something that separates the Jew from the

to be intelligible, it is important to understand that this boast mentioned in 3:27 and taken up again in Romans 4 is not an individual one but a familial one. This explains why Paul invokes Abraham to construct what constitutes a correct conception of kinship and ethnicity, and configure his identity as father of both Judean and gentile Christians. Thus, Paul the implied speaker is faced with a two-fold exigence. Judeans are depending on the Mosaic law to become righteous. Furthermore, gentiles are considered as inferior by Judeans because they do not have access to this righteousness. This two-fold problem looms in the immediate context that precedes Romans 4 and prompts Paul the implied author to use a rhetoric of Abraham's trust to resolve this exigence.

3.1.2 The Dominant Rhetorolect

The dominant rhetorolect in Romans 4 is probably Christian wisdom rhetorolect. Several observations demonstrate this. First, the introduction of this paragraph centres on Abraham as *προπάτωρ* ("forefather"). This fits the first space of wisdom rhetorolect which is the experience of household, whose main figure is the father.⁴ Second, several elements indicate that the discourse as a whole is wisdom argumentation. Robbins observes that "one of the basic characteristics of early Christian wisdom rhetorolect is to turn scriptural discourse into proverbial speech. This occurs either by selecting only part of a verse for recitation or by omitting words from the biblical verse to make it shorter."⁵

We observe that Paul cites verses from Genesis 15, 17 (LXX), and Psalm 31 (LXX) at 4:5, 9 (cf. Gen 15:6 [LXX]); 4:7-8 (cf. Psa 31:1-2 [LXX]); 4:17 (cf. Gen 17:5 [LXX]). Furthermore, Robbins also notes that a "beginning point in wisdom discourse, then, is reasoning and argument based on identification and differentiation. Identities and differences are assumed, asserted by using opposites, contraries and adversatives."⁶

Gentile."

4. See Robbins, *Invention*, 133.

5. So Robbins, *Invention*, 122.

6. Robbins, *Invention*, 136.

We see such an “identification and differentiation” with assertions of “opposites” in 4:4-5; 4:9-10; 4:13-14; 4:16; 4:20 and 4:23-24. Furthermore, the tone of these assertions is exhortative. Even when blessing and reckoning of sin are mentioned, the tone remains exhortative and non-confrontational. If it were confrontational it would transform the discourse into a prophetic one.⁷

Third, and more importantly, the application in 4:23-25 indicates wisdom rhetorolect. Paul’s rhetoric seeks to produce righteousness in the lived space (the thirdspace) of the human body,⁸ that is, to move the implied audience to live righteous lives.⁹ This fits the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorolect. With this noted, I shall discuss the various paragraphs of Romans 4.

3.1.3 Inner Texture

A display of the main topoi helps to reveal the sub-textures of repetitive, progressive, and opening-middle-closing. This facilitates tracing the argument of Romans 4.

Opening	4:1 “What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?”
Middle:	4:2-5 topos related to “work” 4:6-8 topos related to “blessing” 4:9-12 topos related to “circumcision” 4:13-16 topoi related to “promise” and “law” 4:17-22 topoi related to “death” and “life”
Closing	4:23-25 “But the words, ‘it was reckoned to him,’ were not written because of him only, but also because of us to whom it [righteousness] is about to be reckoned, who believe on him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered [to death] because of our transgressions and raised because of our righteousness.”

7. Robbins, *Invention*, 191.

8. Robbins, *Invention*, xxix-xxx.

9. See below, p. 263.

Several observations elucidate Paul's argument. First, the opening question about how the implied audience realises Abraham as their father meets a response in the closing about Jesus Christ obtaining righteousness for the implied audience. The implication is that the intervening material (4:2-22) bridges the gap between the nature of Abraham's fatherhood and the righteousness obtained for the implied audience by Jesus Christ.

Second, the repetitive and progressive texture reveals the main topoi, and thus, exposes the rhetorolects used in each section. It is important to remember that in SRI rhetorolects (rhetorical dialects) replace the traditional genres of rhetorical discourse.¹⁰ Paul starts with wisdom rhetorolect in 4:1 and stays within the same rhetorolect in 4:2-8. He then brings in priestly rhetorolect as indicated by the topos "circumcision" in 4:9-12. The topoi on "promise" and "law" in 4:13-16 indicate apocalyptic rhetorolect. Paul finishes the rhetoric with miracle rhetorolect in 4:17-25. In my analysis, I shall structure Romans 4 according to the physical setting (firstspace) dictated by NT rhetorolects. Hence, these major rhetorolects will delineate the sub-sections of Romans 4 and provide the framework for analysis. More importantly, by identifying the major rhetorolect that dominates a section, a general idea of the object of the rhetoric can also be narrowed down, as displayed in Robbin's matrix under "Ongoing Bodily Effects and Enactments."¹¹

The verb λέγειν occurs at 4:1, 3, 6, 9, 18 and forms a repetitive inner texture that drives the argument of Romans 4 forward. This verb contains a sensory-aesthetic inner texture. Human beings are considered to be interacting appropriately with the world outside them, and hence, satisfying rules of purity.¹² The mouth belongs to the "[z]one of self-expressive speech." In other words, the mouth serves as a means of "self-revelation through

10. Robbins, *Invention*, 1–3, observes that the rhetoric of the New Testament "does not presuppose the rhetorical setting of the law court, political assembly, or civil ceremony." Hence, the categories of classical rhetoric are not appropriate for analysing the NT. Instead, Robbins insists on blending "these categories with the inner workings" of rhetorolects.

11. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

12. Malina, *Cultural*, 68; Bruce J. Malina, "Communicativeness (Mouth-Ears)," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 27.

speech.”¹³ Furthermore, New Testament writers tend to verbalise (in this case by means of the mouth) and not engage in introspection.¹⁴ Thus, by using λέγειν the speaker is not merely articulating something. His entire person is involved. In the case of 4:1 the Judean interlocutor is effectively bringing into the rhetoric his Judean ethnic identity. In addition, the mouth, in the Mediterranean world, was the “key strategy for establishing, maintaining and defending honor.”¹⁵ Thus, by the word λέγειν in 4:1a the Judean interlocutor is putting forward a challenge. The other occurrences of λέγειν should also be construed as part of the challenge riposte game set in motion by the Judean interlocutor in 4:1. In what follows, starting with 4:2, Paul is providing a series of major ripostes that build around the statements in 4:3, 6, 9, and 18. That a challenge-riposte game frames Romans 4 is evinced by two observations. First, λέγειν connotes the giving of a challenge in 4:1 and the other occurrences are responses that seek to refute 4:1 or are theses related to it. Second, Romans 4 centres around attainment of “righteousness” which is closely related to honour.

3.1.4 Translation of Ἰουδαῖοι

This section, discussing the translation of Ἰουδαῖοι, may at first sight appear unrelated to the rhetoric of Romans 4. A correct translation of Ἰουδαῖοι, however, does affect the persuasiveness of Romans 4. The reason is that Ἰουδαῖοι, as I argue below, is very much an ethnic label. Since Romans 4 is an argument that seeks to resolve issues related to the ethnicity of Ἰουδαῖοι Christians, its translation should indicate that Ἰουδαῖοι denotes an ethnic group. This dissertation translates the term Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans.” With regards to this translation, Miller notes that

[a]lthough the traditional translation ‘Jew’ remains dominant, ‘Judean’ is now common enough that it can be employed without justification—thanks, in part, to the influential arguments of Malina and Rohrbaugh (1992: 32), Danker (2000: 478), Esler

13. Malina, *Cultural*, 68.

14. Malina, *Cultural*, 68.

15. Malina, “Communicativeness,” 28.

(2003), and Mason (2007), who maintain that the religious connotations of ‘Jew’ are anachronistic, and that *Ioudaios* is best understood solely as an ethnic label.¹⁶

That said, however, he also acknowledges that this issue is still unresolved. The intent of this section is not to further the scholarly discussion on the translation “Judeans.” Rather, it is to provide sufficient evidence to validate translating Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans.” This section discusses the salient points of Esler’s essay on the translation of Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans.”¹⁷

3.1.4.1 Understanding Ethnicity

Esler follows Barth’s view of ethnicity as espoused in his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). Barth opines that “a categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription, when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background.”¹⁸ This view represents a further development of Weber’s thesis which suggests that members within an ethnic group are naturally attracted to one another with no regards to an objective basis.¹⁹ Barth also refines Hughes’ construal of ethnicity: “[a]n ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable difference from other groups: it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people in it and out of it

16. David M. Miller, “Ethnicity, Religion and the Meaning of *Ioudaios* in Ancient ‘Judaism’,” *CBR* 12 (2014): 217.

17. Besides Esler, *Conflict*, 63–74, who adopts this translation, other scholars who think likewise include Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 44–46; John J. Pilch, “Are There Jews and Christians in the Bible,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 53 (1997): 119–24, who also cites evidence that people in antiquity identified themselves in terms of “their geographical place of origin”; Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 25, 47, 54, 58–67; Richard A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995); Neil Elliott, *Arrogance*, 16.

18. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 13.

19. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 389.

know that it is one.”²⁰ The distinguishing mark of Barth’s understanding of an ethnic group is that cultural features are visible manifestations but not the cause of an ethnic identity.²¹ He further clarifies the relationship between the identity of an ethnic group and the cultural features it exhibits. Cultural features may change, but the boundary that persists between members and outsiders facilitates the specifying of the ethnic identity.²²

But what is that most basic identity? Social scientists recognise Barth’s (correct) insistence that an ethnic group’s self-ascription must be maintained. At the same time, they also recognise the role of “primordialism” in constructing an ethnic identity. Geertz terms primordialism as an attachment which results mainly from a common ancestry and is “overpowering” so as to define an ethnic identity and make that identity and the ethnic group stable.²³ Geertz insists that primordial attachments create a desire to assert an ethnic group’s identity socially.²⁴ Social scientists recognise the need to mediate between these two seemingly irreconcilable positions.²⁵

Hall develops Barth’s viewpoint, and offers a way forward: “there is no doubt . . . that ethnic identity is a cultural construct, perpetually renewed and renegotiated through discourse and social praxis.”²⁶ Hutchinson and Smith develop Barth’s viewpoint and lists six cultural

20. Everett C. Hughes, *On Work, Race, and the Sociological Imagination*, edited and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 91.

21. Esler, *Conflict*, 42.

22. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 9–38.

23. Clifford Geertz, “Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States*, ed. Clifford Geertz (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 105–57.

24. Geertz, “Primordial Sentiments,” 108.

25. See George M. Scott Jr., “A Resynthesis of the Primordial and Circumstantial Approaches to Ethnic Group Solidarity: Towards an Explanatory Model,” *ERS* 13 (1990): 147, who attempts to provide a synthesis of the primordial and circumstantial approaches to explain ethnic group solidarity; Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 165, concludes that as much as ethnicity is associated with culture, that is, shared meaning, it is also “rooted in, and the outcome of, social interaction.”

26. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 14: “the cultural features that signal the

features that are commonly associated with ethnic groups. They are (1) a common proper name to identify the group; (2) a myth of common ancestry; (3) shared historical memories; (4) one or more elements of common culture; (5) a link with a homeland; (6) a sense of solidarity.²⁷ This does not mean, however, that these six features constitute an ethnic group. Rather, Esler suggests that

no one feature can be determinative of, or a *sine qua non* for, ethnicity. In each case one needs to observe the nature of the boundaries that the group in question relies on to distinguish itself from other groups, sometimes using some of the above features and sometimes others, thus establishing the patterns of similarity and difference that show its identity to persist.²⁸

When then does a group use one feature as against other features? This brings us to the concept of “situational ethnicity.” Its main idea is that particular contexts, especially in times of conflict, dictate a person’s “communal identities or loyalties.”²⁹ Ethnic groups will select cultural features in response to challenges so as to maintain their uniqueness. This applies also to the people known as Ἰουδαῖοι who had to respond to various challenges including the period that started with the destruction of Solomon’s temple in 586/587 BCE and the exile that followed, to the sacking of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Thus, ethnicity, including that of Ἰουδαῖοι, is a construct of culture. Its features are not static but take on a shape as social circumstances call for them. This understanding of ethnicity as malleable throws light on the context surrounding ancient names. Thus, translation of ancient

boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics may change—yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity.”

27. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6–7.

28. Esler, *Conflict*, 44.

29. Jonathan Okamura, “Situational Ethnicity,” *ERS* 4, no. 4 (1981): 452, citing John Pandan (1970).

names should avoid primordial constructs. With this understanding of ethnicity we shall turn shortly to the task of translating the name Ἰουδαῖοι.

3.1.4.2 Derivation of the Name Ἕλληνες

Since Paul's world was very much influenced by Greek culture, it will be helpful to understand how this group of people who called themselves Ἕλληνες derived their name. We shall see in the discussion below that Greeks, like Ἰουδαῖοι, derived their name from their homeland.

I have argued that ethnicity is not a primordial given. A historical instance, however, may contradict this point: the Greeks invented a myth to connect their name Ἕλληνες to a mythic common ancestor, a king called Hellen.³⁰ This instance, however, should not be construed as primordialism at work. Rather, as Hall states, "ethnicity is not a primordial given but is instead repeatedly and actively structured through discursive strategies."³¹ That such a discursive strategy is at work is apparent from the surrounding context: the Athenians were attempting to unite all Greeks against their Persian enemies. This strategy, as Hall notes, was frequently used by the Greeks to garner support from other peoples in the face of the threat of powerful enemies.³²

Granted, along with Esler and a majority of social scientists, that ethnicity is not a primordial given, the problem remains: how does one decide what constitutes an ethnic identity? Esler's suggestion that one looks for features that the ethnic group concerned uses to differentiate itself from other groups does not help since all descriptions are situational.³³ Thurén suggests that texts must be de-rhetorized to elicit the underlying system of thoughts.³⁴

30. Hesiod *Cat.* Frg. 4.

31. Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41.

32. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 36–38.

33. Esler, *Conflict*, 44.

34. Thurén, *Derhetorizing*, 28.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to apply this approach to Hellenistic literature that we are utilising here. Minimally, however, we can examine texts which contain names of ethnic groups and whose names are not involved in the main rhetoric of the text. Such texts, noted by Esler, are available.

Ἕλληνες, by which Greeks call themselves, is derived from the name of their home land Ἑλλάς.³⁵ It is also significant that in the *Catalogue of Ships* in the *Iliad* Book 2, individuals who sailed to Troy are referenced to places, either in the form “the men from X,” “those who inhabit Y,” or they are referenced collectively to a place inhabited by that group.³⁶ Thus, Greeks and ancient people derive their names from their origin of habitation. In *Against Apion*, written in the late first century CE by the Judean historian, Josephus, peoples including Hellenists, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Sicilians, Attikoi (people of Attica), Argolikoi (people of Argolis), Athenians, Arcadians, Babylonians, Galileans, Romans, Ethiopians, Indians, and Cretans are all referred to by the territory they occupy.³⁷ The people who call themselves Ἰουδαῖοι do likewise.³⁸

3.1.4.3 Derivation of the Name Ἰουδαῖοι

Hecataeus of Abdera describes Ἰουδαῖοι as a people who left Egypt and settled in Ἰουδαῖα.³⁹ Clearchus of Soli states that the name Ἰουδαῖοι is derived from Ἰουδαῖα, the place they inhabit.⁴⁰ Other Judeans also forged a link between the name and the place Ἰουδαῖα in which they inhabited. An example is found in the *Judean Antiquities*. Esler observes that Ἐβραῖοι is the name used to describe the people during the patriarchal and Egyptian period,

35. See Herodotus *Hist.* 7.150–52, where the Athenians referred to themselves as people who belong to the land of Ἑλλάς.

36. Esler, *Conflict*, 59.

37. Esler, *Conflict*, 59. Cf. Acts 2:9-11.

38. Esler, *Conflict*, 63–68.

39. Diodorus *Bib. hist.* 40.3.

40. Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 1.179.

while the name Ἰσραηλίτης is used to describe them during the Egyptian period. Starting from the time in book 11 when Cyrus permitted them to return to Ἰουδαῖα, they are called by the designation Ἰουδαῖοι on most occasions.⁴¹ Furthermore, the name Ἰουδαῖοι is also often linked to the temple in Jerusalem. For example, Philo mentions that the Ἰουδαῖοι regarded their adopted country as their πατρίς, (fatherland), whereas they deemed “the holy city where stands the temple of the Most High to be their mother city (μητρόπολις).”⁴² Thus, inherent in the name Ἰουδαῖοι is a strong geographical dimension. In view of the above discussion, the name Ἰουδαῖοι will be translated as Judeans, as opposed to the usual “Jews.”

Scholars who object to translating Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans” include Cohen, who puts up a substantial case⁴³ and “set the terms for recent debates.”⁴⁴ His thesis, however, falters on several fronts related to his understanding of ethnicity, as Esler ably shows.⁴⁵ I shall not rehearse the details but shall state the salient points.

First, Cohen takes a primordial approach over a Barthian one. He defines ethnicity as a belief in a common and distinct origin, especially that of an ancestry. This incorrect understanding has been rejected by the majority of social scientists including primordialists like Gil-White.⁴⁶ Second, he relied on Smith’s description of what qualifies for ethnic status which did not include a territory.⁴⁷ Smith himself later realised his mistake and included “a

41. Josephus *Ant.* 11.16ff..

42. Philo *Legat.* 1.281.

43. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

44. David M. Miller, “Ethnicity,” 221.

45. See Esler, *Conflict*, 68–74 for a convincing rebuttal.

46. Francisco J. Gil-White, “How Thick is Blood? The Plot Thickens . . . : If Ethnic Actors Are Primordialists, What Remains of the Circumstantialist/Primordialist Controversy?” *ERS* 22 (1999): 791–92.

47. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

specific territory” as a feature of ethnicity.⁴⁸ Third, Cohen describes “Jewishness” as a religious expression that is independent of kinship, politics, and economics, much like the modern day understanding of the post-Enlightenment concept of religion. This leads Cohen incorrectly to define ethnicity as being independent of a geographic territory.

Millar thinks, however, that Cohen is right to insist that such a post-Enlightenment concept of religion existed in the ancient world. He cites Cohen’s examples which seem to provide evidence for “‘conversion’ in ancient sources, instances where an individual is described as a *Ioudaios* while being associated with another ethnic group, passages where what we call ‘religion’ is especially prominent.”⁴⁹ His refutation, however, has not dealt adequately with Esler and even Smith’s revised understanding of ethnicity that understands ethnicity to be associated with a physical territory. Mason also correctly points out that Cohen’s example of the conversion of Adiabene’s royal family⁵⁰ as an instance of religious conversion fails to take into account the fact that

the passage in question *brims* with the standard language of *ethnos*, law, and custom, as do Josephus’ narratives generally. *Josephus* does not speak of a “religious conversion,” but rather of adopting or going over to *foreign laws, customs, and ways*, and that language is precisely what lends the story its force.⁵¹

Hodge, however, objects to translating Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans.” Her initial preferred choice was the term “Judean” over “Jew” for reasons that I have argued above:

[t]hough “Jew” typically refers to anyone who claims loyalty to the God of Israel or a connection to Judaism, “Judean” refers to someone from the region of Judea . . . This double nomenclature stands in contrast to English translations for other ethnic terms such as *Hellēn* or *Aigyptos*. For these we use just one word, “Greek” or “Egyptian,”

48. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 32.

49. David M. Miller, “Ethnicity,” 222.

50. Josephus *Ant.* 20.17–96.

51. Steve Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 506.

and recognize that they stand for various facets of identity, related variously to geography, ancestry, religious practices, and so on.⁵²

She also agrees with Esler and Elliott that scholars “should pay close attention to ancient terminology and conceptions of identity . . . and whether *Ioudaios* is used by ‘insiders’ about themselves or by ‘outsiders’ about others.”⁵³ Hodge, however, changed her position and used instead the transliteration of the Greek, *Ioudaios*.⁵⁴ But as Mason retorts, this may be a simple solution for academic purposes. It is, however, “of dubious merit in translation projects, and cumbersome in other efforts to make the fruits of scholarship more broadly accessible.”⁵⁵

Hodge’s change in position is triggered by modern concerns. While agreeing with Elliott’s point that the term “Jew” derives not from the first century but from the third and the following centuries, she cautions that many more new terms will have to be invented for traditions that have lasted centuries.⁵⁶ Another concern of hers is that the “refusal to use ‘Jew’ (or *Ioudaios*) to talk about the ancient world ignores the broad cohesion shared by different groups of Jews throughout history.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, Hodge contends that there is the danger of giving implicit assent to “groups past and present whose explicit goals are to erase Judaism from Christian history.”⁵⁸ Despite her objections, the above concerns are modern ones that have little or no bearing on how we interpret Paul’s rhetoric. The reason is that the immediate real audience were people living in the first century CE. They would, hence, construe the ethnicity attached with Ἰουδαῖοι like any ancient people: people from the region

52. Hodge, *If Sons*, 12.

53. Hodge, *If Sons*, 13.

54. Hodge, *If Sons*, 15.

55. Mason, “Jews,” 511.

56. Hodge, *If Sons*, 13.

57. Hodge, *If Sons*, 13.

58. Hodge, *If Sons*, 14.

of Judea. In fact, if Hodge's concerns are valid that the term "Jews" should refer to "the broad cohesion shared by different groups of Jews throughout history," adopting the term "Jews" would confuse the rhetoric as the term " Jews" would, if Hodge is correct, import concerns attached with history beyond the first century CE into a text that belongs to the first century CE.

3.2 Rom 4:1

As previously mentioned, the rhetorolect used in 4:1 is that of wisdom as indicated by προπάτωρ which connotes a household setting. As 4:1 introduces the subject matter of Romans 4, this rhetorolect sets the tone for the entire rhetoric.⁵⁹ According to the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorolect, the rhetoric aims to "create people who produce good, righteous action, thought, will, and speech with the aid of God's wisdom."⁶⁰ In other words, by means of wisdom rhetorolect, Paul seeks to persuade the implied audience to receive favourably Paul's rhetoric of Romans 4.

The first verse, 4:1, introduces the subject matter of Romans 4 as a whole.⁶¹ Several observations evince this. First, the other five occurrences of τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν in Romans (see 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30) function in this way.⁶² Second, the noun προπάτορα in 4:1 anticipates the discussion of Abraham as father of both Judeans and gentiles in 4:11-22. This makes it reasonable to view 4:1 as introducing the rhetoric of Romans 4. Third, more

59. See below, p. 120.

60. Robbins, *Invention*, 110.

61. Contra Moo, *Romans*, 257–66, who treats 4:2-8 as a response to 4:1, and the other paragraphs as units separate from 4:1-8. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 197–98, regards Romans 4 as a midrash with 4:1-2 functioning as an introduction. There he posits that 4:4-8 is an exposition of ἐλογίσθη and 4:9-21 as an exposition of ἐπίστευσεν. This explanation is unconvincing as it collapses Paul's exposition into an exegesis of secondary details rather than main ideas (see my exegesis). Furthermore, as Moo, *Romans*, 255, observes, midrash is a slippery term. For other versions of a midrashic exposition of chapter 4, cf. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 160, who thinks that this might be an pre-Pauline midrash: "Vielleicht war dieser Midrasch ursprünglich selbständig."

62. A similar phrase τί ἐροῦμεν (3:5), without the connective οὖν, also introduces a short discourse in 3:6-8.

importantly, at the conclusion in 4:23-25 of the rhetoric, when Paul applies it to the implied audience, he uses again the first person plural pronoun. This serves as an appropriate response to the first person plural pronoun ἐροῦμεν (4:1) which began the rhetoric. This observation suggests that 4:1 introduces the argument of Romans 4 as a whole. I shall now turn to investigate the meaning of 4:1.

3.2.2 The Structure of 4:1

Rom 4:1, as my discussion below will show, announces the subject matter of the Romans 4. A correct translation of this verse is, hence, important for understanding the rhetoric of this chapter. Much of the difficulty in translating 4:1 lies with the relationship of the perfect infinitive, εὐρηκέναι, to the rest of the sentence. In this section, I shall discuss the two most common translations of 4:1, both of which are not without their difficulties, and then I will discuss my preference with a slight modification of my own.

3.2.2.1 Εὐρηκέναι as Introducing Indirect Discourse

The first view construes the infinitive εὐρηκέναι as introducing indirect discourse and the prepositional phrase κατὰ σάρκα as modifying προπάτορα.⁶³ Rom 4:1 can then be translated as “What then shall we say that Abraham our forefather according to the flesh has found?”⁶⁴ The main weakness of this view, as Hays correctly points out, is that the verb εὐρίσκειν used with no explicit object finds no precedence in Paul’s usage or in the NT. The exceptions occur only

in expressions such as ζητεῖτε καὶ εὐρήσετε (Matt 7:7 = Luke 11:9) or in elliptical constructions where the object is explicitly named in the previous clause (Matt 2:8,

63. A variation of this translation construes the prepositional phrase κατὰ σάρκα adverbially as qualifying the infinitive εὐρηκέναι: Jewett, *Romans*, 304; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 71.

64. So most commentators, e.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 195; Schreiner, *Romans*, 212; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 225; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 105.

12:43, Acts 11:25-26, etc.). In every case of the latter kind in the NT, εὐρίσκειν is juxtaposed to a verb of seeking in the preceding clause.⁶⁵

The conditions for 4:1 to be considered an exception as described above clearly are not present. This perhaps explains why the RSV accepts the reading of Codex Vaticanus in dropping the infinitive εὐρηκέναι out of the text so that 4:1 reads: “What then shall we say about Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?”⁶⁶ Most commentators, however, agree that εὐρηκέναι is part of the original text of 4:1.⁶⁷

3.2.2.2 The Referent of “We” in 4:1

Before ascertaining the structure of 4:1, the referent of “we” needs to be clarified. Several observations help us ascertain the referent of “we” in 4:1. First, when Paul describes Abraham as τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν, προπάτωρ refers to Abraham as being the father of Judeans.⁶⁸ Except for the occurrences of “Abraham” in the Letter to the Galatians, other occurrences of this name outside Romans 4 in Rom 9:7; 11:1 and 2 Cor 11:22 refer to Abraham as the ancestor of Judeans (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ). As for the repeated emphasis in Galatians of Abraham as father of gentiles, this reading must be taken with caution as Paul was aggressively combating Judean Christians who were coercing gentiles into engaging in Judean ethnic practices around circumcision and the law to enjoy the benefits of the saviour. It is, hence, loaded with much emotionally charged rhetoric.⁶⁹ Second, “Abraham is naturally

65. Hays, “Have We Found,” 80. Most commentators similarly acknowledge the weakness, e.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 307; Moo, *Romans*, 259; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 227.

66. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 196, thinks that the absence of εὐρηκέναι from B “attests the sense of various copyists that the verb was being used somewhat awkwardly here.”

67. See the discussion of the textual issues in Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 450; Jewett, *Romans*, 304.

68. Andrew T. Lincoln, “The Stories of Predecessors and Inheritors in Galatians and Romans,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 185.

69. Thurén, *Derhetorizing*, 56–57, 63, cautions interpreters that “many of the

appealed to as father of the [Judean] race, in view of his place within God’s salvation-history (Genesis 12-24).”⁷⁰ He is accorded first place in his claim as “father.”⁷¹ Josephus also refers to Abraham as προπάτωρ.⁷² Thus, to think of Abraham as being the father of Judeans is only natural for an implied audience who hears this name mentioned for *the first time* in Romans. Third, circumcision is closely associated with Abraham (4:10-12; Gen 17:9-14). The previous numerous associations of circumcision with Judeans (2:25, 26, 27, 28, 29; 3:1; 3:30) and the juxtaposition of circumcision with uncircumcision (2:25, 26, 27, 3:30) would tend to imprint on the minds of the implied audience that only the circumcised are Abraham’s descendants. Hence, to construe Abraham as the father of both Judean and gentile Christians at an early stage (4:1) of the rhetoric is a non sequitur. It would, however, be reasonable to address Abraham as the father of gentiles after the reconfiguration of Abraham’s identity in Romans 4, but not before the reconfiguration. The argument of Romans 4 also bears out my point: Abraham as the father of both Judean and gentile Christians is only made explicit at 4:11-12, that is, after Paul redefines the fatherhood of Abraham through the rhetoric of 4:9-12.

Second, regarding the “we” in 4:1, Dunn similarly remarks that

[w]hen Paul speaks of “our forefather” (cf. 9:10—“Isaac our father”), it is not entirely clear whether he was thinking in exclusively Jewish terms (having resumed his dialogue with the Jewish interlocutor of the earlier diatribe—2:1ff.), or intended to include Gentiles as well . . . Such transitions in his thought are fairly typical (e.g., Gal 3:10-14; 4:1-5) and indicate the extent to which he both still thought of himself as a Jew and still regarded the debate in which he was involved as intra-Jewish.⁷³

difficulties in modern exegetical literature also concerning Paul and the law may be attributed to an unnatural, static view of the Pauline letters as texts . . . [Paul] attempts to arouse his addressees’ awareness of the theoretical, theological difference, and does so by dramatizing rhetoric.”

70. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199.

71. Schrenk, “πατήρ, κτλ.,” in *TDNT*, 6:697.

72. Josephus *War* 5.380.

73. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199. Similarly, Stowers, *Rereading*, 31: “in 4:1, Paul presents

I argued above that in Rom 4:1, Abraham should be conceived as being the forefather of only Judeans. In light of this, here in 4:1, the “we” which includes both Paul the implied speaker and the Judean interlocutor should indicate, as Dunn suggests, that Paul is involved in an intra-Judean debate. Paul, the implied speaker, takes on a double identity. On the one hand, he articulates the question of the Judean interlocutor. At the same time, he also refutes the Judean interlocutor. This construal of the “we” in 4:1 makes sense out of the other first person plural pronouns in 4:23-25. In these closing verses, Paul now dissociates himself from the Judean interlocutor and aligns himself with the implied audience comprising Judean and gentile Christians. He then applies the implications of Romans 4 to both of these groups. Stowers’s view is similar to mine, except for the fact that he regards the implied audience as wholly gentile. He correctly identifies the “we” in 4:1 as comprising Paul and the Judean interlocutor. He construes it as a “dialogical ‘we,’” where Paul dialogues with the Judean interlocutor.⁷⁴ The identity of this “we,” however, changes in 4:23-25:

Beginning at 4:23, a new element enters the discourse. For the first time since the prescript (1:1-15), the epistolary audience comes explicitly into view. The “we” here is clearly “me, Paul” and “you gentile believers in Rome.” The Jewish teacher [the Judean interlocutor] has faded from view.⁷⁵

3.2.2.3 Unexpressed “We” as Accusative of Εὐρηκέναι

Hays translates 4:1 as: “What shall we say? Have we found Abraham (to be) our forefather according to the flesh?”⁷⁶ This dissertation will adopt this translation with a slight

himself in a debate with a Jewish opponent and identifies himself with him as a Jew.”

74. Stowers, *Rereading*, 236, 233–34.

75. Stowers, *Rereading*, 247. See also pp. 232-233, where Stowers argues (against Hays, “Have We Found,” 79, footnote 13) that ancient readers read texts that contained no punctuation, no word division, and nothing to indicate change of speakers. This, however, did not pose a problem to them as they “read aloud and had ears well trained for the rhythm, rhetoric, and sense of their language.” Similarly, Joshua W. Jipp, “Rereading the Story of Abraham, Isaac, and ‘Us’ in Romans 4,” *JSNT* 32 (2009): 229.

76. Hays, “Have We Found”, following the lead of Theodor Zahn, *Der Brief Des*

modification: the prepositional phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* qualifies the infinitive *εὑρηκέναι* to yield the translation “What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?” I shall rehearse briefly the pertinent points of Hays’ essay.⁷⁷

3.2.2.3.1 Τί Οὖν Ἐροῦμεν as Complete Sentence and Rhetorical Question

Several scholars correctly recognise the expression *τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν* as a rhetorical question.⁷⁸ This expression (apart from 4:1 which is under investigation) occurs only in Romans (6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30-31). The partial expression without the inferential *οὖν* occurs only in 3:5. Hays makes several pertinent observations regarding the use of the expression *τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν*.

First, except for 8:31, *τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν* is a complete sentence. Second, each of these six references (3:5; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30-31) comprises a pair of questions: the first in each pair is the expression *τί ἐροῦμεν*. In all six occurrences of *τί ἐροῦμεν* (not counting 4:1 but including 3:5), this formulation (the first of the pair of rhetorical questions) introduces the second of the pair of rhetorical questions. Third, in these six occurrences of *τί ἐροῦμεν*, the second of the pair of rhetorical questions “articulates an inference which might be drawn

Paulus an die Römer (Leipzig: Deichert, 1910), 215. This view is later defended by Cranford, “Abraham”. It is also adopted by Maria Neubrand, *Abraham, Vater von Juden und Nichtjuden: Eine exegetische Studie zu Röm 4*, Forschung zur Bibel (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1997), 184; J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 60; Stephen L. Young, “Paul’s Ethnic Discourse on ‘Faith’: Christ’s Faithfulness and Gentile Access to the Judean God in Romans 3:21–5:1,” *HTR* 108 (2015): 41. Also, for a slight modification of Hays’s translation, see N. T. Wright, *The Kingdom New Testament: A Contemporary Translation of the New Testament* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 316; cf. a later modification in Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 61–84. More recently, Jipp, “Rereading,” 227. Also, with a slight modification, Stowers, *Rereading*, 242: “What shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather by his own human efforts?”

77. “Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather According to the Flesh?” A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1.

78. Scholars who recognise *τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν* as a rhetorical question include Hays, “Have We Found,” 78, who calls it a “rhetorical formulation/question”; N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch: The Role of Abraham in Romans 4,” *JSNT* 35 (2012): 226, 229; Jewett, *Romans*, 307, who calls it a “rhetorical question.”

from the foregoing discussion.”⁷⁹ Fourth, in four of the six references (3:5; 6:1; 7:7; 9:14), the inference is a false one.⁸⁰ In other words, the first (τί ἐροῦμεν) of the pair of rhetorical questions in these four cases (6:1; 7:7; 9:14; 3:5) whose specific content is being explicated by the second of the pair of rhetorical questions, contains a false inference. That this inference is false, is also obvious from the question that is posed. For instance, the question τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ (clearly) expects to be negated (6:1). On how the preceding context requires a negative response from the implied audience to the question of 4:1, Jewett, commenting on the way in which the context requires a negative response from the implied audience in 4:1, notes that “[i]n view of the preceding pericope that proves that no one is made righteous, that is, acceptable to God by “works of the law,” such a question requires a negative response from Paul’s audience.”⁸¹ Hays makes the same point when he says that “Paul states in the form of a rhetorical question a view which is opposed to his own.”⁸² This view represents that of one part of the implied audience, the Judean Christians, who are listening to the debate between Paul and the Judean interlocutor. Similarly, Wright and Jewett agree that Paul poses the rhetorical question in 4:1, “expecting the answer ‘no’”⁸³ from the implied audience.⁸⁴

What is happening in 4:1 is this. Paul the implied speaker is involved in an intra-Judean debate. He speaks out the question posed by his fellow Judean, a Judean interlocutor.

79. Hays, “Have We Found,” 79.

80. Hays, “Have We Found,” 79.

81. Jewett, *Romans*, 308.

82. Hays, “Have We Found,” 79, footnote 13.

83. N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch,” 226–27.

84. Jewett, *Romans*, 308. Cf. Stowers, *Rereading*, 163, who observes that in Arrian’s diatribes of Epictetus, “Epictetus emphasizes the use of absurd or unthinkable false propositions or conclusions stated as questions that the interlocutor must strongly reject, that bring to light contradictions in his beliefs, and that lead him to the right conclusion.” Such a mode of discourse is at work in 4:1 (see Stowers, *Rereading*, 236). Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 60, comments that “[t]his rhetorical question [4:1], like so many others in Romans, is intended to be answered in the negative.”

Whether or not this Judean interlocutor is a Christian has no bearing on the argument. He simply functions as someone who articulates the position of a Judean.⁸⁵ At the same time, Paul, the implied speaker, also expects the implied audience (Judean and gentile Christians), who are listening to the debate between Paul and the Judean interlocutor, to negate the question, that is, to reply with a “no.”⁸⁶

With regards to Hay’s fourth observation, it must be emphasised that four rhetorical questions (6:1; 7:7; 9:14; 3:5) expect the implied audience to respond with an immediate “no.” All six pairs of the rhetorical questions in 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30-31; 3:5 can be immediately answered by the implied audience even without further argumentation. The reason is, as Hays says in his third observation, “the second rhetorical question articulates an inference which might be drawn from the foregoing discussion.”⁸⁷ In other words, every occurrence (apart from 4:1 which is under investigation) containing the expression τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν (including 3:5 which leaves out οὖν) has in it an implicit but clear statement.

The above observations lead Hays to draw several conclusions. First, that the expression τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν in 4:1 is a complete sentence is not unreasonable. This is

85. Cf. Stowers, *Rereading*, 163: “When a full-scale dialogue occurs and not just occasional objections from an interlocutor, the speaker or writer usually characterizes the imaginary person as a certain type either corresponding to a specific vice or sometimes belonging to a school of thought.”

86. The situation I describe coheres with Alain Gignac, “The Enunciative Device of Romans 1:18–4:25: A Succession of Discourses Attempting to Express the Multiple Dimensions of God’s Justice,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 487: using the methodology of Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), Gignac views the diatribal dialogues in 1:18-4:25 as an enunciation which is “a speech-act where an *I* or a *we* situated ‘here and now’ speaks with a *you* (singular or plural) about a third party that can be characterized by the third grammatical person (also singular or plural).” He regards the “we” in 4:1 as comprising Paul and the Judean interlocutor: “the (secondary) enunciation splits into a feverish dialogue between *I* and its virtual interlocutor . . . like a ventriloquist, the *I* of the primary enunciation lends its voice to objections that he is quick to refute (diatribe). The enunciation, in the form of questions and answers, is in the *we*.”

87. Hays, “Have We Found,” 79. See also pp. 83-89, “God of the Jews only? Rom 4:1 in relation to the foregoing argument,” where Hays shows that the argument of Romans 3 would elicit from the implied audience a response of “no” to the second rhetorical question of 4:1 regarding Abraham’s fatherhood.

consistent with how four out of the total of five occurrences of τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν are used. Rom 4:1 would, thus, be punctuated as τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα; Second, all five occurrences which contain the expression τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν in Romans are rhetorical questions. In other words, they are not real questions but statements framed in the form of a question. That being the case, we can reasonably expect the question of 4:1 to function likewise. Thus, in 4:1, Paul the implied speaker poses a (rhetorical) question on behalf of the Judean interlocutor. At the same time, Paul, the implied speaker, also expects his implied audience (Judean and gentile Christians) to respond negatively. That this negation is anticipated is also corroborated by the retort in 4:2: Abraham has no reason to boast before God. This means also that 4:1 is making a statement, more than asking a question requiring deliberation that introduces the argument of Romans 4.⁸⁸

3.2.2.3.2 Assuming An Unexpressed “We”

Despite the attractiveness of this second view where Hays assumes an unexpressed “we,” most scholars reject this translation mainly on the grounds that it assumes an unexpressed first person plural supplied by ἐροῦμεν.⁸⁹ This construction, however, is common in classical Greek,

where the complement of verbs (perceiving,) believing, (showing,) and saying which indicate the content of the conception or communication, is formed to a great extent by the infinitive. If the subject of the infinitive is the same as that of the governing verb, it is not expressed.⁹⁰

Furthermore, Wright defends the implicit “we” by arguing on the basis of 4:16, that this verse, διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, also lacks verbs and subjects.⁹¹

88. See Hays, “Have We Found,” 83, 86, where he labels Paul’s “Abraham is our forefather according to the flesh” the proposition in the rhetoric of Romans 4,

89. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199; Tobin, “Controversy Behind Romans 4,” 443; Jewett, *Romans*, 307.

90. BDF §396; Hays, “Have We Found,” 81.

3.2.2.3.3 Assuming An Unexpressed Εἶναι

Hays supplies an unexpressed εἶναι so that 4:1 reads “What shall we say? Have we found Abraham (to be) our forefather . . .” The construction is legitimate as is borne out by Paul’s usage elsewhere (e.g., 1 Cor 4:2, 15:15; 2 Cor 5:3, 9:4, 12:20; Gal 2:17) where the unexpressed εἶναι connects the infinitive εὐρίσκειν and a predicate nominative or adjective to yield the expression “to find (someone) to be (something).”⁹²

3.2.2.3.4 Adverbial Use of Κατὰ Σάρκα

Another grammatical difficulty concerns the relationship of the prepositional phrase, κατὰ σάρκα, to the rest of the sentence. Scholars agree that this expression carries a pejorative sense.⁹³ This phrase can function adverbially and qualify the infinitive εὐρηκέναι, or adjectivally and qualify the noun προπάτορα. Moo holds to the latter position on the grounds that Abraham’s paternity in the flesh (4:1) prepares for Paul’s later argument of Abraham’s spiritual paternity of all believers.⁹⁴ Stowers correctly refutes this position:

That idea [Abraham is forefather by virtue of physical descent from him], however, is entirely unmotivated. The teacher does not advocate that only those born of Jewish blood can be righteous. He advocates attempting to reform non-Jews. Rather, the

91. N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch,” 228; contra Jan Lambrecht, “Romans 4: A Critique of N. T. Wright,” *JSNT* 36 (2013): 192–93, who in his critique of Wright’s article, brushes off in one paragraph the proposed translation of Wright’s (and Hay’s) without engaging in any way their evidence.

92. Hays, “Have We Found,” 82.

93. Jewett, *Romans*, 308; Moo, *Romans*, 260; Schreiner, *Romans*, 214. Michel, *Römer*, 161–62, thinks that by “unserem Ahnherrn nach dem Fleisch,” Paul is thinking of Abraham as “durch den Gehorsam gegen das Gesetz gerecht geworden.” Contra Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 427, who thinks that the prepositional phrase is to contrast Abraham as having children by a different way. This contrast, however, does not escape a pejorative sense as it contrasts with faith, and faith in Romans 4 contrasts with the works of the Mosaic law, in particular, circumcision.

94. Moo, *Romans*, 259–60. In a similar vein, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199, thinks this acts as a “foil.”

issue is whether gentiles can enter into a right relation with God by doing works of the law. “Works of the law” is explicitly the issue in 3:20, 21, 21-28; 4:2, 4-6.

More likely, the prepositional phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* is adverbial.⁹⁵ Jewett interprets the expression as “on his fleshy capacities.” He cites two reasons. First, this prepositional phrase is used adverbially in thirteen out of sixteen times in Paul’s letters which scholars recognise as authentic.⁹⁶ Second, “it provides a cogent link to the following discourse, which deals with the question of whether Abraham performed works of the law prior to being set right by God.”⁹⁷ Here, Jewett takes *κατὰ σάρκα* as “denoting the competitive, self-reliant propensity of humans to boast in fleshy achievements, of which circumcision was the most influential example.”⁹⁸

Construing the prepositional phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* as adverbial yields the following translation of 4:1: “What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?”⁹⁹

3.2.3 The Ideological Texture of 4:1

Underlying this rhetorical question in 4:1 is the social and cultural intertexture of patrilineal descent in which descendants bear resemblance to their ancestor(s).¹⁰⁰ This social

95. Scholars who construe the prepositional phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* adverbially include Jewett, *Romans*, 308; Stowers, *Rereading*, 242. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 174, translates 4:1 as: “Hat es unser Vorvater Abraham nach dem Fleische gefunden?”

96. Jewett, *Romans*, 308.

97. Jewett, *Romans*, 308.

98. Jewett, *Romans*, 308. Although, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 199, construes *κατὰ σάρκα* as adjectival, he understands it as denoting “works of the law (v 2), and [that] Jewish insistence on circumcision of the flesh all belong and fall under the negative sign of *κατὰ σάρκα*.”

99. My translation agrees, in essence, with Stowers, *Rereading*, 242, who translates 4:1 as “What shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather by his own human efforts?” The difference is that Stowers construes *κατὰ σάρκα* as qualifying *προπάτορα*.

100. See below, p. 243.

and cultural texture can mobilise ideological power in the following ways. If the Judean interlocutor who poses the question in 4:1 has a case that Abraham gained righteousness by the deeds of the Mosaic law, then Judeans as descendants of Abraham should also seek righteousness by producing the deeds of the Mosaic law.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, if Paul is right that Abraham did not gain righteousness by observing the Mosaic law but by trusting God, then Judeans and gentiles should do likewise. Thus, in order to refute the interlocutor, Paul needs to reconfigure the nature of Abraham's fatherhood through the rhetoric of Romans 4. Paul seeks to show that the nature of Abraham's fatherhood was such that he did not gain righteousness by performing the deeds of the Mosaic law but by trust. In this way the social and cultural texture of patrilineal descent mobilises ideological power to persuade the implied audience that they, too, should imitate Abraham's trust in God. In 4:1, Paul introduces a rhetoric that starts the process of inscribing the nature of the fatherhood of Abraham so as to include gentile Christians as descendants of Abraham. The ideological texture that mobilises power to persuade resides first, in the word προπάτωρ, and second, in the name Ἀβραάμ.

3.2.3.1 Προπάτωρ

Underlying the term προπάτωρ is the social and cultural texture of fictive kinship. This fictive kinship can be constructed by means of rhetoric. Roman families engaged in such a practice of crafting their genealogies when they linked current family members to noble ancestors.¹⁰² Julius Caesar, for instance, linked himself to Venus so as to raise his status to that of a ruler worthy of Rome.¹⁰³ This social intertexture of fictive kinship assumes that genealogies are malleable and do not need to be a factor of mere physical descent. Instead, the relationship can be attained via mind, soul, or spirit. This is evident in

101. See above, p. 122.

102. Numerous important insights on this subject are drawn from Hodge, *If Sons*, 19–42.

103. Suetonius *Jul.* 6.1: “On her mother’s side, my aunt was sprung from kings, and on her father’s connected with immortal gods. For the Marcii Reges (that was her mother’s name) descend from Ancus Marcius, and the Iulii, to whom my family belongs, descend from Venus.”

philosophical schools and other schools of learning. For instance, in *De virtutibus*, Philo contends that the factor that decides a noble birth (εὐγένεια) is the gathering of virtues. Conversely, if a person is born physically of noble parents but turns out to be wicked, he is denied that noble birth (εὐγένεια).¹⁰⁴ Philo continues by saying, τὸ συγγενὲς οὐχ αἵματι μετρεῖται μόνον, πρυτανευούσης ἀληθείας, ἀλλὰ πράξεων ὁμοιότητι (“Kinship is not measured by blood alone, where truth presides, but by a similarity of deeds”).¹⁰⁵ Plutarch also cites Alexander who in implementing Zeno’s “well-ordered and philosophic commonwealth” said that “all good men are kin (συγγενεῖς) . . . the distinguishing mark of being Greek should be virtue, and that of being a barbarian iniquity.”¹⁰⁶ Medical schools also describe the relationship between teacher and student as that of father and son. For instance, the medical student takes the Hippocratic oath and promises “to hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents (γενέτησιν ἑμοῖς).”¹⁰⁷

In Rom 4:1, Paul, by introducing the term προπάτωρ, signals the start of a rhetoric that constructs a myth of origins for gentile Christians to link Judean and gentile Christians to Abraham as a shared forefather.¹⁰⁸ Two observations regarding how ideological power is mobilised when constructing a myth of origins are instructive.¹⁰⁹ First, Mack comments that “the alreadiness of social arrangements is accounted for in terms of origin stories in which precedence is established by patriarchs, powers, and authorities not accessible for

104. Philo *Virt.* 189–200.

105. Philo *Virt.* 1.195.

106. Plutarch *Alex.* 329.

107. Hippocrates *The Oath* 5–10.

108. Floyd V. Filson, “The Significance of the Early House Churches,” *JBL* 58 (1939): 105–12, postulates that the house church was critical to the early church’s development. The fictive kinship construction ties in with how Christians conceived of their relationship with one another.

109. So Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 207, who comments that myth is “ideology in narrative form.”

questioning.”¹¹⁰ In other words, this myth of origins has ideological power because its authority is derived from “authorities not accessible for questioning,” and hence, is divine and “natural.”¹¹¹

Second, kinship and ethnicity are considered “natural” categories as members within the group often share blood ties. At the same time, these two categories are malleable so that the narrator can modify them to suit his rhetorical purpose.¹¹² Such a conception may seem contradictory. Baumann alleviates the apparent tension by construing ethnic identities as resulting from essentialist (the counterpart of kinship as being natural) and processual (the counterpart of kinship as being malleable) discourses. He observes that “those who preach an essentialist theory of culture rely upon the accuracy of the processual theory of culture.” In other words, what is narrated is essentialist in content but the act of articulating the content is processual.¹¹³ This essentialist and processual nature of ethnic identity also entails the social and cultural texture that descendants are present in seminal form in their ancestor.¹¹⁴

The term *προπάτωρ* is also a cultural intertextual reference. Paul uses it to mobilise ideological power by leveraging the authority of Abraham in two ways. First, he draws on the authority of a father whose instructions are to be obeyed. For instance, Robbins observes that Mark 10:17-22 emphasises “doing what your mother and father have taught you.” Such a mindset is based probably on Deut 6:6-7.¹¹⁵ It is also important to bear in mind that in a

110. Burton L. Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 11.

111. Hodge, *If Sons*, 5–6.

112. Hodge, *If Sons*, 21.

113. Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 91; also, Hodge, *If Sons*, 21.

114. See below, p. 243.

115. See William Loader, *The Septuagint, Sexuality, and the New Testament: Case Studies on the Impact of the LXX in Philo and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 5–9, 15–19, where he demonstrates the influence of the book of Deuteronomy on Judean and Christian writings.

patriarchal society like Israel, despite the fact that both parents educate a child in the laws of Yahweh, the father is the one who holds the responsibility of imparting such knowledge to his child. Deut 6:6-9 is instructive. After Moses rehearses the decalogue to the Israelites and Yahweh responds, Moses exhorts them to obedience in Deut 6:1-5. Moses follows up his exhortation with a charge in Deut 6:6-9 to ensure that following generations of Israelites observe the law of Yahweh. The father is responsible for teaching his children the laws as intimated by the second person masculine singular verbs in *וְשִׁנְנָתָם*, *וְדַבַּרְתָּ*, etc. Furthermore, the obedience of a child to his father and mother is so mandatory that any child who refuses to heed the discipline of his parents is to be stoned to death publicly so as to serve as a warning to the rest of Israel (Deut 21:18-21). This firstspace of a father who imparts wisdom, when blended with God as the progenitor of wisdom, would cause the implied audience to view Abraham as a source of wisdom coming from God who is the authoritative source of wisdom.

3.2.3.2 Ἀβραάμ

The name Ἀβραάμ is another “reference” in the cultural intertexture.¹¹⁶ Ἀβραάμ is a well known personage in Judean culture, and this name presupposes stories in the Judean literature contemporaneous with Paul’s time. The significance invoked by the name Ἀβραάμ can be gleaned from the general perception of the meanings attached to this name in Judean extra-biblical literature. Calvert-Koyzis analysed the significance of Abraham traditions for early Judaism and Christianity in the period 168 BCE to 100 CE. In her assessment, two traditions frequently occur: that Abraham “rejected idolatry for faith in the one God and that he was obedient to God especially through observance of the law.”¹¹⁷ After reading each Judean text in light of its background, she comes to the following conclusions. The *Book of Jubilees* portrays Abraham as a central transmitter of the covenant who was obedient to the Mosaic law before it was even given. He was the first to reject idolatry and embrace monotheism.¹¹⁸ The works of Philo emphasise Abraham as following the natural law which

116. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 110.

117. Calvert-Koyzis, *Abraham*, 4.

is the basis of the Mosaic law.¹¹⁹ In the *Antiquities* of Josephus, Abraham obeys the Judean law. For example, in regards to circumcision and in marriage, he chose to marry a niece rather than a half-sister.¹²⁰ Abraham rejects idolatry and worships the one God as emphasised in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.¹²¹ Relevant to the discussion in Romans 4 about Abraham's trust in God and matters regarding the law, these Judean texts portray Abraham as one who is faithful to the one God and who obeys the Mosaic law. In view of the pride of place that Judaism assigns to Abraham as someone who worships the one God and who keeps the Mosaic law, Paul leverages Abraham's authority to begin his rhetoric.

The name Ἀβραάμ also contains a social and cultural texture. Esler employs social identity theory¹²² and self-categorisation theory¹²³ to argue that Abraham serves as a prototype of common identity.¹²⁴ Social identity theory is built upon the observation that members within a group tend to favour themselves over members of other groups. This identity is a person's self-concept that is derived from his or her membership in a group and is concerned with how a group differentiates itself from another group. Its focus is, thus, on intergroup relationships. Another theory underlying Esler's approach is self-categorisation theory which is concerned with how a person's self-concept is formulated within a group. Its focus is on intragroup relationships. Self-categorisation theory distinguishes between social

118. Calvert-Koyzis, *Abraham*, 16–17; cf. *Jub.* 11:16-17.

119. Calvert-Koyzis, *Abraham*, 39; cf. Philo *Abr.* 1.130.

120. Calvert-Koyzis, *Abraham*, 68; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 2.11.

121. Calvert-Koyzis, *Abraham*, 71–84; cf., e.g., *Apoc. Abr.*, 2.1-9, 4.3, 6.6-7, 7.7-12.

122. Social Identity Theory was first developed by Henri Tajfel and other collaborators including John C. Turner. See Henri Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978).

123. John C. Turner led the way in developing this theory. See John C. Turner, ed., *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

124. Esler, *Conflict*, 171–84.

identity (a person's self-concept with respect to a social group) and personal identity (a person's self-concept with respect to one's personal or idiosyncratic attributes). In this way personal characteristics or characteristics derived from the group may dominate in different situations. Furthermore, individuals within a group may craft their identities by means of argument, negotiation, and persuasion.¹²⁵ The formulation of how such processes lead to a person's self-concept is useful for investigating how the two subgroups of Judean Christians and gentile Christians who belonged to a larger group, the church in Rome, negotiated their identities.

Social identity theory also identifies three approaches to alleviating conflicts between groups, namely recategorisation, decategorisation, and crossed categorisation. In the case of the situation at Rome which is faced with a conflict between Judean and gentile Christians, Esler deploys recategorisation which involves "maintaining a common superordinate identity while simultaneously maintaining the salience of subgroup identities . . . [This] would be particularly effective because it permits the benefits of a common ingroup identity to operate without arousing countervailing motivations to achieve positive distinctiveness."¹²⁶ In Romans 4, Abraham is the superordinate identity that Paul uses to reconcile the two dissenting groups, Judean and gentile Christians.

3.2.4 Conclusion

I propose that 4:1 should be translated as "What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?" Paul the implied speaker engages in an intra-Judean debate (which explains the use of "we" in 4:1) with an imaginary Judean interlocutor. Paul, the implied speaker and Judean, spells out the problem to be

125. S. Alexander Haslam, John C. Turner, Penelope J. Oakes, et al., "The Group as the Basis for Emergent Stereotype Consensus," *European Review of Social Psychology* 8 (1998): 203–209.

126. Samuel L. Gaertner, John F. Dovidio, Jason A. Nier, et al., "The Common Ingroup Identity Model for Reducing Intergroup Bias: Progress and Challenges," in *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*, ed. Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000), 143.

investigated in the form of a rhetorical question. He articulates the question of the Judean interlocutor. At the same time, Paul the speaker also expects the implied audience (Judean and gentile Christians) to negate the question of the Judean interlocutor. In essence, this question is asking (in a rhetorical manner) if Judeans are able to say (λέγειν) or argue for the case that Abraham becomes their forefather by their human efforts. Specifically, this refers to Abraham performing deeds of the Mosaic law which in turn validate Judean Christians doing likewise. Such a rhetorical question anticipates a strong negative reply (4:2). Hence, this introduction prepares the implied audience, comprising Judean and gentile Christians, to hear a rhetoric in Romans 4 that refutes the suggestion that Abraham became the father of Judean Christians by means of the deeds of the Mosaic law. To prepare a receptive implied audience, Paul mobilises ideological power inherent in the textures of Sociorhetorical Interpretation associated with προπάτωρ and the name Ἀβραάμ. The cultural intertexture in προπάτωρ invokes the conception of kinship that Paul uses to begin his reconfiguration of the nature of Abraham's fatherhood from that of being only the forefather of Judean Christians to that of both Judean and gentile Christians. At the same time, Paul draws on the cultural intertexture to invoke the authority of a father and a prophet, and someone whom Judeans revere. The name Ἀβραάμ also contains a social and culture texture whereby Abraham serves as a superordinate identity.

3.3 Rom 4:2-8

Wisdom rhetorlect dominates this section as the presence of topoi related to “work” shows.¹²⁷ According to the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorlect, Paul aims to persuade the implied audience to receive favourably his rhetoric, as a son would heed his father's instruction on wisdom.¹²⁸ This allows Paul to persuade the implied audience in a non-

127. Robbins, *Invention*, 109, observes that the firstspace (experiences of the audience in social places) is that of a household setting.

128. Robbins, *Invention*, 109, notes that the thirdspace creates a “human body [that is a] producer of goodness and righteousness.” In other words, the thirdspace is where the mind of the implied audience is persuaded to receive favourably the speaker's rhetoric.

confrontational manner as will be shown in 4:2-8.

Several observations indicate that 4:2-8 is a complete unit. This paragraph is dominated by cognates of ἐργ- (4:2, 4, 5, 6). Also, 4:9 begins a new paragraph as signalled by a shift of topos to circumcision. The argumentative texture can be displayed as follows:

[Rule ₁]	deeds bring righteousness (assumed)
[Case ₁]	Abraham has deeds (assumed)
Result ₁ /Case ₂	2a εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη,
[Rule ₂]	Righteousness brings boasting
Result ₂	2b ἔχει καύχημα,
[Rule ₃]	Righteousness does not come from works
[Case ₃]	Abraham has deeds
Result ₃	2c ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν.
Result ₄	3 τί γὰρ ἡ γραφή λέγει; ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
[Case ₄]	Abraham has trust in God
Rule ₄ /Rule ₅	4 τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα, 5 τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην
Case ₅	6 καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ᾧ ὁ θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων·
Result ₅	7 μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαι καὶ ὧν ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι· 8 μακάριος ἀνὴρ οὗ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται κύριος ἁμαρτίαν.

Rom 4:2-8 not only shows that righteousness comes by trust in God. It also refutes the erroneous notion that Abraham had a reason to boast because of his obedience to the Mosaic law (4:2). The word “boast” invokes a cultural texture which embeds the Mediterranean honour-shame value system. Paul achieves his objective by constructing a right understanding of the nature of honour that provides a legitimate reason for boasting.

This serves to undermine the Judeans' wrong basis for boasting. The nature of this honour, which comes from a position of righteousness, is something that is ascribed to Abraham by God.¹²⁹ Anyone who wants to receive this righteousness has to inherit it from Abraham by way of kinship relationship, in this case, by becoming a descendant of Abraham by re-enacting his trust in, that is, loyalty to, God.¹³⁰

3.3.1 Rom 4:2

The wisdom rhetorolect used in 4:2 revolves around the topos of work.¹³¹ The opening statement of 4:2 serves as the introduction for 4:2-8. What follows in 4:3-8 elaborates on it. Construing 4:2 as the introduction to 4:3-8 is reasonable in view of several indications. First, it begins the passage. Second, the next verse 4:3 begins with a connective γάρ to indicate that what follows in 4:3-8 serves to support the statement in 4:2 (see above the argumentative texture).

Enthymematic reasoning in 4:2 leads to two results. First, Abraham has a ground for boasting by means of his obedience to the Mosaic law. The statement spells out the problem to be addressed in 4:3-8. Second, this boast, however, has no value before God. This introduces Paul's refutation in 4:3-8.

3.3.1.1 Rom 4:2a

The term ἔργα requires clarification. Some scholars construe it narrowly, maintaining that it refers to Judean identity markers such as circumcision and food laws. For instance, Dunn (referring back to the earlier references in 3:20 and 3:27-28), thinks that this refers to the religious practices, in particular, circumcision, which define the Judeans as people of the

129. Moxnes, "Honour and Righteousness," 71, describes an honourable man as a righteous man.

130. Malina, *Cultural*, 32, notes that honour is either ascribed or acquired and that ascribed honour can be granted on the basis of birth or given by a notable person of authority.

131. See Robbins, *Invention*, 134–50, where biblical wisdom is evident in the creation work of God.

Mosaic law.¹³² Yet others enlarge the semantic domain to mean good deeds in general.¹³³ Moo takes an intermediate position. Although he rejects Dunn's view, he construes this word as referring to good deeds in general but also sees it as having reference to the Mosaic law. I take a position that is close to Moo's but with an important correction. I agree that ἔργα includes good deeds in general as made clear in the preceding context where obedience to the law includes moral behaviour mentioned in 2:21-22. Even the rite of circumcision has value only if these moral laws are obeyed (2:24-29). More importantly, in the conclusion, 3:9-20, to the argument of 1:18-3:8, Paul in indicting the Judeans for not having obeyed the law again couches their disobedience in terms of having broken the law morally (3:13-18). Having said that, however, despite Moo thinking that the law refers to that of the Mosaic law, he is wide of the mark by failing to see that the emphasis is first the deeds of the Mosaic law, then good deeds in general. This has important ramifications not only for understanding the main problem that is plaguing the church in Rome (a dissension between Judean and gentile Christians over righteousness),¹³⁴ but also because it derails the primary focus in Romans 4 which is to divest Judean Christians of their reliance on the Mosaic law as a boast against gentile Christians.¹³⁵

The response begins with a first class condition sentence where the apodosis assumes a statement that is true for the sake of the argument. Whether or not the apodosis contains a fact or a statement that is false but assumed to be true is not apparent from the grammar.

132. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 154.

133. So Barrett, *Romans*, 83. In a similar vein, also, Jewett, *Romans*, 266, extends it to include any human system that competes for honour as in the Mediterranean system of honour and shame.

134. See above, pp. 55-69.

135. Thurén, *Derhetorizing*, 9, notes that scholars often speak of a liberation from "Lutheran captivity." Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 204, comments that Paul is addressing the role of Torah in the gentile-Judean relationship in God's plan of salvation, rather than "pondering about its [the Torah's] effects upon his conscience." Similarly, Stowers, *Diatribes*; Francis Watson, *Paul*, 179–81.

Recent commentators reject any possibility for Abraham to boast through deeds.¹³⁶ But such an understanding goes against records in Judean writings of the pride that Judeans possess because of Abraham's obedience to the Mosaic law. Furthermore, that this pride exists in the implied rhetorical situation is evident in Paul's rhetoric that is levelled against the Judeans' boast toward the gentiles, as I have explained earlier.¹³⁷ Hence, the apodosis contains not only an assumed truth, but also Paul's perception of the rhetorical situation of Romans.

The display of the above argumentative structure in 4:2a reveals a cultural intertexture that Judeans seek righteousness by doing the deeds of the Mosaic law. The social and cultural texture of Mediterranean patron-client culture and rules of purity shed light on why this righteousness so attained becomes a national marker that excludes the rest of the world, those whom Israel generically calls the gentiles.¹³⁸

First, Israel's relationship with God is that of a client to his patron. In Deut 32:6, when Israel is about to enter and inherit the promised land from God, Moses warns the people about their future rebellion against God. He rebukes them for their future unfaithfulness on the premise that God is their father: "Is not he your father who created you, who made you, and established you?" The occasion when God created, made, and established Israel refers to the time when God rescued them out of Egypt and established them in the promised land (Deut 32:6-14). Two points are noteworthy. This father-son relationship started with the

136. So Moo, *Romans*, 261; Jewett, *Romans*, 310. Similarly, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 201, relegates it to a theoretical possibility that is then totally rejected. Contra Godet, *Romans*, 170.

137. See above, pp. 55-69.

138. Donaldson, "Gentile Christianity," 451–53, observes with regards to the term τὰ ἔθνη that "no one in the first century whom we might refer to as a Gentile would have naturally thought of himself or herself in these terms. The use of τὰ ἔθνη with reference to non-Jewish nations or individuals was a Jewish construction. Left to their own device and self-definitions, Phrygians, Parthians, or Bithynians would no more describe themselves as ἔθνη than they would as βάρβαροι." See also Christopher D. Stanley, "'Neither Jew Nor Greek': Ethnic Conflict in Graeco-Roman Society," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 105: "The use of the term 'Gentiles' (ἀλλόφυλοι or ἔθνη) to designate all non-Jews represents a 'social construction of reality' developed by a particular people-group (the Jews) in a concrete historical situation."

creation of the nation of Israel. Ever since, Israel's relationship with God had always been conceived as that of father and son. This father-son relationship is properly the Mediterranean patron-client relationship—the element of reciprocation where God is the patron to whom Israel must show herself faithful.¹³⁹

Second, Judeans maintain a relationship of righteousness with God when they obey what Malina calls the “purity rules of the society”:

In a limited-good perspective of our first-century foreigners, the main task in life was not symbolized by achievement . . . but rather by the maintenance of one's inherited position in society. This brought prosperity and insured the most harmonious relationship possible in terms of time, place, interpersonal relationships with one's fellows, and relationship with God . . . The purity rules of the society were intended to foster prosperity by maintaining fitting, harmonious relationships. Thus perfection—the wholeness marked off by purity rules—characterizes God, the people in general, and the individual.¹⁴⁰

God the patron takes the initiative to give favour to Israel. At the same time, Israel has an obligation to give honour to God. When this happens, Israel is deemed as righteous before God. Put simply, their relationship with God is harmonious. This will cause God the patron to continue to give favour to Israel. The question is the kind of honour Israel must give to God to become righteous or to maintain a harmonious relationship.

Obedying the “purity rules of the society” is the means by which Judeans honour God. These purity rules are encapsulated in the Mosaic laws and explain the prevailing mindset of Judeans which is to seek a righteous or a harmonious relationship with God by obeying the Mosaic law (cf. 9:30-33; 3:20). The essence of the Mosaic law is to differentiate between that which is clean and unclean. Such a law of purity is deeply entrenched in the mind of a Judean as seen in the following practices. They categorise Judeans according to genealogical

139. Cf. 2 Sam 7:14. Bruce J. Malina, “Patronage,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 151, comments that “[i]n the Bible, anytime anyone is called a “father” who is not a biological father, the title refers to the role and status of a patron.”

140. Malina, *Cultural*, 170.

purity and dictate what clean and unclean animals are for consumption and sacrifice.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, by categorising both people and animal according to proximity to the temple, they enhance the authority of these categories.¹⁴² The above observations indicate that purity rules that segregate the clean and unclean are a deep-seated concern of Judeans. Thus, Judeans regard their righteous standing with God as exclusive. We will see how the way Judeans regard purity rules, when read together with the statement (“case”) that “Abraham has deeds,” lends meaning to the result in 4:2a.¹⁴³

Next, we shall examine the unstated rule of the argument, “Abraham has deeds.” Abraham is a reference in the cultural intertexture. Gathercole underlines a problem in the use of Judean writings to illumine Abraham as a reference. Considering the wide range of texts that discuss Abraham, which text does Paul have in mind? Several observations by Gathercole narrow down the scope.¹⁴⁴ First, Second Temple Judaism texts that discuss Abraham generally hold the viewpoint that he is a monotheist and obeys the Mosaic law. Second, the characters in the narrative of the text concerned must be in a similar situation as Abraham was, that is, they also faced trials. Third, the viewpoint held about Abraham must be attested by various Judean texts. To achieve the last criterion, Gathercole looks at two trajectories of texts. The first trajectory is taken from Sirach and 1 Maccabees:

Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations, and no one has been found like him in glory. He kept the law of the Most High, and entered into a covenant with him; he certified the covenant in his flesh, and when was tested he proved faithful. Therefore, the Lord assured him with an oath that the nations would be blessed through his offspring; that he would make him as numerous as the dust of the earth, and exalt his offspring like the stars, and give them an inheritance from sea to sea and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth. (Sir 44:19-21)

141. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 271.

142. Malina, *Cultural*, 136.

143. See the argumentative texture on p. 138.

144. So Gathercole, *Boasting*, 235.

Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation and it was reckoned to him as righteousness? (1 Macc 2:52)

The second trajectory, which originates from Sirach, is developed in *Jubilees* and the Damascus Document:

This is the tenth trial with which Abraham was tried, and he was found faithful, controlled of spirit because he was found faithful and he was recorded as a friend of the Lord in the heavenly tables. (*Jub.* 19:8-9)

Abraham did not walk in it [the stubbornness of the heart that follows after the thoughts of the guilty and eyes of lust], and he was accounted a friend of God because he kept the commandments of God and did not choose his own will. (CD 3:2-4).

The above citations reveal that Judeans perceived Abraham as someone who had obeyed the Mosaic law and won the approval of God, that is, righteousness. In understanding the result, it is important to note that the constrictions imposed by the perception of the Mosaic law which thoroughly excludes the participation of any gentile in righteousness gets transferred onto the result of 4:2a. This informs the scope of righteousness that it belongs only to Judeans. Abraham by his deeds of obeying the Mosaic law receives a righteousness that excluded the gentiles.

3.3.1.2 Rom 4:2b

In 4:2b where the result of the enthymeme is expressed, Paul makes explicit the problem he needed to address. This enthymeme comprises a case: Abraham became righteous by deeds (4:2a), followed by an unstated rule: possession of righteousness leads to boasting. It is not immediately obvious as to why righteousness leads to boasting. For that, we need to recall the process through which deeds of the Mosaic law bring righteousness (viewed from the perspective of the Judean interlocutor). As explained in the unstated rule of 4:2a, the rules of purity of the Judean society (as encapsulated in the Mosaic law) generate a righteousness that is exclusive to Judeans. Consequently, Judeans flaunt their pride toward the gentiles that they (the Judeans) are the only ones who stand to gain favours from God.

The above case and (unstated) rule result in an Abraham, according to these Judean texts, who boasts because he has gained honour, or a position of righteousness, given to him by God. This honour, in light of the Mediterranean culture of honour and shame, is not only an individual achievement. It is first and foremost an honour in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, this honour is also collective.¹⁴⁵ Here, Abraham is viewed as the forefather of the Judeans. This means that the honour he receives is also extended to his descendants, the Judeans. Seen in this light, we can understand why Paul couches honour in terms of boasting. This boasting is not so much Abraham's boast as it is a kinship boast, that is, the boast of the entire family of Abraham, the Judeans, over the gentiles.

3.3.1.3 Rom 4:2c

Paul's enthymematic reasoning here includes an unstated rule that righteousness (that is acceptable to God) does not come from works. This, together with the unstated case that Abraham has deeds, produces the result in 4:2c, that Abraham by his deeds of the Mosaic law cannot boast before God. The meaning of 4:2c, that Abraham's righteousness has no value before God (ὄν πρὸς θεόν), must be read in light of 4:1: Abraham is considered righteous by the deeds he has performed (at least from the view point of the Judean interlocutor). In other words, this righteousness does not make him the father of many descendants. This interpretation assumes, reasonably, that the Judean interlocutor would read the result of Abraham ἐδικαιώθη in terms of fatherhood since the fatherhood of Abraham has been discussed in 4:1. Furthermore, minimally, Judeans would be familiar with the overall story of Genesis 15 where Abraham became a father of many descendants by virtue of his trust in God. Just as the result in 4:2b states the problem to be addressed in 4:2-8, this result in 4:2c lays down the solution that will resolve the problem in 4:2-8. Since 4:2c is the point that provides the solution to the problem in 4:2-8, we would expect Paul to expound the unstated rule that righteousness does not come from deeds of the Mosaic law.

145. Malina, *Cultural*, 40.

In interpreting 4:2-8, scholars have not given sufficient weight to 4:2c, in particular, the word *καύχημα*, considering that “not before God” constitutes Paul’s main refutation in 4:2-8.¹⁴⁶ Instead, by focusing on the term “righteousness,” their discussions over-theologise Paul’s concern without considering how the Mediterranean culture of honour and shame would understand this passage. Hence, “boasting,” as a claim to honour, and related concepts must inform our understanding of this passage. By the statement that Abraham “has something to boast but not before God,” Paul intimates that what follows in 4:3-8 is a rhetoric that intends to reconfigure the implied audience’s understanding of honour to that of Paul.

3.3.2 Rom 4:3

With the connective *γάρ*, Paul begins his refutation of Abraham’s possible boast (4:1)—the Judeans’ boast toward gentiles. By introducing the term *ἡ γραφή*, Paul leverages its authority. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca state that argumentation begins with some presupposition agreed upon by both the audience and the speaker.¹⁴⁷ One of these presuppositions is “values.” Such an agreement between the audience and the speaker amounts to

an admission that an object, a being, or an ideal must have a specific influence on action and on disposition toward action and that one can make use of this influence in an argument, although the point of view represented is not regarded as binding on everybody.¹⁴⁸

In terms of Sociorhetorical Interpretation, this “specific influence” is the power to persuade that comes from the ideological texture. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguish between

146. Neil Richardson, *Paul’s Language About God*, JSNTSup 99 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 515, remarks that this last clause is often neglected. He comments that it is polemical.

147. C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 65.

148. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 74.

abstract and concrete values.¹⁴⁹ They contend that in argumentation, the mind cannot avoid relying on both abstract and concrete values. Examples of abstract values are “truth” or “justice,” while concrete values include “France” or “the church.”¹⁵⁰ A concrete value is attached to a living being, a specific group, or a particular object which is regarded as a unique entity. God would, thus, be considered a concrete value. At the same time, however, as God could be regarded as the foundation of all values, God is also the absolute abstract value.¹⁵¹ Such an argument that is based on an absolute value would, provided that the audience construes that value as absolute, have the potential to appeal to the whole of humankind, or the universal audience. In our case in 4:3, ἡ γραφή is a concrete value that is founded upon the abstract value, God.¹⁵² This abstract value, God, lends ideological power to ἡ γραφή in order to persuade.

Such Cartesian certitude, however, has been questioned by philosophers.¹⁵³ It is more justifiable to think that the ideological power of ἡ γραφή is not only derived from its abstract value but also from its concrete value. Amador elaborates on Perelman’s and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s understanding that “particular qualities of ‘universality’ . . . depend not only on the individual perspectives of the rhetor, but on the social, cultural, and historical ‘context’ in which both rhetor and argumentation are embedded.”¹⁵⁴ How this concrete value provides ideological power is our subject of discussion here. To understand the ideological texture inherent in ἡ γραφή, I shall examine its attached social and cultural texture.

149. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 77.

150. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 77.

151. So Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 229–301, who drew up a list of all the abstract values which found their origin in the perfect Being.

152. That the abstract value upon which γραφή is founded is God is likely, as God is regarded as the originator of what is written in γραφή. See, e.g., Rom 1:2; 9:17; 16:26.

153. Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 39, comments that “universal consensus” is often based on sentiments that a person holds.

154. Hester (Amador), *Rhetorical Criticism*, 70; cf. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 33.

Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures* represents an important work that conceptualises culture as being semiotic and seeks to explicate its meaning.¹⁵⁵ Thompson, who construes a semiotic and a symbolic understanding of culture as being synonymous, develops Geertz's thesis. Relevant for our investigation is the refinement that Thompson offers to Geertz's limitation of his conception of culture: cultural phenomena are not only symbolic forms, but these symbolic forms, defined as meaningful actions, objects, and expressions of various kinds, "sustain or disrupt relations of power."¹⁵⁶ This power derives from the social context in which these symbolic forms are embedded.¹⁵⁷ Within this embedding, an individual inscribes value into the symbolic forms.¹⁵⁸ Several concepts help to clarify the value inscribed into the symbolic forms.

First, Thompson utilises the concept of fields of interaction developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Particular individuals take up a social position and follow a certain course in their lives as determined by three kinds of capital: economic capital, which pertains to material wealth; cultural capital, which includes knowledge and skills; and symbolic capital, which is related to accumulated praise, prestige, and recognition.¹⁵⁹ Ἡ γραφή can be regarded as a symbolic form into which different individuals inscribe value through these fields of influence. Individuals, for example, kings, with economic, cultural, and symbolic capitals, are associated with ἡ γραφή, which itself is considered as a single collection that includes the law of Moses.¹⁶⁰ For instance, in Rom 10:6-8, Paul cites Deut 30:11-14 (LXX) as ἡ

155. Geertz, "Primordial Sentiments," 5.

156. John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 134–36.

157. Thompson, *Ideology*, 151.

158. Thompson, *Ideology*, 146.

159. Thompson, *Ideology*, 147–48.

160. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 202; see 9:17, 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; cf. also, Philo *Mos.* 2.84; *Let. Aris.* 158, 168.

γραφή.¹⁶¹ Deut 17:18 is instructive: “When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests” (Deut 17:18-20). The kings of Israel are commanded to possess a copy of the Mosaic law. The main purpose of copying the law is expressed by the purpose clause *לְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ* / purpose clause, ἵνα μάθῃ φοβεῖσθαι (LXX), which in turn is explicated by several infinitive constructs of purpose / infinitives of purpose (LXX). These infinitive constructs form a pair of contrasts demarcated by the negative particle of purpose *לֹא יִתְלַבֵּן* / particle of negation μή (LXX). The negative counterpart of this contrast is “neither exalting himself above other members of the community.” When read in light of the preceding context (Deut 17:8-13) which talks about bringing a case before “levitical priests and the judge who is in office in those days” (Deut 17:9), the kings replace priests and judges in judicial responsibilities. This means that the law of Moses is to aid the king in his judicial responsibilities. My point coheres with McBride’s observation. He notes that Josephus affirms that the entire Book of Deuteronomy,¹⁶² including the above passage, is a comprehensive constitution of government (πολιτεία).¹⁶³ Commenting on Deut 17:18-20, McBride writes: “The only positively specified task of the Israelite monarch is to study the written Deuteronomic polity throughout his reign and to serve as a national model of faithful obedience to its stipulations (17:18-20).”¹⁶⁴ The Book of Deuteronomy is a “charter for a constitutional theocracy.”¹⁶⁵ This form of theocracy also

161. Sarah Whittle, *Covenant Renewal and the Consecration of the Gentiles in Romans*, SNTSMS 161 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 48; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 602–3, comments that in Rom 10:6-8, Paul cites Deut 30:11-14 (LXX) as ἡ γραφή.

162. Josephus *Ant.* 4.176–331.

163. S. Dean McBride, Jr., “Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy,” in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.*, ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 17. Similarly, Robert R. Wilson, “Deuteronomy, Ethnicity, and Reform: Reflecting on the Social Setting of Deuteronomy,” in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.*, ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 109.

164. McBride, “Polity,” 30.

165. See McBride, “Polity,” 27; cf. the use of “theocracy” in Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 9.359.

influenced Israel's subsequent history. Sparks' proposal that Deuteronomy was crafted sometime between the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah to create an ethnic identity is debatable. He has, however, demonstrated that important features of Deuteronomy served to provide the nation of Israel with a distinct ethnic identity.¹⁶⁶ Thus, generations of Israelites would have associated the law of Moses (e.g., the Book of Deuteronomy) with the kings of Israel. This adds to the collective memory of Judeans, and hence, adds value to ἡ γραφή.¹⁶⁷

The patron-client culture of the Mediterranean world also lends economic capital to the patrons of Christian house-churches. Richer Christians host Christian gatherings in their homes where ἡ γραφή is taught. For instance, Phoebe is probably the patron of the church in Cenchreae.¹⁶⁸ Being a patron to Paul and to many others (16:2) shows that she is wealthy. In writing to Philemon, Paul also ascribes to Philemon the role of patron because he hosts the church in his house (Phlm 1). Philemon is described as someone who refreshes Paul and the hearts of the saints (Phlm 7). These rich patrons of Christian congregations also added value to ἡ γραφή.

Second, the concept of social institutions adds value to ἡ γραφή. They include particular enterprises or organisations. A social institution “gives shape to pre-existing fields of interaction.” One feature of these institutions is hierarchical relations between individuals or the positions in which they are situated.¹⁶⁹ A Judean family is one such institution in which a hierarchical relationship exists between parent and child. Another social institution is the religious system in house churches, places of prayer, and synagogues where a formalised hierarchy exists between leaders and followers.¹⁷⁰

166. Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 222–84; also, Robert R. Wilson, “Deuteronomy,” 112.

167. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 22, comments that those who remember are individual members of a group. Sustaining this memory “requires the support of a group delimited in space and time.”

168. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 888–89.

169. Thompson, *Ideology*, 149.

Third, the above two concepts of fields of interaction and social institutions contain a social structure which is characterised by asymmetries. In the above discussion, the relationship between an Israelite king and his subjects, a rich Christian patron and his Christian client(s), an Israelite parent and his child, and a leader in a religious system and his followers, operate in a social context where there are asymmetries in terms of access to resources of various kinds which includes authority, opportunities, etc.¹⁷¹ Where such asymmetries exist, Thompson describes it as one of domination.¹⁷² In this way Paul, by using the symbolic form ἡ γραφή, takes on a position of dominance over his implied audience.

Paul, however, assumes this position of dominance not in a direct manner but via a metaphorical use of ἡ γραφή. Here, Paul assumes the role of ἡ γραφή by personifying it with the verb λέγειν. Thompson comments that metaphors

may dissimulate social relations by representing them, or the individuals and groups embedded in them, as endowed with characteristics which they do not literally possess, thereby accentuating certain features at the expense of others and charging them with a positive or negative sense.¹⁷³

In Paul's present situation, he is faced with two difficulties, both of which are circumvented by the metaphorical use of ἡ γραφή. First, the fact that Paul had to devote some space to configure his apostolic authority in the *exordium* (1:1-15) before he could assert it over his implied audience indicates that his apostolic authority over the Roman Christians may not be a clear-cut case. The reason could be that he did not found this church, but we are not certain. Left on its own, Paul's rhetoric is only as powerful as his persuasive

170. See Esler, *Conflict*, 88–97, who cogently argues that “the majority of Judeans of Rome in the mid-first century CE met in buildings specially built or adapted for that purpose—*proseuchai*—and not in the houses of members.”

171. Thompson, *Ideology*, 150.

172. Thompson, *Ideology*, 150–51.

173. Thompson, *Ideology*, 63

ability.¹⁷⁴ Paul, by assuming the identity of ἡ γραφή through the mode of ideology which Thompson calls dissimulation, now has access to the full range of its ideological power to extract obedience from his implied audience.¹⁷⁵ Second, in view of the historical intertextual link of this letter to the Letter to the Galatians, Paul would not have wanted to rouse similar unhappy sentiments as he probably did with the Galatian Christians by his letter to the Galatians. Furthermore, considering that Romans seeks to reconcile two dissenting groups, Judean and gentile Christians, muting overtones of opposition is needful. By this metaphorical use of ἡ γραφή, Paul also turns attention away from himself so that if the implied audience refused to heed Paul the speaker's refutation, it would amount to opposing ἡ γραφή of God and not simply Paul.¹⁷⁶ Thus, this metaphorical mode of mobilising ideological power allows Paul to inherit the full range of the persuasive power of ἡ γραφή without unnecessarily offending his implied audience.

This ideological texture inherent in ἡ γραφή also lends ideological power to the rhetoric as the entire argument of Romans 4 is built on Gen 15:6 (LXX) of ἡ γραφή. This is corroborated by the fact that not only is Gen 15:6 (LXX) cited several times in Romans 4 (4:9; 4:22; 4:23), but it also occurs in a critical location within the passage: at the closing where the implication of Romans 4 is applied to the implied audience (Judean and gentile Christians). What that implies is that Romans 4 is a rhetoric based on Gen 15:6 (LXX), or more precisely, a rhetoric of Abraham's faith (trust) in God. Before investigating Gen 15:6 (LXX), a comment about the nature of the LXX is necessary. Presently, the LXX can be represented by the great uncial manuscripts of the fourth and fifth centuries CE. We are not, consequently, certain as to the *Vorlage* that Paul used in his citations.¹⁷⁷ This is a result of

174. I owe this insight to Wanamaker, "Rhetoric and Ideology," 210.

175. This application of Thompson's use of metaphor is built upon the excellent essay by Wanamaker, "Rhetoric and Ideology," 210.

176. I am using again the insights of Wanamaker, "Rhetoric and Ideology," 210, where he observes that in 2 Corinthians, Paul "obfuscates the nature of the opposition to him and the nature of his own apostleship by making his opponents enemies of God."

177. Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique*

the multiple recensions of the LXX. Tov notes that

as a result of recent finds and studies in early recensions, the heterogeneity of the canon of the LXX has become increasingly evident. It has been recognized that ‘the LXX’ contains translations of different types, early and late, relatively original and significantly revised, official and private, literal and free.¹⁷⁸

That said, however, Stanley comments that “the evidence seems to suggest the existence of a primary version that enjoyed wide circulation and use throughout the late Second Temple period.”¹⁷⁹ We shall now investigate this Hebrew Bible recitation.

Paul provides an oral-scribal recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX).¹⁸⁰ I contend that this citation functions as a *chreia*. This construal fits the dominant wisdom rhetorolect of Romans 4 since a *chreia* belongs to wisdom speech genres.¹⁸¹ The two differences between Paul’s recitation and the wording of the LXX are significant. There are two differences between Paul’s recitation and the present tradition of the LXX at Gen 15:6. First, δέ replaces καί of the LXX. Stanley thinks that the presence of δέ could have come from the wording of his *Vorlage* in Rom 4:3. That Paul could have been in possession of such a *Vorlage*, so he contends, is shown by the reading containing δέ in Jas 2:23.¹⁸² This line of evidence can be

in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature, SNTSMS 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 69–71, argues that Paul did not cite the Hebrew Bible quotations from memory. He suggests, along with Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift Als Zeuge Des Evangeliums*, BHT 69 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 93–99, that the majority of these citations were drawn from some kind of written texts. One such kind of written texts could be collection of biblical proof texts. See Rendel J. Harris, *Testimonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916–20); Stanley, *Paul*, 71–79.

178. Emmanuel Tov, “Jewish Greek Scriptures,” in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W.E. Nickelsburg, *The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 225. Similarly, Stanley, *Citation Techniques*, 42.

179. Stanley, *Citation Techniques*, 48.

180. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 103.

181. Amos N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 1–54, 71–88.

182. Stanley, *Paul*, 100.

controverted by the fact that in the Letter to the Galatians in 3:6, a letter whose content is closely related to that of Romans, Paul cited Gen 15:6 (LXX) without the particle *δέ*.¹⁸³ In the final analysis, perhaps Stanley is right to conclude that the evidence does not point us in either direction. That said, however, the location of *δέ* within the citation is awkward. This implies strongly that this particle has a purpose. The particle *δέ* is probably adversative as it functions in this way in what follows (it occurs a total of three times in 4:4-5). Also, the conjunction *καί* in Gen 15:6 (LXX) denotes the result of Gen 15:6 (LXX).¹⁸⁴ This explains why Paul did not include *καί* in the recitation as such a resultative use does not fit the present need of 4:3-5. But Paul could have simply not included any connective. In fact, having begun the recitation with a causative *γάρ*, discarding *δέ* would be smoother grammatically as in Gal 3:6.¹⁸⁵ The fact that he replaces *καί* with *δέ* hints that this change is intended to contrast with the preceding statement *ἔχει καύχημα*.¹⁸⁶ Also, this contrast is a pronounced one considering that *δέ* subsequently occurs another three times in the subsequent verses 4:4-5. This observation sharpens the focus of 4:3ff.: to *refute* the contention of the Judean interlocutor that Abraham has a reason to boast over gentiles by his deeds (of the Mosaic law).

Second, *Ἀβραάμ* replaces *Αβραμ* of the LXX. Paul could have chosen the name *Ἀβραάμ* over *Αβραμ* as the former is the prevailing address given to the forefather of Judeans. When read against the fact that *Αβραμ* is the name used throughout Genesis 15 (LXX), Paul's choice of *Ἀβραάμ* should be viewed as intentional. When understood in light

183. Benjamin Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith in Romans 4: Paul's Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6*, WUNT 2.224 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 334.

184. BDAG, "καί," 495ζ.

185. In Gal 3:6, Paul inserts Gen 15:6 (LXX) immediately after the connective: *καθὼς Ἀβραάμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην*.

186. Moo, *Romans*, 261, thinks that the citation of Gen 15:6 explains *ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν*. Although he is right in the sense that Paul is trying to refute the thesis that Abraham has a boast before God, Moo's (incomplete) understanding removes the focus from the word *καύχημα*, which carries a pejorative sense of boasting against gentiles.

of the above discussion, at this stage, Paul is highlighting the name Ἀβραάμ which means “father of a multitude.” He is arguing that Abraham became the father of Judeans not by doing the deeds of Mosaic law but by trust in God.¹⁸⁷

The emphasis of 4:3 is clear: Abraham obtained righteousness by trusting God.¹⁸⁸ Several details, however, cloud how Gen 15:6 (LXX) substantiates Paul’s thesis that Abraham has no grounds to boast against the gentiles and that such a boast has no value before God (4:2). For one, it is not clear as to how Abraham’s trust in God removes any possibility for him to boast about his deeds (of the Mosaic law). Hence, it is premature at this point in 4:3, as some commentators would like, to draw out the implications of Gen 15:6 (LXX) for Paul’s argument.¹⁸⁹ That Paul’s point is not immediately clear explains why he elaborates on Gen 15:6 (LXX) in 4:4-5. Gen 15:6 (LXX), at this juncture in 4:3, serves as a key text that he will later use in his argument. I shall now examine Gen 15:6 (LXX).

3.3.3 Gen 15:6 (LXX)

One of the questions investigated in the six year course of the SBL seminar on Paul and his use of Scripture is “How do Paul’s references to the Jewish Scriptures relate to their original context?”¹⁹⁰ Opinions are divided into basically two camps. One camp believes that

187. Jewett, *Romans*, 311; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 202. This also casts doubt on the view that the rhetoric of Romans 4 is to prove justification by faith.

188. Herman C. Waetjen, *The Letter to the Romans: Salvation as Justice and the Deconstruction of Law*, New Testament Monographs 32 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 121–123, denies imputation of righteousness by citing as evidence Abraham’s ongoing trust in God, where Abraham demonstrated trust in Genesis 12 and continued to do so in Gen 15:6ff. His exegesis collapses the contexts of the various Genesis accounts. In particular, he has glossed over the clear fact that God reckoned Abraham as righteous because of his response in Gen 15:5. The trust involved was not something that was ongoing, although Abraham did continue to trust God. He also claims that the trust involved is a mutual relationship between God and Abraham. This claim is not borne out by sound exegesis.

189. E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 261–62; Jewett, *Romans*, 310–12. Contra Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 228–30, who confines his commentary mainly to its function; cf. Barrett, *Romans*, 88.

190. Christopher D. Stanley, “What We Learned and What We Didn’t,” in *Paul and Scripture: Extending the Conversation*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Atlanta: Society of

Paul factors into his rhetoric the literary and theological contexts of the passages to which he refers.¹⁹¹ The other insists that tensions and discrepancies exist in the way Paul applies these texts. Stanley acknowledges that this question remains unresolved. A consideration on the role of the implied audience forms a main part of the impasse.

3.3.3.1 The Role of the Implied Audience

Scholars agree that the speaker must adapt his rhetoric to his real audience.¹⁹² This implies that Paul would have considered the extent of the knowledge his real audience had of any quotation of the Hebrew Bible. Although scholars agree that a large part of Paul's real audience is illiterate, both camps differ on how this data should be used. Those who oppose the view that Paul is faithful to the Hebrew Bible contexts of his quotations argue that he does not expect his real audience to look up the context of his quotations. The other camp which

Biblical Literature, 2012), 325. See also David M. Allen, "Introduction: The Study of the Use of the Old Testament in the New," *JSNT* 38 (2015): 7–9.

191. For a comprehensive treatment of this position, see G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 41-54. Against those who think that NT writers, when citing the Hebrew Bible, sometimes fail to respect the context of the Hebrew Bible citations, C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 110, 126–27, asks, first, why the same verse was often not cited in identical ways, and second, why different verses of a Hebrew Bible section were cited. He concludes that these observations show that the NT writers were aware of the larger context from which they cited. See, e.g., R. Rendall, "Quotation in Scripture as an Index of Wider Reference," *EvQ* 36 (1964): 214–21; R. T. France, "The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communications," *NTS* 27 (1980): 233–51; see Walter C. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), for examples that demonstrate that NT writers cited Hebrew Bible passages in context.

192. So Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 8: "The rhetorical audience must be capable of serving as mediator of the change which the discourse functions to produce"; also, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 26–31, who underscore that a rhetor must be both *persuasive* by adaptive to the views of his particular audience and also *convincing* to a universal audience by appealing to a universal set of facts and truths possessed by a normal or a rational being. See also Eugene E. White, *The Context of Human Discourse: A Configurational Criticism of Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 38–39, who lists six factors for an effective rhetoric. Amongst these are "[t]he capacity of the readers/listeners to alter the urgency" and "the readiness of the readers/listeners to be influenced."

thinks that Paul is faithful to the Hebrew Bible contexts of the texts to which he refers contends that Paul expects his real audience to continue to study his letters under the guidance of more knowledgeable members.¹⁹³ Stanley mediates between these two camps by suggesting that Paul requires his real audience to go no further than just to hear what is being quoted and accept the authority of the Hebrew Bible. Stanley's rationale is that should more information be provided other than what is given in the words of the quotation, Paul's real audience might interpret the assumed data and turn it against him. Furthermore, he contends that Paul has provided sufficient "snippets of information" to enable his real audience to follow his argument.¹⁹⁴ In response, first, whether or not the real audience will use the additional information against Paul is moot as the reverse can also be true: too little information may create a misunderstanding. Second, that Paul has provided enough "snippets of information" is based on the assumption that Paul's rhetoric can be effective just by a minimal use of a Hebrew Bible citation. This point is debatable as there are no objective criteria to gauge the persuasiveness of a rhetoric. Thus, the strongest argument levelled against the position that a wider context of the Hebrew Bible citation is invoked is the low literacy rate of the ancient real audience. I shall argue, however, that the real audience was likely to have known the wider context of the Hebrew Bible quotations.

3.3.3.2 The Influence of the Synagogue

Gentile Christians, including gentile Godfearers who formed part of the real audience of Romans, were likely to have been familiar with the Mosaic law due to the influence of synagogues where the law was read, taught, and studied. Fisk lists several factors that support this contention.¹⁹⁵ In view of the possible fact that Claudius' edict to evict Judeans in

193. Stanley, "What We Learned," 327.

194. See Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 154, for his summary of what Paul's audience could have inferred about Abraham solely from the way Paul describes him in Romans 4.

195. Fisk, "Synagogue Influence," 184–85, lists seven considerations that argue for the plausibility of the fact that gentile Christians may have been educated in the Torah.

49 CE was narrow in scope and of limited impact,¹⁹⁶ the ties between Roman Christians and the synagogues were probably maintained a few more years beyond 49 CE.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, historical studies point in the direction that synagogue service before 70 CE included as some of its most important activities sermons and public readings of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁹⁸ Josephus, Philo, the NT, and rabbinic literature support the observation that “scriptural readings constituted the core of contemporary Jewish worship in the synagogue.”¹⁹⁹ When the need arose, Greek and /or Aramaic translations were provided.²⁰⁰ Fisk correctly cautions us that “it is precarious to make claims solely on evidence within Romans about the competence of Paul’s actual first readers . . . given the lack of evidence that Rome’s Christian community had uniformly severed its ties with the synagogue.”²⁰¹

3.3.3.3 Tertius and Phoebe

Jewett is probably right to conclude that “Tertius and Phoebe were engaged in the creation, the delivery, the public reading, and the explanation of the letter.”²⁰² Several observations evince the above comment. In his study of the role of the secretary in the writing of ancient letters, Richards explains that an ancient letter was carried by hand and brought directly to the recipient. The carrier of the letter provided the personal connection

196. See above, p. 35.

197. Fisk, “Synagogue Influence,” 177.

198. Lee I. Levine, “The Second Temple Synagogue: The Formative Years,” in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), 7–31; James Strange, “Ancient Texts, Archaeology as Text, and the Problem of the First-Century Synagogue,” in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress*, ed. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 27–45.

199. Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 134, 138.

200. Levine, *Ancient*, 139.

201. Fisk, “Synagogue Influence,” 184–85.

202. Jewett, *Romans*, 23.

between the sender and the recipient. “The carrier was then expected to elaborate all the details for the recipient.”²⁰³ There are many such examples. Richards cites two of them.²⁰⁴ In one case, the son of a woman was being mistreated. This mother then sought the help of Zenon through a letter. She added in her letter: “The rest please learn from the man who brings you this letter. He is no stranger to us.”²⁰⁵ In another case, Cicero complained that the carrier did not bring the letter to him personally and provide the missing details:

I received your letter . . . and read it. I gathered that Philotimus did not act . . . [on] the instructions he had from you (as you write) . . . [when] he failed to come to me himself, and merely forwarded me your letter; and I wondered that it was shorter because you had imagined that he would deliver it in person.²⁰⁶

Cicero’s point was that the letter was shorter than he had expected. Thus, he thought that the carrier would provide the details. Richards comments that “[t]he sender did not usually state that the carrier had additional news; it was expected.”²⁰⁷ In other words, the sender did not just communicate in writing. He also provided additional information through the carrier of the letter. The carrier of the letter was also competent to provide clarification of the content of the letter. Ancient letters were read aloud. Hester remarks that “one had better begin to take seriously the possibility that Paul saw his letters as speeches.”²⁰⁸ Botha comments that “[r]eading in antiquity . . . was a performative, vocal, oral-aural happening.”²⁰⁹ As such,

203. E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2.42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 9.

204. E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 183–84.

205. PCol. 3.6.

206. Cicero *Fam.* 4.2.1. For other examples, see Cicero *Fam.* 3.5; 10.7; 1.8.1; 3.1.1.

207. E. Randolph Richards, *Paul*, 183.

208. James D. Hester, “The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1–14,” *ThZ* 42 (1986): 389.

209. Pieter J. J. Botha, “The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters: Rhetoric, Performance

Paul, when dictating his letter to the secretary, would have also coached and explained the letter to the carrier and the eventual reader.²¹⁰

In the case of the Letter to the Romans, Tertius was the secretary of the letter.²¹¹ The writing of the letter was probably funded by Phoebe, of whom Paul says, she was “a patron to many and to myself as well” (16:2). Tertius was probably Phoebe’s slave or employee. Jewett is likely correct to think that although Phoebe delivered the letter, a person of her social class, as patron, would have her scribe or slave read the letter. “Phoebe and Tertius would then be in the position to negotiate the complex issue advanced by the letter in a manner typical of the ancient world.”²¹²

White’s observations corroborate the above point that the letter bearer would serve “both as interpreter of the letter’s content and as letter carrier.”²¹³ He also adds that “in the case of the messengers of the wealthy and eminent, we may assume the couriers tended to be more conversant with the letter’s contents and capable of adding supplementary news by word of mouth.”²¹⁴

Hence, although the literacy rate was likely low in the ancient real audience of Romans, in line with ancient letter practices, Tertius and Phoebe were present to shed light, where necessary, on the wider Hebrew Bible context.

3.3.3.4 The Role of the Wider Context in Romans 4

In spite of the evidence presented in my previous point, I am not insisting that we

and Presence,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 90 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 413–14.

210. Botha, “Verbal,” 417. Similarly, E. Randolph Richards, *Paul*, 202.

211. E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary*, 189–90, ranks Romans as a letter certainly written with secretarial assistance; Jewett, *Romans*, 22. See Rom 16:22.

212. Jewett, *Romans*, 23.

213. John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 216.

214. John L. White, *Light*, 216–17.

should always assume that the audience invokes the wider context of the Hebrew Bible citations. Rather, whether or not a Hebrew Bible context is factored into analysis should be judged on an individual basis. In the case of the use of Gen 15:6 (LXX) in Romans 4, several observations indicate that Paul intends the implied audience to invoke the surrounding context of Genesis 15.

First, N. T. Wright makes the observation that in citing Gen 15:6 (LXX), Paul considered the chapter as a whole. This is evident in that besides citing Gen 15:6 (LXX) in several places in Romans 4, he also cites Gen 15:5 (LXX) in 4:18. Paul also makes use of the fact that certain events in Genesis 15 precede the events in Genesis 17. Furthermore, Paul alludes to Genesis 18 and 22. Wright, however, does not delve more deeply into the argument of Genesis 15 which yields substantial dividends for understanding Romans 4.

Second, as argued above, Gen 15:6 (LXX) should be viewed as a *chreia* and 4:4-5 as a commentary on it. This poses a problem as Gen 15:6 does not contain the idea of someone being an ungodly person. The suggestion that Abraham is the referent for this ungodly person is not borne out by Romans 4.²¹⁵ In fact, the reverse is true: Genesis 15 and Romans 4 portray Abraham as a man of great trust in, or more precisely, loyalty to his patron, God. God justifying the ungodly (4:5), as Wright contends, recalls Gen 15:13-16, where the future descendants of Abraham are discussed.²¹⁶

Third, in the seminar mentioned above on Paul and Scripture, Fowl suggests a way forward for detecting the presence of the larger context of a Hebrew Bible citation. He suggests that in the absence of a direct indicator that Paul is engaging a Hebrew Bible reference, one can rely on distinctive vocabulary to make the case.²¹⁷ Here, righteousness and

215. So most commentators, e.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 205; Godet, *Romans*, 175; Moo, *Romans*, 265.

216. N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch,” 218, 223. Wright (p. 218, footnote 33) remarks that, “[i]t is no objection to this to point out that τὸν ἀσεβῆ in Rom. 4.5 is singular, ‘the ungodly one’; as BDAG 141 points out, citing the parallel 1 Pet. 4.18, this is an example of the ‘collective singular’, as indeed in Gen. 18.”

217. Stephen Fowl, “The Use of Scripture in Philippians,” in *Paul and Scripture*, 180–181.

trust in God are concepts emphasised in both Romans 4 and Genesis 15. That Genesis 14 is in view is corroborated by the tight nexus between Genesis 14 and Genesis 15: Abraham receives the promise of descendants that was catalysed by a prior patron-client relationship between Abraham and God (Gen 14:17-21). Without this prior relationship of Abraham's trust in God, the promise of a descendant which finds its inception at Gen 15:1 would not have been possible. Thus, 4:4-5 requires one to read the larger context of Gen 15:6 in Genesis 14-15. Fowl also suggests that if Paul intends the implied audience to dig deeper than just the Hebrew Bible quotation, the interpreter should demonstrate that such a use of the larger context of the Hebrew Bible quotation enhances or advances the argument.²¹⁸ In the case of Romans 4, as I shall show in my analysis below, the larger context of Gen 15:6 enhances our understanding of "righteousness" as a relational term between a patron and a client, or the state of a relationship in a covenant. Without the insight provided by the larger context of Gen 15:6, the term "righteousness" is open for other interpretations, including forensic justification.

With this introduction, I shall now show that the righteousness in Gen 15:6 refers to a relationship where Abraham finds favour with God. Abraham's position of favour causes God to grant to him the promise of numerous descendants and these descendants will possess the land. Thus, my analysis seeks to demonstrate two points: first, that righteousness involves a relationship, and second, that the result of Abraham's righteousness is that he is promised descendants and a land for these descendants. My analysis will proceed as follows. I will first analyse briefly the narrative in Gen 14:17-24 which forms the backdrop of Genesis 15. Then the narrative in Gen 15:1-21 will be examined to shed light on the meaning of Gen 15:6. This analysis of the narratives of Genesis 14-15 is not intended to be an exhaustive commentary. Only details which help to explain the focus of Gen 15:6 will be discussed.

3.3.3.5 Gen 14:17-21 (LXX)

The war that takes place in Genesis 14 is one waged between king Chedorlaomer and

218. Fowl, "Use of Scripture," 181.

the kings of his client states, one of whom is the king of Sodom. The relationship between the king of Sodom and king Chedorlaomer is likely a Hittite vassal-suzerainty type, but one which could also be subsumed under a patronage system, as I shall explain below.

George Mendenhall suggests that the Hittite suzerainty treaty by which a king bound his vassal states to faithfulness and obedience was in existence during the beginning of the Israelite people.²¹⁹ The Hittites, however, probably did not create this type of treaty, as it was already in use during the second millennium BCE by any number of peoples and states.²²⁰ A similar treaty pact probably governed the relationship between king Chedorlaomer and his vassal states. According to Lemche, treaties that bound vassals in Syria or Asia Minor to their Hittite overlord should be viewed as expressions of basic notions related to the system of patronage.²²¹ Lemche points out that despite the amount of material found in the archives of the Bronze Age Syrian states of Ugarit and Alalakh, extensive written laws that govern societies have not been discovered. Lemche is probably correct to suggest that justice was meted out by means of the patron-client system.²²² He also observes that during the Late Bronze Period, a king of a higher standing and one in a lower class would address each other metaphorically as father and son, respectively. These observations point to the existence of a patron-client system. That such patron-client relationships were in operation by the Late Bronze Age is also demonstrated by the letters discovered in the archive of el-Amarna. This correspondence indicates that the local Palestinian kings regarded the relationship between themselves and their overlord Pharaoh to be a patronage system. A misunderstanding arose where the dependants had expected their overlords to protect them as a form of recompense

219. George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 17, no. 3 (1954): 52.

220. Mendenhall, "Covenant," 54.

221. Niels P. Lemche, "Kings and Clients: On Loyalty Between the Ruler and the Ruled in Ancient Israel," in *Ethics and Politics in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Douglas A. Knight and Carol Meyers, Semeia 66 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 127.

222. See Niels P. Lemche, "Justice in Western Asia in Antiquity, or: Why No Laws Were Needed!" *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 70 (1995): 1708–16, who cites Deut 16:18-20 as an example.

since they had paid tribute to the Pharaoh of Egypt. These Palestinian states thought of themselves as clients of their Egyptian patron. The ruler of Egypt, however, regarded these dependants as mere employees who had an obligation to pay dues.²²³ Such an existing patron-client system, as mentioned above, was probably in operation in the Middle Bronze Period, that is, during the time of Abraham. Genesis 14 should be read against such a backdrop of existing patronage systems. With this framework, I shall examine Gen 14:17-24.

The narrational texture, a sub-texture of inner texture, “resides in voices” as spoken by the narrator. The narrational pattern of Gen 14:17-24 can be discerned by observing the sequence in which the narrator introduces characters and also which characters speak. In Genesis 14, after Abraham rescues his nephew Lot from the hands of the patron king Chedorlaomer, and inadvertently, the king of Sodom, the “voice” of the narrator introduces two characters, first the king of Sodom and then King Melchizedek. These two persons come to see Abraham. What is interesting is the sequence in which these two characters approach Abraham. Whether or not both kings met Abraham at the same time is moot. The “voice” of the narrator introduces two characters who speak, who again are the same two characters mentioned above. By correlating the identities of the two characters who are introduced without making any speech and the same two characters who speak, it appears that the author of this passage has deliberately juxtaposed both characters, possibly in a chiasmic manner.²²⁴

223. See Mario Liverani, “Political Lexicon and Political Ideologies in the Amarna Letters,” *Berytus* 31 (1983): 41–56, for his analysis of key ideas and words that gave rise to the misunderstanding between the patron Pharaoh and his Palestinian state clients. Cf. Mario Liverani, “Pharaoh’s Letters to Rib-Adda,” in *Three Amarna Essays* (Malibu: Undena, 1979), 3–13.

224. This answers the observation of Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 304–5, that “[i]t is admittedly strange that the king of Sodom having been introduced to Abram in v 17, Melchizedek should suddenly appear . . . and the king of Sodom say nothing until v 21.” Melchizedek’s abrupt appearance has caused some scholars to view Gen 14:18-24 as a later insertion (e.g., J. A. Emerton, “The Riddle of Gen XIV,” *VT* 21 [1971]: 408–12, views the framework of Gen 14 as original but verses 18-20 as insertions). Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 176, who views the king of Sodom as a “sharp contrast” with Melchizedek.

This helps explain why the king of Sodom who arrives at Gen 14:17 should wait until Gen 14:21 to speak. This narrational pattern aims to compare and contrast these two characters:²²⁵

14:17 Arrival of king of Sodom

14:18 Arrival of king of Salem

14:19-20 Speech by king of Salem

14:21 Speech by king of Sodom

The LXX has Melchizedek, in pronouncing blessings (εὐλογημένος) from the most high God, attach to the proper noun Αβραμ the dative substantive τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ.²²⁶ What is in question is the relationship between the proper noun and the dative substantive. Construing the dative as instrumental is possible. This would yield the translation “blessed be Abram by the most high God.”²²⁷ Such a translation of Gen 14:19 (LXX) is, however, strange as the verb is not expressed. Translating it as a dative of possession is better:²²⁸ “Blessed be Abram of the most high God, Yahweh.”²²⁹ Such a construal has two advantages.

225. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 307, seems to imply a juxtaposition of these two kings when he writes that such an abrupt insertion about Melchizedek’s enthusiasm heightens the reader’s sense of the king of Sodom’s “surliness towards Abram.”

226. G. Levi Della Vida, “‘El Elyon in Gen 14:18–20,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 1–2, notes that the Hebrew equivalent לְאֵלֵיִן where ‘Elyon is preceded by El occurs only here and in Psa 78:35. In this psalm, the expression parallels Elohim, and hence, refers to Yahweh. Similarly, Norman C. Habel, “Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 321–24.

227. So NIV, NRSV, ESV in translating Gen 14:19 of the Hebrew Bible.

228. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 149. BDF §495, explains the difference between the dative of possession and genitive of possession, that “the genitive is used when the acquisition is recent or the emphasis is on the possessor . . . and the dative [is used] when the object possessed is to be stressed.” Gen 14:19 (LXX) is a case in point. Josef Scharbert, “‘Gesegnet sei Abraham vom höchsten Gott? Zu Gen 14,19 und ähnlichen Stellen im Alten Testament,’” in *Text, Methode und Grammatik*, ed. Walter Groß, Hubert Irsigler, and Theodor Seidl (St. Ottilien: EOS, 1991), 387–401, basing on analogies from Aramaic and Phoenician inscriptions, interprets לְ as “in front of.” The phrase לְאֵלֵיִן אַבְרָם would then be translated as “blessed be Abram in front of El Elyon.” This possible translation, however, fails to shed light on the context whose emphasis, as I argue, is on Abram as Yahweh’s client.

229. So Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint LXX: Greek and English* (London:

First, this understanding coheres with the Hebrew Bible where the preposition לְ in the expression אֲבְרָם לְאֵלֵי עֵלְיוֹן indicates possession. This yields the translation: “Abram of El Elyon” which emphasises Abraham as belonging somehow to God. Second, this translation fits the emphasis of Gen 14:17-24 that Abraham is a client of the patron God, Yahweh. Melchizedek praises the most high God for delivering Abraham’s enemies into his power. Considering that the incident about Abraham giving tithes to Melchizedek follows closely on the heels of Melchizedek’s pronouncement of a blessing on Abraham, the tithe should be read as a response of gratitude that a client shows towards his patron. This ties in with the custom of that milieu that tithes were given to sanctuaries and kings.²³⁰ As this tithe is probably a part of the booty which is rightfully Abraham’s, Abraham’s giving it to Yahweh indicates that he acknowledges this booty was won by the help of Yahweh.²³¹ Thus, Abraham by presenting a tithe to Melchizedek indicates that he is a client of אֵלֵי עֵלְיוֹן, or as the LXX translates it, τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ. The intent of the king of Sodom’s speech in Gen 14:20 (LXX) should be read in light of Abraham’s rejection in Gen 14:22 (LXX): the king of Sodom is offering Abraham a part of the booty won during the war.²³² This offer must be read in light of the patron-client setting of Genesis 14 where king Chedorlaomer acted as the patron of the vassal state kings including the king of Sodom.²³³ This setting sheds light on the speech made by the last character who speaks, as introduced by the “voice” of the

Bagster & Sons, Ltd., 1851), Gen 14:19.

230. So Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 317; von Rad, *Genesis*, 175, views Abraham’s tithe as a sign of submission to the blessing from Melchizedek.

231. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 317, comments that the tithe, that is, a tenth of all (לֵ), must be taken from the booty since he was on his way home; so also Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 413.

232. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, misses the point of this juxtaposition when he regards the king of Sodom as making “a short, almost rude demand.” In fact, the opposite is true: the king of Sodom was offering something (a part of the booty) to Abram.

233. Gary Stansell, “Wealth: How Abraham Became Rich,” in *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context*, ed. Philip F. Esler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 100, agrees with my view, that “[t]his is not about Abraham’s generosity . . . but about his refusal to enter into a patron-client relationship with the king.”

narrator. Considering that this final character who speaks breaks away from the chiasm of Gen 14:17-21, it is reasonable to construe what Abraham says in Gen 14:22-24 as constituting the main point of the narrative. Abraham's rejection resembles legal texts that renounce property rights.²³⁴ This implies that Abraham is formally rejecting the king of Sodom's offer of patronage. Thus, Gen 14:17-24 emphasises Abraham's rejection of the king of Sodom's patronage and an acknowledgement of the patronage of Yahweh, the most high God.

3.3.3.6 Gen 15:1-24 (LXX)

The opening-middle-closing sub-texture of the inner texture of Genesis 15 can be displayed as follows:

Gen 15:12 The Opening: Abraham laments that he has no descendant

Gen 15:13-17 The Middle: God resolves Abraham's lament

Gen 15:18-21 The Closing: Abraham's descendants will inherit the land

Significant for our analysis is the observation that Abraham's lament about not having descendants in the opening is apparently resolved in the closing by God's promise that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land. It appears, as my analysis below will verify, that Abraham's concern about having descendants is closely related to his descendants inheriting the land. My analysis will proceed according to the above delineated sections of opening, middle, and closing: Gen 15:1-2; 15:3-17; 15:18-21.

3.3.3.6.1 Gen 15:1-2 (LXX)

Genesis 15 (LXX) begins with a prepositional phrase *μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα* that ties the events in Genesis 15 to Genesis 14. The prepositional phrase²³⁵ in the Hebrew Bible אַתָּר הַדְּבָרִים *also signals a clear tie to the events in Genesis 14.*²³⁶ The phrase, *τὰ ῥήματα*

234. So Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 318.

235. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 192–93, construes the function of this preposition as temporal.

ταῦτα, refers to events that could have made Abraham afraid. One likely event to which it refers is that of Gen 14:17-24 (LXX).

Seen from this perspective, we would be able to understand why Yahweh gives to Abraham a word of assurance: “Fear not, Abram. I am shielding you and your reward is exceedingly great” (Gen 15:1 [LXX]). The fear is a consequence of rejecting the patronage of the king of Sodom. The reward is a result of Abraham remaining under the patronage of Yahweh. What this implies is that Genesis 15 must be read in light of Gen 14:17-21, that is, with a view to the formation of a patron-client relationship.

At the outset in Gen 15:1-2, Abraham is concerned with not only having a descendant, but a descendant who will inherit his inheritance. After Yahweh promises to reward Abraham for acknowledging him as patron, Abraham responds immediately with a rhetorical question. Scholars agree this is not a real question but rather a complaint. Hamilton comments on the meaning of Abraham’s reply: “What useful purpose would be served by a reward that could not be transmitted?”²³⁷ The subject matter that follows concerns having a descendant that comes from Abraham’s own physical body. The question is rhetorical, as intimated by the clause that connects (by way of the light adversative δέ) this question to its explanation: he is childless and his slave will be his heir. Abraham is essentially lamenting

236. Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 240, comment that “[a]lthough ‘after this’ may refer to all the scenes of Genesis 12-14, it is most closely connected to chapter 14.” Many scholars view Gen 14:18-24 as a late addition, and various conjectures have been postulated on the compositional history of Genesis 14. This does not mean, however, that Genesis 14 cannot be analysed as a consistent literary unit; see Gard Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110*, BZAW 406 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 16, who argues that chapter 14 is a “unified and internally consistent narrative.” Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 133, suggests that “the editorial combination of different literary sources might usefully be conceived as the final stage in the process of artistic creation which produced biblical narratives.” Thomas D. Alexander, “A Literary Analysis of the Abraham Narrative in Genesis” (PhD diss., The Queen’s University of Belfast, 1982), 43, notes the conjunction that connects Genesis 14 and 15. He also detects common ideas in these two chapters. Unfortunately, he does not explore the connection but instead links Genesis 15 with Gen 11:27-12:9.

237. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 420. Similarly, Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 328; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 241.

that there is nothing that he desires from Yahweh since what he desires most—a son—cannot be fulfilled at a time when his death draws near.²³⁸ Instead, Abraham continues his lament that Eliezer, his slave, will be his heir. How Abraham’s lament will be alleviated is narrated in Gen 15:3-17.

3.3.3.6.2 Gen 15:3-17 (LXX)

I shall begin by tracing the flow of the narrative in Gen 15:3-17 while highlighting certain details along the way. After that, I will explain the implication of those details that will demonstrate my contention that Yahweh’s promises to Abraham of descendants and land are basically different facets of the same promise. I will also show that righteousness is relational, specifically, a favourable relationship between God as the patron and Abraham as the client.

Construing the dialogue in 15:3-6 as a normal conversation is possible. More likely, however, this dialogue is Abraham’s strategy of asking from Yahweh a gift. Using dialogue to secure a promise from Yahweh is not unusual for Abraham as he later utilises this mode to secure the safety of Lot in Gen 18:16-33. Specifically, this gift is a descendant who will become Abraham’s natural heir.

Abraham begins by lamenting and suggesting that “a slave in my house, he will inherit (ירש) me [a metonym for “my inheritance”]” (MT Gen 15:3), or “A slave in my house will inherit (κληρονομεῖν) me [a metonym for “my inheritance”]” (Gen 15:3 [LXX]). Yahweh, however, rejects Abraham’s suggestion: “This man will not inherit (ירש) you [your inheritance] . . . but he who comes out from your own belly will inherit (ירש) you [your inheritance]” (MT Gen 15:4), or “he who will come out from you will inherit (κληρονομεῖν) you [your inheritance]” (Gen 15:4 [LXX]). In Gen 15:5, Yahweh grants to Abraham many descendants.

238. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 73, interprets the Hebrew text as a euphemism for dying; the verb ἀπολόομαι (LXX) is used sometimes to denote death (e.g., Num 20:29; Tob 3:6).

When Abraham אֱבְרָהָם / ἐπίστευσεν Yahweh in Gen 15:6, Abraham was regarded as “righteous.” Important for a right interpretation of this verse is the time when Abraham acknowledged Yahweh as his patron, that is, trusted Yahweh. Abraham had already trusted Yahweh *as patron* as early as Gen 15:1 (LXX). When Abraham trusted Yahweh at Gen 15:6 (LXX), it was not to begin a patron-client relationship but to trust Yahweh for some provision, in this case, a descendant. Abraham’s trust was demonstrated when he rejected the king of Sodom as patron and gave a tithe to Melchizedek. This observation has implications for how we construe “righteousness” in Gen 15:6. The verbs אָמַן / πιστεύειν must be understood in light of the patronage backdrop of Gen 14:17-21 with which Genesis 15 is tightly linked. This implies that the patron-client relationship of Genesis 14 forms the framework for the grant of descendants in Genesis 15. In other words, this righteousness refers to covenant faithfulness or loyalty that makes Yahweh favourably disposed so as to reward Abraham with numerous descendants. In this respect, I am following Hermann Cremer’s interpretation of צָדִיק / הַקָּדוֹשׁ as a concept of relationship (*Verhältnisbegriff*). People bring their own claims to a relationship. When these claims are mutually fulfilled, they are considered righteous.²³⁹ In other words, both parties demonstrate covenant faithfulness. This understanding is a corrective to the long held view that construes “righteousness” as merely conformity to the norm of distributive justice.²⁴⁰ As far as Gen 15:6 is concerned, righteousness does not refer to conformity to an absolute norm—the holiness of God—but to Abraham having fulfilled his role by trust in Yahweh, or loyalty in his covenant relationship with Yahweh.²⁴¹

239. Hermann Cremer, *Die Paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre* (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1899), 33–38.

240. E.g., after David spared the life of his enemy Saul, Saul spoke to David saying: “You are more righteous (יָצִדְתָּ) than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil” (1 Sam 24:17 [Hebrew 24:18]). John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1–23* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 107–8, cites Psa 143:1, 2 as an example that shows “righteousness” to denote God fulfilling covenant faithfulness. Here, the psalmist requests God to save him on the basis of God’s righteousness in spite of the fact that he is not a righteous man.

241. See Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New

When God promises Abraham and his descendants a land, Abraham asks in Gen 15:7 for an assurance: “by what will I know that I will possess (יִרְשׁ) it [the land]?” (MT Gen 15:8); “How will I know I will inherit (κληρονομεῖν) it?” (Gen 15:8 [LXX]). Yahweh gives him the assurance by instituting a Hittite type treaty (Gen 15:9-17). Yahweh, however, not only assures Abraham of land. His reply in Gen 15:8ff states also that a distant future generation of Abraham’s descendants will inherit the land.

The above discussion shows that, despite the seeming difference in concerns, where Gen 15:1-6 focuses on descendants and Gen 15:7-21 is about the land, both passages are closely related.²⁴² First, the same verbs יִרְשׁ / κληρονομεῖν are used to talk about who will possess Abraham’s inheritance. Thus, a verbal link exists between Gen 15:1-6 and Gen 15:7-21. Second, in Gen 15:1-6, Abraham desires not only a descendant, but a descendant who will inherit his inheritance. In other words, the concern that Abraham’s descendant will inherit Abraham’s inheritance dominates both Gen 15:7-21 and Gen 15:1-6. After all, without descendants, land is worthless.²⁴³ I also contend that the inheritance in Gen 15:1 and the land that Yahweh will give Abraham are basically the same thing. This is corroborated by the fact that in an agrarian society, both terms refer to the land and its produce. The difference is that what Abraham possesses now is a much smaller subset of the future land that he, through his descendants, will possess.

3.3.3.6.3 Gen 15:18-21 (LXX)

I have shown, in my argument above, that Abraham’s desire was not merely to have a

York: Harper, 1962), 1.371. This implies also that the post-Reformation concept of forensic justification is not in view here.

242. E.g., Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 335, focuses his discussion of Gen 15:7-21 on the land without giving attention to the land’s relationship to descendants. Similarly, Alter, *Five Books*, 74; Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 429.

243. Cf. Paul R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel, and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, JSOTSupp 315 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 133, who opines that without descendants, land was worthless; also Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 142.

descendant, but to have a descendant who would inherit the land promised to him with its produce. When this is understood, we are able to see that the closing section, Gen 15:18-21, constitutes a closing to the opening in Gen 15:1-2. In Gen 15:18-21, Yahweh concludes the Hittite covenant ceremony by declaring that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land. This has come to fruition because Abraham in Gen 15:6 acted righteously by trusting Yahweh as patron to provide descendants for him (Abraham). This act of trusting Yahweh, and not someone else, is also an act of loyalty. Paul will later (in 4:4-5) explain that this act of trust is in contrast to "works." Furthermore, Yahweh also acted righteously by promising to provide for Abraham. Consequently, the relationship between Abraham and Yahweh, his patron, is considered a righteous relationship.

3.3.4 Rom 4:4-5

How 4:4-5 explains the significance of Gen 15:6 (LXX) is debated. Barrett thinks that the use of 4:4-5 hinges on the word λογίζομαι, that the implication of righteousness having been "counted" to Abraham means that Abraham did not do "deeds." The conclusion that ensues is that Abraham is made righteous by divine favour (grace). Moreover, trust and favour, so Barrett presumes, correlate to one another and so lead to the conclusion that deeds and trust are opposites.²⁴⁴ This view falters on several observations. First, Cranfield retorts that λογίζεται is associated with both φείλημα and χάρις.²⁴⁵ Second, how trust correlates with favour needs to be explained in view of the fact that Judean interpretation of Gen 15:6 understands Abraham's trust in God to refer to faithfulness when he was tempted.²⁴⁶ Jewett interprets the weight of 4:4-5 as resting on two words. First, he thinks that the word λογίζεσθαι is a commercial term that denotes charging a bill, calculating a debt, or counting out wages for work done. Second, he argues that the term πιστεύοντι is a theological term

244. Barrett, *Romans*, 88.

245. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 230.

246. "Remember the deeds of the ancestors, which they did in their generations; and you will receive great honor and an everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?" (1 Macc 2:51-52).

whose meaning has been expounded in the preceding chapter, and hence, is already clear to the audience. Jewett's view is refuted by Cranfield (see above). Also, this view ignores the contemporary use of πίστις. As I will argue below, since 4:4-5 should be construed as expounding Gen 15:6 (LXX), the immediate context of 4:4-5 should be Gen 15:6 (LXX). To properly understand 4:4-5, we will need to investigate the cultural contexts of the terms χάρις, ἔργα, and πίστις and their relationship with each other.

Aelius Theon describes *chreia* as a “brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specific person or something corresponding to a person.”²⁴⁷ The name “Abraham” in Paul's recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) and its brevity makes 4:3 a *chreia*. Hermogenes of Tarsus explains that a *chreia* is elaborated in several ways, one of which is by means of comparison and contrast.²⁴⁸ The above observation means that the significance of Paul's recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) is encapsulated by 4:4-5. Also, the meaning of 4:4-5 should be read in light of Gen 15:6 (LXX). I shall now analyse 4:4-5 for how this passage substantiates Gen 15:6 (LXX).

Rom 4:4-5 basically comprises a pair of parallel lines as the common vocabulary τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ and λογίζεται indicate. The particle of negation μή makes them a pair of contrasting parallel lines. They do not, however, correspond exactly to one another. By observing elements that disrupt the parallelism, we can gain insights into the significance of this passage. To keep the parallelism, the second line should read “but to the one who does not work, the reward is counted according to favour and not due.” Instead, Paul writes “But to the one who does not work, but trusts” This observation exposes a two-fold social intertexture.

First, the above comparison and contrast shows that ἔργα and χάρις operate in opposite ways. As Paul explains, a μισθός that is derived from ἔργα is not a result of χάρις. This becomes clearer when χάρις is read in light of the patron-client culture. We have

247. Also, Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: The Progymnasmata* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 26.

248. George A. Kennedy, trans. and ed., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 77.

established that the *chreia*, Gen 15:6 (LXX), should be read against a patron-client backdrop. As Gen 15:6 (LXX) is set during the Middle Bronze Age, it seems anachronistic for Paul to use a first century CE analogy to elaborate on Gen 15:6 (LXX). But this does not appear to be an issue with Paul, probably because the basic parameters underlying the patron-client culture in both the Hebrew Bible and NT times did not change: the relationship between a patron and a client are asymmetrical and requires “reciprocity not by balanced exchange or by a return of equal or greater value but by the giving of honor, gratitude, and loyalty.”²⁴⁹

In the first century preindustrial world of the NT, power, property, and wealth were concentrated in the hands of two percent of the people. They were the elite of the ancient society.²⁵⁰ Needed goods could be purchased from the market. For special goods, however, the vast majority of the world had to ask favours of these elites. When a patron grants a favour, a long term patron-client relationship is formed.²⁵¹ Aristotle explains the basis underlying the granting of favours:

The persons towards whom men feel benevolent, and for what reasons, and in what frame of mind, will be clear when we have defined what favour (χάρις) is. Let it then be taken to be the feeling in accordance with which one who has it is said to render a service to one who needs it, not in return for something nor in the interest of him who renders it, but in that of the recipient.²⁵²

Harrison argues that Paul’s use of χάρις should not be read against an aristocratic literary backdrop. Rather, the patronage system should inform the use of this word.²⁵³ Several observations support this. Harrison ascribes priority to the public inscriptions (200 BCE to

249. Zeba A. Crook, “Reciprocity: Covenantal Exchange,” in *Ancient Israel*, 82–3.

250. Malina, *Cultural*, 89.

251. David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 96–97.

252. Aristotle *Rhet.* 2.7.1–2.

253. James R. Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 2.172 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 26–27.

200 CE) as they were readily accessible to the Graeco-Roman public for several reasons. For one, patrons engraved these inscriptions so that posterity could read them.²⁵⁴ Also, these eulogistic inscriptions were widespread throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin. In the Latin west, *gratia* and its cognates were also widespread in honorific inscriptions. This ensured familiarity with Paul's use of patronage terminology. Moreover, decrees erected by small clubs or associations made patronage terminology pervasive in Graeco-Roman culture.²⁵⁵ Several inscriptions indicate that *χάρις* may refer to a favour bestowed on the client by the patron. In 71 BCE, the Roman patrons of Gytheion, Numerius, and Marcus Cloatius demonstrated their favour (*χάρις*) by releasing the city Gytheion from a repayment of two loans.²⁵⁶ In the late second century BCE, Xenocleas of Akraeoguae "had performed not a few favours (*χάριτας οὐκ ὀλίγας*) for the people" of Akraephaie.²⁵⁷ Harrison concludes that

254. Harrison, *Grace*, 1, construes *χάρις* against the backdrop of the Hellenistic benefactor-beneficiary reciprocity system. He argues that this was the prevailing system in the eastern Mediterranean basin, the area where Paul founded his house churches. He prefers this construal over the Roman patronage system, espoused in Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). The problem with Saller's research, some felt (e.g., Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 6–7), was that it glossed over differences in the various asymmetrical relationships that involve exchange (e.g., marriage and slavery). See also A. N. Sherwin White, "Review of R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire*," *The Classical Review* 33 (1983): 271–73. In this dissertation, I have chosen to use the terminology of the Roman patronage system not because every asymmetrical relationship is the same but because as Bruce A. Lowe, "Paul, Patronage and Benefaction: A 'Semiotic' Reconsideration," in *Paul and His Social Relations*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land, *Pauline Studies*, vol. 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 84, comments: "What this case study shows, though, is how difficult it is to choose terms—more difficult than those opposing Saller have often acknowledged, with their failure to properly distinguish the synchronic from the diachronic as well as the signified from the signifier. What is more important in all this is finding a word that means something to a modern implied audience and yet still captures the sense of intention in terms of the things originally signified." Lowe, "Paul, Patronage," 79, adds that "with Saller's work acting as a paradigmatic starting point for so much New Testament studies, it would be a backward step to insist upon a different word, or some clumsy expression like *reciprocity system*."

255. Harrison, *Grace*, 27–29.

256. *SIG*, 748.

257. *RIG*, 236.

these numerous inscriptions demonstrate that *χάρις* functions as the central term for favours bestowed by patrons on clients.²⁵⁸ This term can also refer to the return of a favour by the client. During the first century CE, the people of Busiris set up a stone stele to praise General Gnaeus Pompeius so as “to reciprocate with favours (*ἀμείβεσθαι χά[ρισιν]*)” for building dykes and the fair distribution of the crop.²⁵⁹ In an honorific first century CE decree where the people of the city of Cardamylae praise their patron Poseidippos,²⁶⁰ a terminology of exchange, *ἀμοιβή*, *ἀντί*, *καθιστάναι*, and *ἀποδιδόναι*, is used in conjunction with *χάρις*.²⁶¹ In this inscription, the favour rendered to the patron by the client is described as the lesser favour (*ἐλάττονος χάριτος*). This implies that *χάρις* is used to denote both the favour dispensed by the patron and the client. It is important to note the rhetorical effect created by such an interplay. By the phrase “lesser favour,” the client emphasises that the favour he received is *unpayable*. This is as Seneca remarks: “he who has a debt of gratitude to pay (*gratiam debet*) never catches up with the favour unless he outstrips it.”²⁶² Furthermore, a patron, as in the case of the city of Cardamylae’s praise for its patron Poseidippos, does not intend the favour to be repaid in kind. This finds evidence in *φιλοτιμία* (love of honour) as motivation.²⁶³ Thus, Poseidippos receives favour (*χάρις*) in return for his love of honour. This “love of honour” was considered to be positive in ancient culture. In other words, the favour returned by the city of Cardamylae to Poseidippos is honour. In another example, a corporation of merchants erected an honorific decree from Delos in praise of its patron who dispensed favours out of love of honour. A first century honorific decree (41/42 CE) makes the same point although the word *φιλοτιμία* is not used: Phainios, son of Aromatios left a sum

258. Harrison, *Grace*, 47.

259. *SEG VIII*, 527.

260. *SEG XI*, 948.

261. So Harrison, *Grace*, 51.

262. Seneca *Ben.* 1.44.

263. See also *RIG*, 998, where a corporation of merchants erected an honorific decree during the early second century BCE.

of 8,000 *denarii* to city magistrates in order that the needy might take loans.²⁶⁴ His generosity is demonstrated also in allowing slaves to share in Phainios' gift of oil for six days a year. He also makes explicit his intent in dispensing these favours, which is "to achieve immortality in making such a just and kindly disposal (of my property)."²⁶⁵ Read in light of the inscriptions, the antithesis of *χάρις* and *ἔργα* becomes even more pronounced.

The contrast between *χάρις* and *ἔργα* is accentuated when *ἔργα* is read in light of the social and cultural intertexture of wage labourers. The per-capita income was invariably low. The minimum annual cost of average subsistence is estimated to be 115 sesterces and the wage of an ordinary Roman citizen is about one and a half times subsistence.²⁶⁶ Furthermore, wage labourers (*mercennarii*), whom the upper-class authors regarded as almost slaves,²⁶⁷ were often employed only seasonally for hay-making, the harvest, or in the vineyard.²⁶⁸ Aristotle locates them in the lowest class of wage-labourers,²⁶⁹ dependent labour who comprise mostly slaves.²⁷⁰ Living conditions for them were harsh.²⁷¹ Viewed in light of the

264. *SEG* XIII, 258.

265. See Harrison, *Grace*, 60–61.

266. K. Hopkins, "Rome, Taxes, Rents, and Trade," in *The Ancient Economy*, ed. Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden, Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 190–230.

267. See G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 179–204, for evidence of the similarity between a wage-labourer and a slave-labourer.

268. William V. Harris, "The Late Republic," in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard Saller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 528.

269. Aristotle *Pol.* 4.11.

270. William V. Harris, "The Concept of Class in Roman History," in *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity*, ed. Toru Yuge and Masaoki Doi (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 598–605, convincingly argues for the relevance of the concept of class to be applied to the Roman society.

271. Although William V. Harris, "Concept," 604, may be overstating his case when he argues that the economic factor defines a social class, one's economic standing is certainly one of the defining characteristics.

above described Graeco-Roman social setting, paying a worker for work done is imperative. There is no place for χάρις where ἔργα is present. This brings out the antithesis between χάρις and ἔργα.

The second social intertexture exposed by the pair of contrasting statements in 4:4-5 is a close nexus between trust and favour (grace). The precise relationship between trust and favour requires elucidation. To begin with, the inscriptions mentioned above reveal that inherent in the term χάρις is the notion of reciprocity.²⁷² Thus, a favour dispensed by patrons must be returned with a favour. The favour returned is not at the same level of munificence but comes in the form of honour. If a favour is not returned, that client is considered ungrateful. Cicero uses strong language to emphasise the necessity of returning a favour (*gratia*): “No duty is more imperative (*necessarium*) than proving one’s gratitude . . . to fail to requite was not allowable (*non licet*) for a good man.”²⁷³ According to Seneca and Dio Chrysostom,²⁷⁴ a failure to show gratitude towards one’s patron was considered sacrilegious.²⁷⁵ Thus, gratitude must be repaid. The question is what constitutes a legitimate mode of showing gratitude. Several observations indicate that demonstrating trust (Latin *fides*; Greek πίστις) in the patron is the main mode.²⁷⁶ Ehrensperger maintains that

Fides was not only important in the relation between Rome and conquered nations, it permeated all aspects of Roman society. The patronage system depended on *fides* in that the client was granted protection and certain favours by the patron and in turn owed the patron unconditional *fides*. Loyalty and trust in these relationships were neither an affair of mutuality nor merely voluntarily as most free non-elite people depended on patronage relationships as a matter of survival.²⁷⁷

272. See the citations in Harrison, *Grace*, 40–63, for numerous first century CE inscriptions that demonstrate the notion of reciprocity in the term χάρις.

273. Cicero *Off.* 1.47.

274. Seneca *Ben.* 1.4; Dio Chrysostom *Orat.* 31.37.

275. So deSilva, *Honor*, 110.

276. Ehrensperger, *Paul*, 171.

277. Ehrensperger, *Paul*, 171.

First, trust constitutes the main component that cements the relationship between the patron and the client. In a Greek play *Menaechmi* written by Plautus (c. 254-184 BCE) that was translated into Latin, the hero Menaechmus, after attending to the legal problems of his clients, returns frustrated. He laments that the elites want clients (*clientes*) as long as they are wealthy. What is noteworthy is that despite the fact that his rich clients are likely to be able to repay the help Menaechmus has given them, he complains of the absence of trustworthiness (*fides*) in such clients.²⁷⁸ This indicates the importance Roman patrons placed on *fides*.²⁷⁹ Cicero in comparing rendering help to the poor and to the wealthy, remarks that helping the poor is a better investment than helping the wealthy. Cicero explains by drawing on the following analogy: “A man has not repaid money if he still has it; if he has repaid it, he has ceased to have it. But a man still has the sense of favour, if he has returned the favour, and if he has the sense of favour, he has repaid it.”²⁸⁰ In other words, the poor repays with a mindset of repaying a favour and not with money. In this way, the poor feels indebted, and hence, remains loyal to the patron.²⁸¹ Cicero draws a contrast with a wealthy person—they dislike “like death” to accept a patron (*patrocinio*) or become clients (*clientes*). The point of contrast is that a poor man would tend to remain loyal to the patron when compared to a wealthy person.²⁸² Cicero, thus, commends *fides* or loyalty in a patron-client relationship. In the same vein, Seneca says that “if you wish to make return for a favour

278. Plautus *Men.* 571–572.

279. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 82, comments that the “client should be marked by dependability, one for whom the patron can pledge his faith (*fides*).”

280. Cicero *Off.* 2.69.

281. My interpretation concurs with Phebe Lowell Bowditch, *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage*, Classics and Contemporary Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 52, who states that “Cicero quotes this dictum to point out that patronage of the poor who are unable to repay the service in kind leads to a lasting emotional gratitude that cultivation of the rich may not yield.”

282. Cicero *Off.* 2.69–71.

(*referre vis gratiam*), you must be willing to go into exile, or to pour forth your blood, or to undergo poverty.”²⁸³ The meaning of πίστις read in light of 4 Macc 16:18-22 is instructive. Here, when faced with the threat of punishment from King Antiochus IV, the mother of seven Judean brothers begins by reminding them of the benefits they have received from God, that they had a share of this world and received life. She then urges them to endure suffering for God’s sake (διὰ τὸν θεόν). What that entails is enumerated by various examples of men (4 Macc 16:20-21) who endured for God’s sake (διὰ τὸν θεόν / δι’ ὄν). She then returns to exhort them to emulate their trust towards God (τὴν αὐτὴν πίστιν πρὸς τὸν θεόν [4 Macc 16:22]). The author of 4 Maccabees then reformulates such a demonstration of trust or loyalty as “to die rather than violate God’s commandments” (4 Macc 16:24). In other words, trust equates to not violating God’s commandments, or faithfulness to God’s commandments.

deSilva also detects another facet of meaning in the word *fides* or πίστις: “to trust the goodwill and ability of the patron to perform what he or she promised.”²⁸⁴ I wish to add that πίστις can mean at the same time both “loyalty” and “trust in the ability of the patron.” Such a meaning is evident in the speech by King Antiochus IV (4 Macc 8:5-7) when he threatens the above mentioned seven Judean youths. In his attempt to win their allegiance, he urges them to trust (πιστεύσατε) him. That this trust involves King Antiochus’ ability to provide is evident. First, that which follows explains the object of this trust: the ability to bestow on them positions of authority. Second, he expressed earlier that just as he is able (δυναίμην) to punish the seven youths, he is able also to be a patron (εὐεργετῆν) to them. Thus, loyalty is also present in the word “trust” (πιστεύσατε) since King Antiochus’ main intent is to urge them to transfer their allegiance from God and his commandments (2 Macc 16:24) to himself. This understanding of πίστις is also reasonable. That which motivates a client to trust his future patron is driven first by the dependant’s need which later develops into loyalty. These two facets, loyalty and trust in a patron’s ability, are present in Abraham’s trust in Romans 4. The element of trust in the patron’s ability is evident when Abraham trusts that God can give

283. Seneca *Ep.* 81.27.

284. deSilva, *Honor*, 115.

him descendants despite “his own body, which was already as good as dead” (4:19-20). Abraham’s trust includes also a demonstration of loyalty towards God.²⁸⁵ At this point in 4:4-5, the implied audience would be clear that Abraham’s act of trust in God in the recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) implies trust as a response to favour, and hence, does not constitute deeds.

I shall now continue to explain the remaining parts of 4:4-5. The object of πίστις is the one who makes righteous τὸν ἀσεβῆ. Since 4:4-5 is an elaboration on Gen 15:6 (LXX) (which I take to be functioning here as a *chreia*), the meaning of ἀσεβής should be read in light of its immediate context in Gen 15:6. As I have argued above, Abraham’s state of being righteous is set within a patronage matrix. This righteousness is a result of Abraham trusting in God that he (God) will give him innumerable descendants and is not primarily about the sixteenth century forensic justification from sin, valid as it is. Scholars who interpret Abraham from the perspective of a polytheistic pagan, as one who needs justification from sin, have read this into Romans 4.²⁸⁶ That means ὁ ἀσεβής does not refer to Abraham. Wright identifies ὁ ἀσεβής as referring to Abraham’s future descendants that God will give him.²⁸⁷ Such an understanding coheres with how Paul describes Abraham’s trust in the other two occurrences (4:3; cf. Gen 15:6; Rom 4:18), where Abraham’s trust is in what God will do for his descendants rather than for Abraham himself. Abraham’s trust in 4:5 is specifically believing that “somehow God will bring into this family people from all sorts of ethnic and moral backgrounds, i.e. the ‘ungodly.’”²⁸⁸ This interpretation makes sense as it responds to the wider concern enunciated in 4:1 where the issue is about whether or not the Judean interlocutor (or the implied audience, Judean Christians) can have Abraham as their ancestor on the basis of human efforts.

285. See above my analysis of Gen 15:6 (LXX) on p. 155.

286. E.g., Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 71; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 110–12.

287. N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch,” 218–19. See also above my footnote 216.

288. N. T. Wright, “Paul and the Patriarch,” 218.

This observation about Abraham's trust in God is critical for a correct understanding of the rhetoric of Abraham's trust which will repair the deteriorating ties between Judean and gentile Christians in the Roman Christian community. Paul utilises the aspect of Abraham's trust that believes in a God who receives the ungodly to reconcile the two dissenting groups—the Judean and gentile Christians.

To maintain contrasting parallelism with ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται, we would have expected ὁ μισθὸς λογίζεται. Instead, Paul writes λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. In place of ὁ μισθός, Paul has inserted ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ. It appears that Paul construes ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ as some form of a reward from God that comes as a result of Abraham's act of trusting what God said about having an innumerable descendants. Ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ is a status granted by God to Abraham for his act of trusting in God's promises. In Mediterranean culture, Malina calls this trust “personal loyalty, personal commitment to another person.”²⁸⁹ This status leads (εἰς) to the position of being righteous before God. Here, Paul accentuates the role of πίστις by couching it in terms of μισθός. Furthermore, by using wisdom rhetorolect to frame 4:4-5 in the form of contrasting parallel lines, Paul seeks to elicit from the implied audience a demonstration of πίστις.²⁹⁰

3.3.5 Rom 4:6-8

Wisdom rhetorolect dominates 4:6-8. This is shown by the name “David” and the genre of this citation, poetry,²⁹¹ in which proverbial wisdom is usually couched.²⁹² Although the name “David” belongs to the story line of Christian prophetic rhetorolect, Psalm 31 (LXX) is non-confrontational, and hence, should not be classified as prophetic rhetorolect

289. Malina, “Faith,” 74.

290. See the thirdspace in Robbins, *Invention*, 109, where wisdom rhetorolect seeks to produce in the human body goodness and righteousness, that is, to persuade the audience to respond favourably to Paul's rhetoric.

291. See below, p. 183.

292. Robbins, *Invention*, 180, cites Sirach 45:25-26, 47:2-11, a “deutero-biblical” wisdom literature in the Mediterranean world. There, David is listed as one of the people who produce righteousness and goodness. This fits the thirdspace of wisdom rhetorolect.

(which is sometimes transformed from wisdom rhetorlect).²⁹³ Furthermore, the fact that μακάριος occurs frequently in wisdom literature (e.g., Psa 1:1; 2:12; 31:1 [LXX]; Sir 14:1, 2, 20; 25:8, 9; 48:11; 50:28) and that it frames Paul's recitation in 4:6-8, indicates that 4:6-8 should be classified as wisdom rhetorlect.

Rom 4:6-8 functions to support 4:4-5. The presence of wisdom rhetorlect is indicated by Paul's rhetorical question couched in terms of "righteousness apart from deeds." This recalls the topic of 4:4-5. Thus, as in 4:4-5, Paul uses wisdom rhetorlect in 4:6-8 to coax the implied audience to seek a righteousness that is obtained apart from the deeds of the law. Paul does this in several ways.

3.3.5.1 Δαυὶδ Λέγει

As a personified Scripture λέγει (speaks) in 4:3, which serves as a riposte to the challenge that the Judean interlocutor asks (λέγει) in 4:1, so now David also λέγει which serves as a riposte to the Judean interlocutor's challenge in 4:1.²⁹⁴ At the same time, this riposte in 4:3 supports Paul's contention in 4:4-5.

The name "David" in 4:6 is a cultural reference in the intertexture of Sociorhetorical Interpretation. Its significance can be elicited from two (1:3; 15:12) of its four occurrences in Romans.²⁹⁵ Rom 1:3 describes Jesus as being a descendant of David (ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυίδ). This description represents a prophetic hope long awaited by the nation of Israel (Isa 11; Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:23-31; 37:24-28; *Pss. Sol.* 17:23-51; 4 QFlor 1:10-13; 4QpGen 49; *Shemoneh Esreh* 14-15) that the messiah will come from the seed of David. Similarly, the description "root of Jesse" in 15:12 refers to the messiah (Isa 11:1; Sir 47:22; Rev 5:5; 22:16) as David's descendant. The Hebrew Bible corroborates the above contention, as kings who

293. Robbins, *Invention*, 222, 229, 248–49.

294. As discussed above on pp. 123-124, Paul is involved in an intra-Judean debate with a Judean interlocutor. Thus, Paul is articulating the question posed by the Judean interlocutor.

295. The contexts of the other two occurrences 4:6 and 11:9 do not reveal clearly how one should understand David as a reference in Sociorhetorical Interpretation.

rule Israel in the united kingdom are often described as the “house” (בֵּית) of David, which is kinship terminology.²⁹⁶ In other words, David is to be construed not only as the first king in the Davidic dynasty, but the patriarch of the Davidic dynasty.

The above conclusion that David is a father figure is borne out by the social organisation of the nation of Israel which was ruled by kinship. Several comments are needed to elucidate this social organisation. First, Coote posits that “in the biblical world, tribal organization was nearly always embedded in monarchic settings, and therefore nearly always took shape in relation to monarchic court policy and discourse.”²⁹⁷ This finds evidence in the relationship between monarchy and tribe in the Mari kingdom as recorded in the Middle Bronze Age Mari texts.²⁹⁸ In biblical history, David was made king over the whole of Israel by the tribes of Israel (2 Sam 2:4; 5:1-3). Knauf-Belleri remarks that “[t]ribal organization usually is the political response of a non-state population to a state expanding into their territory.”²⁹⁹ Thus, tribalism is embedded into a political system. Flanagan also convincingly shows that between the reigns of Saul and David, an intermediate rule by tribal chiefdom intervenes. This rule “provided leadership for family-based, but non-egalitarian, social groups.”³⁰⁰ This transition from chiefdom to monarchy was only completed during the reign of Solomon.³⁰¹

296. E.g., 2 Sam 2:4, 7, 10; 3:1; 5:11, 16; 2 King 12:19, 20; 14:18; 17:21.

297. Robert B. Coote, “Tribalism—Social Organization in the Biblical Israel,” in *Ancient Israel*, 38–9. He also critiques studies in biblical tribalism that erroneously tend to view village and field organisation as not being influenced by the political court in all periods.

298. See Victor H. Matthews, *Pastoral Nomadism in the Mari Kingdom (ca. 1830–1760 B.C.)*, Dissertation Series (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1978); also, Moshé Anbar, *Les Tribus Amurrites de Mari*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 9, who after studying the Mari documents concludes that there is interaction between tribal groups and the governing body: “Dans les documents se reflètent à la couche gouvernante ainsi que des simples citoyens.”

299. Ernst A. Knauf-Belleri, “Edom: The Social and Economic History,” in *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, ed. Diana V. Edelman, Archaeology and Biblical Studies 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 108.

Second, Gottwald provides a much needed corrective to how biblical scholars understand the social organisation of Israel:

Biblical scholars generally assume that Israel was internally articulated into “tribes,” and that these tribes were subdivided into “clans,” which were further divided into “families” or “fathers’ houses” . . . Yet as soon as one turns to the wider social-scientific literature, it emerges that “family,” “clan,” and “tribe” are terms that have been applied to an amazingly varied array of kinship and sociopolitical arrangements.³⁰²

A tribe, real or putative (fictive), is basically “a social extension of household kinship conceptions.”³⁰³ This conceptualisation is evident in what the rest of the Israelite tribes (Benjamin and the other northern tribes) said in making David their king: “We are your bone and flesh” (2 Sam 5:1).³⁰⁴ After the main body of Israelites had punished the tribe of Benjamin, Judg 21:6 records that “the sons of Israel had compassion on אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (his brother).” This construct noun takes on a masculine singular suffix that refers to the plural “the sons of Israel.” In other words, the relationship between the tribe of Benjamin and the other tribes of Israel is regarded as (putative) kinship.

In Mediterranean honour-shame culture, the patriarch (or matriarch) of a family, tribe, or clan is responsible for maintaining the honour of the family’s social standing. Paying honour to the patriarch (or matriarch) is the duty of children. Paul, by attributing Psa 31:1-2 (LXX) to David, emphasises that he (David) possesses royal patriarchal authority. But David

300. Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 115.

301. James W. Flanagan, “Chiefs In Israel,” *JSOT* 20 (1981): 66–67.

302. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250–1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 257–84.

303. Coote, “Tribalism,” 39.

304. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 194, notes that one reason why the northern tribes approached David to be their king was because of strong kinship ties.

is not just any patriarch. His authority, measured by the level of honour, is absolute because David's honour was ascribed by God to him for his faithfulness (Sir 47:1-11; 1 Macc 2:57; 1 Sam 13:14; cf. 2 Sam 7:1-17). As in 4:3 where Paul uses the dissimulation mode of ideology to tap into the authority of the Judean sacred scriptures by the clause ἡ γραφή λέγει, here Paul again employs dissimulation by the clause Δαυιδ λέγει to assume the authority of the royal patriarch David to persuade his implied audience to pursue a righteousness that is derived apart from deeds.

3.3.5.2 Μακάριοι

Ideological power is mobilised in the use of the cognates containing μακαρ- (blessedness/blessed) in several ways. Although the term μακαρισμός is a new term at this point of the argument, it is in essence another expression related to honour, and hence, is not abruptly introduced. That it carries the meaning of honour is apparent in Gal 4:15, a text that is intertextually related to Romans. In Gal 4:15, μακαρισμός is correlated to Gal 4:13-14 when the Galatians accepted Paul despite his “physical infirmity” (Gal 4:13) which could have caused the Galatians to be ashamed of Paul. But they regarded the reception of Paul an honour because he preached to them the gospel. Hence, μακαρισμός is another vocabulary for honour, a claim for boasting.

This word also generates ideological power in other ways. In Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's terminology, Paul adopts a “pragmatic” approach where an act or event is evaluated by its favourable or unfavourable consequences. Here, the value of the consequent “blessedness” is easily transferred from the consequence to the cause which is the state of righteousness acquired apart from deeds. No justification is required as acceptance of that act (in this case, righteousness apart from deeds) is a matter of common sense.³⁰⁵ The value placed upon the cause, righteousness apart from deeds, is derived from the consequence “blessedness.” The question is from where “blessedness” derives its value. Underlying the word “blessedness” is the premise that it carries performative power from God when spoken

305. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 266–67.

by a person of divine authority.³⁰⁶ Moreover, blessedness is related to the concept of “favour” and therefore, can be associated with client-patron relations that God establishes with God’s people. Thus, this blessing is given by the divine patron. The thrice-repeated cognates of μακαρ- frame 4:6-8 and weave the sensory-aesthetic texture, a sub-texture of inner texture, so that the conception that blessing comes with trust in God would be ringing in the ears of the implied audience, and hence, sustained in their minds.³⁰⁷ The pronouncement of blessing also contains another aspect of the sensory-aesthetic texture. As discussed above,³⁰⁸ the mouth, in the Mediterranean world, is a “key strategy for establishing, maintaining and defending honor.”³⁰⁹ By the recitation of Psa 31:1-2a (LXX), David is ascribing honour (one of the two available means of acquiring the Mediterranean honour) to the person whose transgressions are forgiven and who does not rely on the deeds of the Mosaic law. But that which results in “blessing” is not just righteousness, but righteousness which comes apart from deeds of the Mosaic law which Paul’s recitation of Psa 31:1-2 (LXX) seeks to prove. I shall discuss below how this citation bolsters Paul’s thesis.

3.3.5.3 Psa 31:1-2a (LXX)

Paul cites only Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) and omits the second half of the second colon, “in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa 31:2b [LXX]). The reason is that Psa 31:2b, as perceived by the implied audience, appears to contradict Paul’s intent. At the same time, however, by citing just Psa 31:1-2a (LXX), Paul is able to include the essence of the entire psalm without highlighting the parts of the psalm which would seemingly contradict his (Paul’s) intent. This is shown by two observations. First, 31:1-2 is the prologue to the entire psalm. Several

306. Kent H. Richards, “Bless/Blessing,” *ABD*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:756; cf. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

307. Robbins, *Exploring*, 29–30.

308. See above, p. 97.

309. Malina, “Communicativeness,” 28.

observations support my point. Psa 31:3 (LXX) begins with the particle ὅτι.³¹⁰ This particle should be construed as causal as 31:3 describes a state that is opposite to that of the blessedness mentioned in 31:1-2: in his unrepentant state, the psalmist says that “my body wasted away through my groaning all day long”; “your hand was heavy upon me”; “my strength was dried up.” The flow of the argument also corroborates the centrality of blessedness in 31:1-2. The psalm begins with the section 31:1-2 which functions as a pronouncement of blessedness. This is followed by 31:3-5 which recounts the process that led up to this state of blessedness. This state of blessedness is then elaborated in 31:6-7. That the section 31:8-11 constitutes the psalmist’s exhortation that is directed at his implied audience is demonstrated by two observations. Verses 31:8-9 is sandwiched between 31:3-7 and 31:10-11. Since the speakers of 31:3-7 and 31:10-11 are clearly the psalmist, construing the speaker of 31:8-9 as the psalmist is reasonable. Furthermore, since 31:10-11 contains instructions given by the psalmist to his implied audience, that the immediately preceding 31:8-9 is of the same nature is reasonable.³¹¹

Second, Paul introduces 4:6-8 with 4:6 which contains the recitation of Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) and the noun δικαιοσύνη. In Psa 31:8-11 (LXX) where the psalmist applies the psalm to his (the psalmist’s) audience, he describes the recipient of Yahweh’s blessing as a δίκαιος man (verse 11). This is the *only* occurrence in the psalm that contains the δικ- cognate. This intimates that when Paul cites Psa 31:1-2a (LXX), he has an eye on not only the start of the psalm but also its conclusion (Psa 31:11 [LXX]).

With my point that Paul uses the entire psalm established, I shall explain how the recitation of Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) bolsters Paul’s point that righteousness, according to Psa

310. This Greek particle translates the Hebrew וְ which can take on a causal meaning (BDB, 473). Contra Robert G. Bratcher and William D. Reyrburn, *A Handbook on Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 3; Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 263.

311. Contra Bratcher and Reyrburn, *A Handbook on Psalms*, 308, who incorrectly attributes the speech in Psa 32:8-9 [Heb.] to Yahweh. Likewise, Mitchell S. J. Dahood, *Psalms 1–50*, AB (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 196.

31:1-2a (LXX), does not come by deeds of the Mosaic law. Psa 31:1-2 (LXX) consists of a pair of synonymous couplets

Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven (A)
 whose sin is covered (B)
 Blessed are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity (A')
 and in whose mouth there is no deceit (B')

This structural layout implies that colon A is parallel to colon A' and colon B is (purportedly but not exactly semantically) parallel to B'. The similarity sets the background against which we can interpret the differences between the two cola.³¹² To properly interpret the significance of the differences, how the parallel cola are related to one another needs to be investigated as poetry tends to be elliptical in nature.³¹³ Kugel argues that the second colon in Semitic parallelism accentuates the first colon.³¹⁴ This implies that the emphasis of the couplet in Psa 31:1-2 (LXX) is on the Lord's imputation of righteousness to a person. Paul's citation of Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) is, thus, apropos in reinforcing the need for a righteousness that has value in God's estimate (4:2; cf. Gen 15:6). The psalmist, by placing them in parallel, seems to imply that the result of having sins covered up requires the fulfilment of colon B'. This understanding is borne out by what follows, that is, the meaning of colon B' "in whose spirit there is no deceit," is explicated by what follows in Psa 31:3-5 (LXX), where the psalmist acknowledges his sin.³¹⁵ The verbal citation of an incomplete couplet in Psa 31:1-2a

312. J. P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide*, in *Poetry*, trans. Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 78–79.

313. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 45.

314. James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 51–58.

315. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 266, has a similar interpretation as mine when he says that "[t]he fourth line of the parallel structure (v 2b) refers to the absence of *deceit*; . . . by which forgiveness is granted."

(LXX) is poetically jarring as it gives the implied audience a sense of incompleteness. As mentioned above, the reason why Paul cites only Psa 1:1-2a is to avoid a possible misunderstanding that the psalmist's transgression has obtained forgiveness because his mouth contains no deceit (31:2b [LXX]). At the same time, by creating in the implied audience a sense of an incomplete reading of the psalm, Paul was probably making use of the elliptical nature of poetry to prompt the audience to fill in the gap left by the missing second half of colon B'.³¹⁶ That which is to be filled in by the implied audience would naturally be the missing half colon: "in whose mouth there is no deceit." But since this missing half colon serves as the heading for what follows in Psa 31:3-5 (LXX) where repentance from sin is stressed, the desired effect would be to bring to the mind of the implied audience the point that forgiveness of iniquities was achieved not by deeds of the Mosaic law but by repentance.

3.3.5.4 Secondary Rhetorolects

In order to mobilise ideological power to coax the implied audience into pursuing a state of "blessedness," Paul, as discussed above, uses the dominant rhetorolect of the passage, wisdom rhetorolect. At the same time he introduces prophetic rhetorolect into this overarching wisdom rhetorolect. Its presence is indicated by the words ἀνομία (Psa 31:1 [LXX]) and ἁμαρτία (Psa 31:1, 2 [LXX]). These two words are important vocabulary in the prophetic discourses of the Hebrew Bible as they are used to indict the sinning of ancient Israelites. These words in the firstspace conjure up in the secondspace images of God as King and David as a prophet sent by God to highlight sin and the threat that is attached to unforgiven sins. Fauconnier and Turner explain the resulting effect on the audience: "[t]here is nothing more basic in human life than cause and effect."³¹⁷ One outworking of cause-effect is "stimulus-response conditioning."³¹⁸ In this case, as Paul has proven in 4:2-5 that Abraham did not and the implied audience, too, does not become righteous by deeds, the

316. Fokkelman, *Poetry*, 73, describes this technique as "gapping."

317. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 75.

318. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 76.

threat brought on the implied audience by a prophet for unforgiven sins is real. This will urge the implied audience to search for a way to resolve this threat. In this way, priestly rhetorolect is introduced into the rhetoric. That priestly rhetorolect is invoked is indicated by the use of Psalm 32 (Psalm 31 [LXX]) which was frequently cited during the Day of Atonement. Furthermore, the focus on “iniquities are forgiven” and “sins are covered” recalls the secondspace of the priestly rhetorolect.³¹⁹ At this point of the argument, Psalm 31 (LXX) offers Paul a ready made text in several ways.

First, Psalm 31 (LXX) was frequently recited during the Day of Atonement.³²⁰ It is probable that the real audience of Romans, Judean Christians and gentile Christians, the latter of whom were probably also God-fearers, knew Psalm 31 (LXX) because it was recited as part of the liturgy associated with the Day of Atonement. Several observations support my point. This day was observed by God-fearers. Philo and Josephus boast that many God-fearers observed the Day of Atonement.³²¹ Furthermore, Ben Ezra is probably right to argue that the Day of Atonement was observed by first century CE Christians. His point finds evidence in Acts 27:9 where ἡ νηστεία refers to the fast conducted during the Day of Atonement. He comments that, in the context of Acts 27:9, this word

appears with complete neutrality in the context, without polemical or pejorative accretions. In the same way, a modern Jew would understand a friend saying in late summer that he will return ‘after the holidays’ as meaning “at the end of Sukkot.” We can therefore assume that the attitude of Luke and his addressees to the fast of the Day of Atonement was to that of a revered and observed festival.³²²

319. See the description of the thirdspace of priestly rhetorolect in Robbins, *Invention*, 109, which specifies that the objective of a rhetoric that uses priestly rhetorolect is to persuade the audience to become “a receiver of beneficial exchange of holiness and purity between God and humans.”

320. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 207; see Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Munich: Beck’sche, 1926–28), 3.202–3.

321. Philo *Mos.* 2.20–25; Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.282.

322. So Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 775; I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, TNTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 406; Ben

Ben Ezra acknowledges the possibility that ἡ νηστεία in Acts 27:9 was simply “a common reference to the time of the year.”³²³ The problem with such a possibility, as he correctly retorts, is that there is no instance of “another non-Jewish source using ‘the fast’ as common chronological reference in a non-polemical or exegetical context.”³²⁴ That Luke should use a Judean calendaric reference to address a secular problem indicates that Luke and his implied readers observed the Day of Atonement.³²⁵ There are also other instances in the New Testament which indicate that early Judean Christians attended temple services. Acts 2:46, 3:1, and 5:20 show the original apostles attending the temple, day after day, while in Acts 21:26ff., Paul is depicted as observing temple worship. Judean festivals are also regularly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. These included Pentecost (Acts 2:1; cf. 1 Cor 16:8), Passover (Acts 12:3ff.), and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Acts 20:6).³²⁶ Furthermore, the fact that Paul in Rom 14:5-6 allows the Christians in Rome the freedom to observe Judean festivals shows that first century CE Christians were likely still observing Judean festivals.³²⁷ One of these festivals would be the Day of the Atonement in view of its importance to

Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 762, et al.

323. Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov, “Review of Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur*,” *SCJR* 1 (2006): R16, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/view/1373/1283> (accessed 6 February 2015).

324. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “Fasting with Jews, Thinking with Scapegoats: Some Remarks on Yom Kippur in Early Judaism and Christianity, in Particular 4Q541, *Barnabas* 7, Matthew 27 and Acts 27,” in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 173. Similarly, Markus Tiwald, “Christ as Hilasterion (Rom 3:25): Pauline Theology on the Day of Atonement in the Mirror of Early Jewish Thought,” in *The Day of Atonement*, 196.

325. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “‘Christians’ Observing ‘Jewish’ Festivals of Autumn,” in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry, *WUNT* 158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 62.

326. G. Rouwhorst, “The Origins and Evolution of Early Christian Pentecost,” *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 309–11.

327. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century*, *WUNT* 163 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 215–16.

Judeans. In fact, Paul thinks that Christians who observe such Judean festivals can honour God.³²⁸

The above discussion shows that first century CE Christians which include gentile God-fearers observed the festival of the Day of Atonement. For gentile God-fearers to properly observe this important Judean festival, however, it is reasonable to expect that the various parts of the festival should be made intelligible to them. This would include the recitation of Psalm 32 (Psalm 31 [LXX]), which could have been read out in Hebrew, Aramaic, or even Greek.³²⁹ Levine's comments are helpful:

There can be little question that Jews of the Diaspora worshipped in the vernacular, although evidence in this regard is largely inferential. We know of some prayers with an apparently Jewish orientation that have been preserved in early church documents, although we cannot be certain that the source was synagogue liturgy. Clear cut evidence for the use of Greek is preserved in Justinian's famous *Novella* 156 of 553 C.E., wherein it is stated that Jews read the Torah in Greek.

Thus, when Paul cites Psa 32:1-2a (Psa 31:1-2a [LXX]), the implied audience would recall the Day of Atonement and thereby the temple, altar, or some place of worship. Furthermore, the verb ἀφιέναι is frequently used with regards to sin and guilt offerings (Leviticus 4, 5 [LXX]). These factors create the firstspace consisting of the altar and the temple which conjures in the secondspace the image of God as holy and pure. Regarding this second space, the image of God as holy and pure is also made more persuasive to the implied audience by purity rules: as discussed above, rules of purity, which mark off clean and unclean food and demarcate the temple precincts, are deeply entrenched in the mind of a Judean. These purity rules, thus, form the intangible institution from which Paul derives ideological power to persuade the implied audience of God's holiness.³³⁰ This legitimises God's demand for

328. Ben Ezra, "Christians," 60–61.

329. Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 158.

330. See Thompson, *Studies*, 129, for how ideological power is mobilised. He argues that "the power to act must be related to the institutional site from which it derives."

holiness.³³¹ The audience is, therefore, persuaded to maintain a relationship of holiness between God and humans.³³² This desire for holiness will cause the implied audience to agree with David, and hence, Paul's assessment that a person whose transgressions are forgiven is blessed.

Second, Psa 31:1-2a (LXX) is a historical intertexture that recalls the Day of Atonement. Several aspects of this day would probably be obvious to the implied audience.³³³ The implied audience would understand the significance of this day as summarised in Leviticus 16, an important text that is closely related to the observance of the Day of Atonement: the priest "shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" (Lev 16:33). This truth is clearly communicated by means of a "powerful visual aid" to the public when a goat was despatched into the wilderness.³³⁴ This goat was the one on which Aaron laid his hands and confessed "over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel and their transgressions, all their sins, putting on the head of the goat . . . [which] shall bear on itself all their iniquities" (Lev 16:21). Such an object lesson constitutes rhetography, where a goat that bears the sins of the people communicates in clear terms the "forgiveness of iniquities" apart from deeds. Furthermore, in view of the tight nexus between Romans 4 and 3:21-31, the implied audience would possibly recall the mercy seat (ἰλαστήριον) which signifies Christ as atonement for sins (3:25).

Thus, the recitation of Psa 31 (LXX), on the one hand, impresses upon the audience the threat of unforgiven sins, and on the other hand, offers the implied audience relief from

331. Thompson, *Studies*, 57, calls it a mis-recognition of cultural arbitrariness so as legitimise the cultural arbitrariness.

332. See above, footnote 319.

333. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 118–20, describes a historical intertexture as one that "textualizes" past experience into a 'particular event' or 'a particular period of time.'"

334. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 236–37.

the forgiveness of sins. Fauconnier and Turner emphasise that the cause (here, the threat) and effect (here, forgiveness of sins) “have to be brought together in one mental space.”³³⁵ In other words, the audience visualises the threat and the effect as one. The resulting third space is that the implied audience regards their sins as having been resolved. This would lead the implied audience to give mental assent that a person whose sins are forgiven is indeed blessed, and hence, agree that to be regarded as righteous apart from deeds is blessed.

The “righteousness” that results in blessedness should not be read simply as a contrast to the person described in the psalm whose transgressions have not been forgiven or whose sins are not covered. Rather, in keeping with how the term righteousness is used in what precedes, “righteousness” here is essentially relational. It refers to David’s status in his covenant relationship with God where David is regarded as righteous by God. This relationship is maintained when David’s transgressions are forgiven. Noteworthy also is the common stress on both Abraham’s and David’s righteousness, where their righteousness is obtained when they trust God, their patron.

335. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 76.

CHAPTER 4
THE RHETORIC OF ROMANS 4
PART TWO

4.1 Rom 4:9-12

The topos “circumcision” dominates this section and suggests priestly rhetorolect as the overarching rhetorolect of this section. Several observations demonstrate my point. During circumcision, blood is shed. This invokes the firstspace (temple and afflicted body) of priestly rhetorolect. Also, the rite of circumcision is performed in formal religious settings.¹ This belongs to the firstspace of priestly rhetorolect. Rom 4:9-12 discusses whether or not circumcision can take on a mediating role of communicating righteousness to Christians. This fits into the thirdspace of priestly rhetorolect which seeks to move the implied audience to seek after “holiness and purity between God and humans.”² Thus, priestly rhetorolect fits into the discussion of circumcision here. In this section Paul rejects the mediating role of circumcision and investigates who or what can take the role of mediating righteousness. In response Paul constructs a myth of origins that instates Abraham

1. S. Safrai, “Home and Family,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 767, comments that various traditions from the Second Temple period record that on the eighth day of circumcision, many people gathered for celebration and feasting. Moreover, “[a]lthough only the later [Tannaitic] sources mention a quorum of ten men for circumcision and the accompanying blessings, it seems that in actual practice, this was the ancient rule as well.” Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 59, observes that by the first century CE, two institutions, the *chavurah* and the synagogue, had emerged. Circumcision was performed in these two institutions. Levine, *Judaism*, 139, comments that by the first century CE, the synagogue had become a “universal Jewish institution.” Considering that circumcision is central to Judaism, it is reasonable to think that this important rite would be performed in the synagogue.

2. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

as father. Through Abraham's fatherhood and not circumcision, Paul contends Judeans and gentiles inherit righteousness.

4.1.1 Rom 4:9

Paul, representing the Judean interlocutor, introduces 4:9-12 with a rhetorical question in 4:9.³ The inferential οὖν and the word μακαρισμός which recalls 4:6-8 pick up the preceding argument and move the argument forward. The question is how. Commentators think that Paul takes up the topic on circumcision to address a common misconception that this blessing is available only to Judeans. Paul aims, so they say, to shed light on the implication of Psalm 31 (LXX).⁴ As much as this is part of Paul's objective, however, this position does not take seriously the inferential force of οὖν. Rather, it tends to reduce it to a resumptive, as if Paul is taking up the subject of "blessing" without much regard for the argument of 4:6-8.⁵

More likely, the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος points not only to the blessedness that he has just constructed by his exposition of Psalm 31 (LXX), but also to the whole point that Paul has just established in 4:2-8, namely, that Abraham is promised many descendants by trust in God and not by deeds of the Mosaic law.⁶ In other words, the whole argument of 4:2-8, and not just 4:6-8, leads to the argument in 4:9-12. This is shown by the fact that 4:2-5 is closely linked to 4:6-8 through the discussion on "blessedness." More precisely, 4:2-8 discusses the nature of a kinship honour that has value before God. This lays the premise for Paul to challenge and refute the Judean mindset contained in the rhetorical question of 4:9

3. As discussed above on pp. 123-124, Paul is involved in an intra-Judean debate with a Judean interlocutor. Thus, Paul is articulating the question posed by the Judean interlocutor. Similarly, Jipp, "Rereading," 225; Jewett, *Romans*, 317.

4. So Käsemann, *Commentary*, 114; Schreiner, *Romans*, 224; Moo, *Romans*, 267; Jewett, *Romans*, 317.

5. E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 267, who thinks that 4:9 seeks to add a "further dimension" to Psa 32:1-2. Jewett, *Romans*, 317, while recognizing that 4:9 is tied to the preceding context by both οὖν and the mention of "blessing," does not explore how 4:9-12 develops 4:2-8.

6. See above, p. 145.

that this blessedness is given only to the “circumcised,” that is, Judeans. This implies that 4:2-8 lays the foundation for the construction of a myth of origins for gentile Christians that is later made explicit in 4:11-12.

By recalling the word “blessedness” (4:9), Paul applies the “blessedness” constructed in the preceding 4:2-8 to the groups “circumcised” and “uncircumcised.” This intimates that Paul has begun to address the social dissension between Judean and gentile Christians. The referent of ὁ μακαρισμός is basically the righteousness of 4:6. Paul, however, has chosen to couch it in terms of “blessedness.” Fauconnier and Turner’s insights on conceptual blending help. By the end of the rhetoric of 4:6-8, Paul, by blending in the thirdspace of the implied audience’s mind, seeks to persuade the implied audience (comprising both Judean and gentile Christians) that they are blessed.⁷ This thirdspace, as discussed above, was produced by cause-effect and compression contained in the generic space. That being said, the individual inputs can also be distinguished to achieve what Fauconnier and Turner call “global insight” that gives a sense of deep understanding.⁸ In other words, although this blessedness is compressed, it can also be decompressed into its individual input spaces. Thus, the topos “blessedness” carries with it the input space that “blessedness” is a result of forgiveness of sins and not deeds of the Mosaic law. Paul by juxtaposing “blessedness” and circumcision as a mediator of righteousness, the aim of priestly rhetorlect, creates a disanalogy that is jarring for the implied audience.⁹ In other words, at the onset, Paul is casting circumcision in a bad light by juxtaposing blessedness and circumcision. With that, Paul probably could have drawn out the conclusion that he later does in 4:11-12. Instead, however, attention is shifted

7. See Robbins, *Invention*, 109, for a description of the thirdspace of “wisdom rhetorlect.” The thirdspace creates a “human body as producer of goodness and righteousness.” This means that the implied audience is persuaded to “produce good, righteous action, thought, will, and speech with the aid of God’s wisdom” (see his p. 110).

8. See Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 119, 78–78, who stress that understanding requires one to grasp the parts and the whole.

9. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 99.

to the topos circumcision. Why Paul chooses to delay the conclusion has to do with the role circumcision plays in the dissension between Judeans and gentiles.

Περιτομή, by its widespread adherence among Judeans, has become a metonym that refers to Judeans. Ἀκροβυστία, on the other hand, is a term Judeans use to refer to gentiles.¹⁰ Reading these two terms against the backdrop of a dissension between Judean and gentile Christians indicate that Paul is here addressing a cultural intertexture where Judeans reject gentiles because they are uncircumcised. The severity of this rejection can be gleaned from the role circumcision plays in the preceding passages. The fact that a section (2:25-29) is devoted to putting circumcision into perspective indicates that Judeans regard circumcision as important. Furthermore, it appears that Judeans regard circumcision as being more important than keeping the moral law of Moses (2:25). Judeans also view circumcision as that which defines their ethnicity (2:28-29). The immediately preceding context (3:29-30) also corroborates the latter point: “Or is God the God of Judeans only? Is he not the God of gentiles also, since God is one? And he will make righteous the circumcised on the ground of trust [in God] and the uncircumcised through the same trust [in God]” (3:29-30). This passage must be read in light of the social and cultural texture that every nation has a patron god. By saying that “God is one,” Paul implies that circumcision does not determine whether or not a nation or an ethnic group belongs to God. Thus, Paul needs to address this main obstacle that is impeding reconciliation between Judean and gentile Christians before he can take the final step in crafting a myth of origins for gentile Christians. Paul begins by refuting the notion that “this blessedness” is extended only to the circumcised. He does this by citing again Gen 15:6: “trust was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.” This citation aims to do two things.

First, it reiterates the previous conclusion (4:5) reached by the rhetoric in 4:2-8. Several observations show this. Although 4:9 is a recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX), it follows

10. E.g., in 1 Macc 1:15, this term is used to refer to Judeans who become uncircumcised and abandon the “holy covenant” and join the gentiles (ἔθνη).

4:5 more closely. This is demonstrated by the initial position of the verb λογίζεσθαι, and the use of the verb πιστεύειν instead of the noun πίστις. The display below clarifies my point:

Gen 15:6 (LXX): ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην

Rom 4:5: λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην

Rom 4:9: ἐλογίσθη τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην

An observation about the repetitive-progressive texture, a sub-texture of the inner texture of Socio-rhetorical Interpretation, also corroborates my point. In 4:1, Paul, who represents the Judean interlocutor, introduces a rhetorical question with “we say [λέγειν]” that expects to be negated by the implied audience comprising Judean and gentile Christians. The refutation in 4:3 is introduced with “the Scripture says [λέγειν],” where Paul cites Gen 15:6 (LXX). Similarly, in 4:9a, Paul, representing the Judean interlocutor, asks a rhetorical question that expects to be negated by the implied audience. The refutation in 4:9b, which is also taken from Gen 15:6 (LXX), however, is introduced not with “the Scripture says” but with “we say [λέγειν].” To maintain a repetitive-argumentative structure that is structured around the verb λέγειν, we would expect Paul to say in 4:9 that “the Scripture says,” as in 4:3. Paul, however, here introduces the citation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) with “we say” to signify that the Judean interlocutor’s rhetorical question in 4:1, which implies that Judeans received Abraham as forefather by human efforts, has been modified by the rhetoric in 4:2-8. In other words, in Paul’s intra-Judean debate, the Judean interlocutor, together with Paul, now agrees with the conclusion reached that “trust [in God] was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.” This reinforces my earlier point that 4:2-8 lays the foundation for the myth of origins of the gentile Christians in 4:11-12. What Paul intends in 4:9 is to reiterate the foundational nature of this myth of origins that Abraham became the father of many descendants by trust in God before he addresses the obstacle posed by the rite of circumcision.

Second, this citation also sets the stage for 4:10-11.¹¹ Paul will now seek to remove

11. So Moo, *Romans*, 267.

the rite of circumcision as a prerequisite to becoming Abraham's descendant before he completes his construction of a myth of origins for gentile Christians.

4.1.2 Rom 4:10

The preceding argument has established that the blessedness that results in Abraham's fatherhood of many descendants is an ascribed honour. With the connective οὖν and ἐλογίσθη which recall the argument in 4:4-5, Paul indicates that he is ready to take the argument to the next stage with what he has established in the preceding argument (4:2-8) as a springboard. He seeks to answer the following question: was the ascribed honour that led to Abraham's fatherhood obtained ἐν περιτομῇ ὄντι ἢ ἐν ἀκροβυσταί? Here, Paul focuses not only on the rite of circumcision but the states of circumcision or uncircumcision as signified by the present participle ὄντι and the temporal dative.¹² This participle emphasises circumcision or uncircumcision as a settled state of affairs and not merely as an act.¹³ Such a construction is a fitting response to 4:4-5 where Paul construes trust as not merely an act but a settled state that results from his act of trusting God in Genesis 15. Specifically, the emphasis on a settled state by the use of the present participle ὄντι sharpens the focus on how Abraham established a favourable patron-client relationship with God, that it was by trust in God, as argued earlier in 4:2-8 and reiterated in 4:9, and not by circumcision. To do that, Paul uses the fact that in the Genesis narrative, Abraham was reckoned as being righteous in Genesis 15 before he was circumcised in Genesis 17.¹⁴ That makes it self-evident that Abraham was uncircumcised when he was regarded as righteous in his relationship with his patron, God. This paves the way for Paul to conclude his construction of the nature of Abraham's fatherhood in 4:11.

12. BDF §107.

13. BDAG, "εἰμί," 286. The present participle ὄντι occurs two other times (7:23; 12:3), both of which denote a settled state of affairs.

14. The Genesis chronology of these two events, which the implied audience probably has knowledge of, spans over a minimum of 13 years (cf. Gen 16:16 and Gen 17:24).

4.1.3 Rom 4:11

Most commentators construe 4:11 as a digression from Paul's main objective of constructing a myth of origins. They think that, in order to undermine circumcision as a means of attaining righteousness, Paul explains the right use of circumcision, namely, that it is a seal of righteousness.¹⁵ The weakness of this interpretation is that Paul does not directly refute circumcision as a means to obtain righteousness. As commentators agree, Paul only implies that circumcision is not a means to obtaining righteousness.¹⁶ A better interpretation is that 4:11 does not merely clarify the meaning of circumcision but leads into or supports the myth of origins for Judean Christians. Since 4:11b describes Abraham as being the father of both gentile and Judean Christians, we would expect Paul to construct a myth of origins for both groups. This is precisely what Paul does here. He contends that just as the fact that Abraham was regarded as righteous when he was uncircumcised suits him for the role of father of gentile Christians, Abraham receiving the sign of circumcision fits him for the role of father of Judean Christians. That this is Paul's meaning is clear when one reads 4:11 for what it says and not for what it might be thought to imply. Paul says that Abraham received a sign (σημεῖον) whose content is signified by the genitive of apposition, περιτομῆς. Σφραγίδα is the complement in the object-complement construction and describes the object σημεῖον. Thus, the emphasis of 4:11a is that circumcision is a σφραγίς, that is, a seal that affirms the reality of righteousness that comes by trust (τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως).¹⁷ This implies that Paul regards circumcision in 4:11 as advancing his argument rather than, against most commentators, as something to be attacked. Construing a constructive role for circumcision in Paul's rhetoric ties in with Esler's contention that in Romans 4, Paul is not attempting to persuade the implied audience to abandon their Judean ethnic identity which is connected to circumcision. In other words, by constructing a myth of origins for Judean Christians in

15. E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 268; Jewett, *Romans*, 318.

16. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 209, thinks that Paul's implication is clear; similarly, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 236.

17. BDAG, "σφραγίς," 980❹.

terms of circumcision, Paul is preserving the Judeans' sense of ethnic identity.¹⁸ To do otherwise, that is, to undermine the meaning of circumcision as one that marks out a Judean would be viewed by Judeans as an attack on their ethnic identity. Paul needs to defend circumcision in view of the quarrel in 14:1-15:13 where the strong (gentile Christians) are somehow regarding the weak (Judean Christians) as inferior for observing certain rites and rituals of Judaism.¹⁹ But Paul, by stating that circumcision is a seal, is not merely defending the ethnic identity of Judeans, he is also strengthening the fact that Abraham was made righteous on account of his trust in God. This move reinforces the myth of origins he constructs for gentile Christians. How circumcision further advances his argument will be explained below.

Rom 4:11 contains an oral-scribal intertexture recitation: the words σημεῖον and περιτομῆς recall similar terms in Gen 17:11 (LXX); Paul probably recited σημεῖον διαθήκης (Gen 17:11 [LXX]) as σημεῖον . . . τῆς δικαιοσύνης. This is probable in view of the following observation. The clause ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην, other than the reference to Abraham, is only used one other time in the LXX, in Psa 105:31, where it refers to Phinehas who punished his fellow Israelites for indulging in sexual immorality: ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην εἰς γενεάν καὶ γενεάν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος.²⁰ What is entailed in this righteousness is described in Num 25:10-13 (LXX) where Yahweh enacted a διαθήκη εἰρήνης (Num 25:12 [LXX]) with Phinehas and his descendants. Paul's intent is to garner support from a Hebrew Bible text (Gen 17:11 [LXX]) which talks about circumcision as being a mark of Abraham's descendants which the implied audience would have understood as referring to Judeans. He replaces the word διαθήκη of Gen 17:11 (LXX), however, with "righteousness that comes from trust [in God]." In this way, Paul leverages the authority of Gen 17:11 with its stress on

18. Rom 2:17-29 does not contradict my point that Paul seeks to preserve the Judean ethnic identity denoted by circumcision. Rom 2:25 puts circumcision in the right perspective: "Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law." In other words, Paul is not opposing circumcision but circumcision that is not accompanied by obedience to the Mosaic law.

19. See above, p. 101.

20. N. T. Wright, "Paul and the Patriarch," 220.

circumcision. At the same time, he brings to the fore a righteousness that comes from trust in Yahweh. This recitation of transforming the initial identity of Abraham's descendants from one marked by circumcision to one based on trust paves the way for Paul to craft a myth of origins for both gentile and Judean Christians.

To understand why the fact of circumcision carries such ideological power, we shall examine the social and cultural texture of circumcision as a ritual.²¹ Catherine Bell comments that ritualisation is a strategy for exercising power in relationships within a particular social organisation.²² Her observations about rituals explain how ideological power is derived. I shall discuss some salient points of her essay in what follows.²³

First, “[b]eliefs could exist without rituals; rituals, however, could not exist without beliefs.”²⁴ Durkheim sharpens this point in his discussion of cults, stating that ritual allows the participating community to experience and affirm as real their ideas and beliefs.²⁵ Geertz's view is similar. He maintains that “in ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined fused as under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world.”²⁶ In Geertz's formulation, the imagined world is the culture of the people which he defines “as an ordered system of meaning and symbols, in terms of which social interaction takes place.” The lived world refers to the social system which contains “the pattern of social

21. Hodge, *If Sons*, 28, points out that circumcision is a ritual that “marks the baby as a member of the lineage of Abraham.” She refers to Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 99, to understand how rituals negotiate ideological power.

22. Bell, *Ritual*, 197; cf. Crystal Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society-The Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 14, who construes ritual form as an acting out of social relationships so as to express and alter these relationships.

23. Bell, *Ritual*, 30–117.

24. Edward Shils, “Ritual and Crisis,” in *The Religious Situation*, Donald R. Cutler (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 736.

25. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 463ff.

26. Geertz, *Interpretation*, 112–13.

interaction.”²⁷ The fusion of the world as lived and the world as imagined is critical for a successful ritual.

Second, a successful ritual will be one in which the culture and social system and their associated forces are integrated.²⁸ Where a ritual is successful, it facilitates changes. For instance, grief resulting from death is resolved by means of funeral rites.²⁹ But whether or not a ritual is successful rests in part upon how one construes the meaning of a ritual. Performance theorists deny a distinct dichotomy between the act of the ritual and the concepts that underlie it. They think that such a dichotomy impedes our understanding of how ritual activities are generated and experienced.³⁰ Instead, drawing on two points made by Singer, they think that people regard “their culture as encapsulated within discrete performances, which they can exhibit to outsiders as well as to themselves.”³¹ Also, “the most concrete observable units of the cultural structure” are communicated via ritual performances. In other words, meaning is to be found in the act of rituals rather than in the concepts underlying these rituals. The difficulty with this construal, that meaning is to be found in the performance of the ritual, is that it meets with the hermeneutical impasse that meaning cannot be

27. Geertz, *Interpretation*, 144.

28. See Geertz, *Interpretation*, 146ff, where he analyses a failed ritual of a Javanese funeral ceremony as a case where the people’s practice of their culture (the social system) does not fit with the local officiant’s perception of the culture. The result was that instead of helping the community to accept the fact of the death of a young boy, the rites produced distress.

29. Bell, *Ritual*, 34–35.

30. Ronald L. Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1982), 246, thinks that the result of dichotomising an act of a ritual and its concepts is to make the ritual “foreign”; Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 89, cites D. H. Lawrence’s remarks that such an “analysis presupposes a corpse.”

31. Milton Singer, *Traditional India: Structure and Change* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1959), xiii.

objectivised.³² Bell is, thus, right to conclude that performance theory, despite its advantages, still needs to fall back on the conceptual ideas and values that underlie ritual activity if the meaning of rituals is to be properly communicated.³³ We find this to be the case in Romans, where Paul in communicating the meaning of circumcision relies on the meaning he constructs through rhetoric. There, he explained the conceptual ideas underlying this rite earlier in 2:25-29, and now he elaborates them in 4:9-11.

Third, the ideological power of rituals lies not merely in the conceptual ideas but in how ritual effectively communicates these conceptual ideas. Ritual is defined by difference³⁴ and adopts strategies to differentiate itself from other acts so that they appear to be sacred.³⁵ This endows them with authority to mobilise ideological power. There is also a degree of ambiguity which makes rituals mysterious and impresses upon those present that they carry an authority “from well beyond the immediate human community itself.”³⁶

Paul also employs wisdom, priestly, and prophetic rhetorolects to mobilise ideological power. Besides priestly rhetorolect, “circumcision” also invokes wisdom rhetorolect since it is performed in the presence of the father whose son is to be circumcised. Prophetic rhetorolect is also used: σφραγίς probably refers to the seal of a king when read against the backdrop of the patron-client relationship, or more specifically, a vassal suzerainty Hittite treaty between God and Abraham. This fits the firstspace, political kingdom, of prophetic

32. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., trans. Garret Barden and John Cumming (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975).

33. Bell, *Ritual*, 43.

34. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Naked Man: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 671, notes that rituals centre on how they differ from similar activities in daily life. Cf. Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Random House, 1973), 11; Stanley J. Tambiah, “The Magical Words of Power,” *Man* 3, no. 2 (June 1968): 198; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 5.

35. Bell, *Ritual*, 90.

36. Bell, *Ritual*, 109–10. See also David I. Kertzer, *Ritual Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 69–75.

rhetorolect. The language of “righteousness” also corroborates the above observation. Thus, Paul seeks to persuade the implied audience amicably through an overarching wisdom rhetorolect. At the same time, by describing circumcision as a seal, Paul exerts the authority of a prophet (secondspace) to strengthen the priority of trust in God. By this, Paul hopes to elicit obedience from the implied audience (thirdspace), that is, the assent of the implied audience.

With that, Paul is now ready to craft a myth of origins for the gentile Christians. He does that with εἰς plus an articular infinitive, which should be construed as denoting result. This coheres with Paul’s intent. By emphasising a present reality, as is the force of a result clause, the result clause enables Paul to better influence the divided Judean and gentile Christians towards reconciliation.³⁷ Paul describes the gentile Christians as those who believe δι’ ἀκροβυστίας. This construction is unusual in that Paul could have used his usual construction ἐν ἀκροβυστία (4:10, 11, 12) to denote a state of uncircumcision. Hence, to translate the prepositional phrase as denoting attendant circumstances does not bring out the intended force. A correct construal should take on its usual emphasis, that of a marker of extension in time.³⁸ Thus, δι’ ἀκροβυστίας qualifies the present substantive participle τῶν πιστευόντων and emphasises that gentile Christians’ trust in God was exercised when they were in a settled state of uncircumcision. In this way, Paul accentuates the uncircumcision of those who trust in God.

Paul then adds another result clause, εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι αὐτοῖς δικαιοσύνην. The intent of this clause is debated. Some construe it as parenthetical, in that Paul while positing Abraham becoming the father of the uncircumcised seizes the opportunity to make a secondary point that gentiles become righteous on the basis of Abraham’s example.³⁹ Dunn

37. Contra the NRSV and most commentators; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 236–37; Moo, *Romans*, 269; Jewett, *Romans*, 319; Schreiner, *Romans*, 225.

38. BDAG, “διά,” 224❷.

39. So Moo, *Romans*, 270; Jewett, *Romans*, 319; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 210: “. . . in order that it might be clear that God accepted the uncircumcised as circumcised.” Similarly, some, like Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 237 and Käsemann, *Commentary*, 116, view it as

makes a similar point:

It is just this point which he wants to make (hence the addition of this clause [εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι αὐτοῖς δικαιοσύνην] to give the point emphasis); that God always intended to reckon righteousness to Gentiles without reference to whether they became proselytes and accepted the obligations (works) of the law.⁴⁰

More likely, this result clause should be viewed as pointing toward where Paul is finally heading, which is to posit that this is how gentile Christians attain righteousness, namely, by becoming descendants of Abraham. Scholars who hold to the former position have glossed over how these two result clauses, that Abraham becomes the father of gentile Christians and that gentile Christians obtain righteousness, relate to each other.⁴¹ Their interpretations do not address the following observation. Earlier, Paul had said that Abraham was regarded as righteous with the result that he received the promise of becoming a father. Here, however, righteousness follows on the heels of Abraham becoming a father. In other words, 4:2-8 argues that Abraham's trust leads to his attaining righteousness which eventually leads to fatherhood. Here, in 4:11, Abraham's trust leads to fatherhood which eventually leads to gentile Christians obtaining righteousness. The difference in order of fatherhood and righteousness has to do with the point I made in my discussion of 4:2-8. There, I argued that righteousness is ascribed and is to be inherited via becoming a descendant of Abraham.⁴² We need to note that the δικαιοσύνη that is reckoned to the gentile Christians must be read in light of the subject discussed here, which is about Abraham and his descendants. In other words, this righteousness describes a relationship in which God the patron is favourably disposed towards gentile Christians. The second result clause should be construed as what

“consecutive.”

40. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 210.

41. Barrett, *Romans*, 90; Michel, *Römer*, 120.

42. My interpretation is corroborated by the observation in Stowers, *Rereading*, 243–44: “The Greek indicates a relation of purpose or result between Abraham's faithfulness signified in the covenant and his fatherhood, which in turn results in the justification of gentiles (11c) and fatherhood of Jews (12).”

Paul is trying to finally derive and is not merely “parenthetical” or “consecutive.” This is also borne out by the fact that it responds directly to the main concern of Romans 4, which is to remove the boast of Judean Christians, on the basis that they alone possess righteousness, toward gentile Christians.

The role of πιστεύειν also needs to be explained in the equation between Abraham’s fatherhood and gentile Christians’ righteousness. The social intertexture that Paul is employing is the idea that a son will resemble his father. Several ancient sources evince the prevalence of such an assumption.⁴³ For example, in 4 Maccabees 13, when the seven brothers were undergoing torture, they urged each other to remain loyal (faithful) to God (4 Macc 13:13). They said to the brothers who were dragged away, “Do not put us to shame . . . or betray the brothers who have died before us” (4 Macc 13:18). Such love for one another, the author of 4 Maccabees explains, is a result of what “the divine and all wise Providence has bequeathed through the fathers to their descendants and which was implanted in the mother’s womb” (4 Macc 13:19). Another example is the *Iliad*, which was still influential and well-known in Paul’s day. When the character Diomedes questions the worth of Glaukos in the battlefield, Glaukos traces his lineage by going back ten generations. Diomedes discovered through Glaukos’ recounting that their forefathers had been friends and even guests in each other’s homes. On the basis of this realisation, Diomedes responds, saying, “You are my guest friend from far in the time of our fathers” (*Iliad* 6.215). This incident implies that descendants should manifest the behaviour of their ancestors.⁴⁴ In other words, gentile Christians, by trusting God, shows their resemblance to Abraham, and hence, prove themselves to be Abraham’s descendants. The result, as indicated by the infinitival result clause, is that gentiles inherit Abraham’s righteousness so that they become Abraham’s descendants. Thus, Abraham becomes a superordinate figure. This mobilises ideological power to unite Judean and gentile Christians on the basis that they have a common ancestor.

43. Cited by Hodge, *If Sons*, 23–26.

44. Hodge, *If Sons*, 24–25.

More importantly, gentile Christians can, thus, be ascribed righteousness. Consequently, gentile Christians should not be considered as inferior by Judean Christians.

4.1.4 Rom 4:12

The εἰς plus the articular infinitive construction that denotes result has a second part to it: καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον, κτλ. This infinitival result clause indicates that what follows is the second part of a construction of a myth of origins, this time, for Judean Christians. The syntax here poses some difficulties. Scholars debate over the identities denoted by the metonym περιτομή and the dative substantive participle τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν. Some commentators think that both belong to the same group denoted by περιτομή, with the second τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν qualifying the first term περιτομή. A variation of this position views this group as referring to Judean Christians.⁴⁵ This construal accounts for Paul subsuming both groups (the first περιτομή and the second τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν) under the description πατέρα περιτομῆς. These two groups, however, are more likely to be two separate groups. This view is borne out by the fact that the combination containing οὐ μόνον followed by ἀλλὰ καί is never used in a way where the second group qualifies the first.⁴⁶ However, to conclude, as Jewett does, that when οὐ μόνον is followed by ἀλλὰ καί it refers indiscriminately to two groups with opposing characteristics (gentiles and Judeans) overstretches the evidence.⁴⁷ The above analysis leads to the interpretation that the

45. So Moo, *Romans*, 270–71. Also, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 238, who does not interpret this statement in 4:12 as implying, therefore, that Paul wishes to deny the physical kinship between Judeans and Abraham. Jules Cambier, *L'Évangile de Dieu Selon L'Épître Aux Romains: Exégèse et Théologie Biblique*, *Studia Neotestamentica* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967), 170–71, incorrectly thinks that περιτομή takes on a spiritual meaning that refers also to gentile Christians. This understanding collapses the repeated distinction made between Judeans and gentiles in Romans.

46. Neubrand, *Abraham*, 234–36. James Swetnam, “The Curious Crux at Romans 4,12,” *Bib* 61 (1980): 113–15, argues that Paul by placing τοῖς before οὐ, indicates that the two groups are the same group. He cites the construction in 4:16 as evidence. Rom 4:4, however, where the article is placed before the particle of negation, οὐ, counters his evidence.

47. Incorrectly, Jewett, *Romans*, 320. In the many occurrences of this construction, the two elements are clearly not opposing: e.g., in 1:32, those who do (ποιοῦσιν) and those who approve (συνευδοκοῦσιν) are certainly not opposites. Rather, the latter is an

expression ἐκ περιτομῆς refers to Judeans as an ethnic group, while the group denoted by τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἔχνεσιν refers to Christian Judeans. In other words, Paul in crafting a myth of origins that includes people who become descendants of Abraham by means of trust in God has purposefully included ethnic Judeans in this group. He could have omitted this fact since he had already achieved his objective of constructing a common ancestor for both Judean and gentile Christians. But Paul does so probably because he does not wish to be mistaken that he is obliterating the Judeans' ethnic identity as children of Abraham who are recipients of God's covenantal promises.⁴⁸ This social and cultural texture underlies Paul's rhetorical strategy of constructing a viable superordinate prototype to unite dissenting groups. Such a strategy requires that ingroups be allowed to maintain their individual ethnic status. Paul, by saying that Abraham is the father of ethnic Judeans, does not, however, mean that trust in God is not necessary for ethnic Judeans. For now, he is content to leave his point at that since he has achieved the rhetorical objective of constructing a common ancestry for Judean and gentile Christians while keeping intact the ethnic identity of Judeans. But he revisits this topic in Romans 9-11.⁴⁹ Such a construal explains why Paul uses the construction οὐ μόνον followed by ἀλλὰ καί in 4:12, which has the effect of accentuating the first group by the description of the second group without collapsing these two groups into one. In this case, the second group denoted by τοῖς ἐκ περιτομῆς is qualified by the description of the second group as τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἔχνεσιν.⁵⁰ At the same time, Paul by using this construction of

accentuation of the former. Similarly, 5:10-11; 8:32; etc.

48. This concern surfaces frequently in Romans: 3:1-4; 9:1-7; 9:30-32, where Paul emphasises that God does not forsake Israel; see also 11:1; cf. 3:21; 1:1-4 where Paul stresses continuity between the Christian faith and Judaism. This conception agrees with the observation of Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 55, that "people are more willing to adopt a new religion(s) with which they are familiar."

49. Contra Esler, *Conflict*, 191, who incorrectly thinks that Paul does not answer "the status of Judeans who have not come to righteousness by faith in respect of Abraham." More correctly, Paul did provide a response to that question although he does not provide a complete answer.

50. For explicating the identity of the group denoted by the expression τοῖς ἐκ

οὐ μόνον followed by *ἀλλὰ καί* also keeps intact the ethnic identity of Judeans, that they are descendants of Abraham.

The second group is described as “those who walk in the footsteps of the trust [in God] of our father Abraham while he was in the state of uncircumcision.” The footsteps (*ἵχνεσιν*) are qualified by the emphatic attributive genitive *τῆς πίστεως*.⁵¹ Thus, the emphasis of this second group is on their trust in God. But Paul, by embedding the temporal dative *ἐν ἀκροβυστία* within the emphatic term *τῆς πίστεως* brings the nature of this trust in God to the fore. He emphasises that it is a trust in God that Abraham exercised while he was in a state of uncircumcision. In this way, Paul gathers together his two-fold emphasis, that Abraham exercised trust in God and that he was in a state of uncircumcision when he was regarded by God as righteous. He uses this two-fold emphasis to make an explicit statement about the nature of Abraham’s fatherhood, that it was a fatherhood founded upon trust in God and did not come via circumcision. The ideological power underlying the claim that those who walk in the footsteps of Abraham are his descendants is built upon the social and cultural intertexture of patrilineal descent, which states that descendants bear resemblance to their ancestor. Thus, when gentiles imitate Abraham, they demonstrate that they are his descendants.⁵²

The above discussion allows us now to better discern Paul’s rhetorical strategy. Describing Abraham as *πατήρ περιτομῆς* indicates that the overarching rhetorolect used in 4:12 is that of wisdom. This is evident since both groups are subsumed under the description of Abraham as being a father. The term “father” belongs to the firstspace (household) of wisdom rhetorolect. Likewise, circumcision invokes wisdom rhetorolect and also priestly

περιτομῆς (4:12), Paul could not possibly be referring to people who belonged to the “true circumcision” in Rom 2:28-29. The reason is that 2:25-29 defines “true circumcision” (2:28) as those who obey the Mosaic law (2:25). If Paul was referring to 2:28-29, he would be undermining his own rhetoric as the emphasis of 4:9-12 is on the need for trust in making a Judean Abraham’s descendant.

51. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 87, provides an example to clarify the emphasis, that “body of sin” is more emphatic than “sinful body.”

52. See below, p. 243.

rhetorolect.⁵³ The main (wisdom) and secondary (priestly) rhetorolects have the ideological power to persuade the implied audience to accept Abraham not just as the father of Judeans but of Judeans who trust God. To achieve the latter objective, Paul uses priestly rhetorolect embedded in the conception of circumcision to reinforce the fact that the trust that Judeans (who are circumcised) place in God has gained them the status of Abraham's descendants. That being said, however, Paul does not (as discussed above in the section on 4:12) mean that circumcision is essential for becoming Abraham's descendant. By using the construction οὐ μόνον followed by ἀλλὰ καί Paul cleverly qualifies circumcision as marking out Judeans as Abraham's descendants while relegating it to a position of nonessentiality.

4.2 Rom 4:13-16

Apocalyptic rhetorolect dominates 4:13-16. Its presence is indicated by the topos ἐπαγγελία (4:13, 14, 16). The promise that Abraham will inherit the world (4:13a) positions him as *pater patriae* (4:13a) when both Judeans and gentiles become descendants of Abraham (see the discussion below). Thus, the experienced firstspace is a political empire. This input fits the firstspace of apocalyptic rhetorolect.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Abraham inheriting the world hints at the eschatological age and fits the thirdspace of apocalyptic rhetorolect. Also, the recurring topos, νόμος (4:13, 14, 15 [2x], 16), when read against a backdrop of the Roman Empire, contains a social intertexture to the Roman army.⁵⁵ This experienced firstspace of the implied audience is a political empire and an imperial army. These inputs again fit the firstspace of apocalyptic rhetorolect. Thus, in line with the dominant rhetorolect of 4:13-16, the goal of 4:13-16 is to persuade the implied audience to agree with its rhetoric so as to receive the eschatological "promise" (4:16). This also fits the thirdspace of

53. See above, pp.202-210.

54. See Robbins, *Invention*, 108, for the definition of "firstspace," which refers to the physical setting that is experienced by the audience. For the firstspace of apocalyptic rhetorolect, see Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

55. See pp. 224-228 where I argue that the Roman emperor is subject to Roman law whose power lies with the Roman populace. Moreover, for him to ascend to the throne, he is also subject to the law in the sense that he needs the support of the Roman populace.

apocalyptic rhetorolect, which is described as “eternal life and resurrection in a new well-being in the eschatological age.”⁵⁶

4.2.1 Rom 4:13

Rom 4:13 begins with γάρ, which most scholars construe to be causal. They have not, however, discussed the implication of its connection with what precedes in 4:9-12.⁵⁷ Jewett contends that construing the causal particle as substantiating the preceding argument is overly simplistic. He thinks that the connection reaches back to 3:27-31⁵⁸ and that Paul is trying to “cut the nexus between promise and obedience.”⁵⁹ Such a construal of γάρ, however, not only ignores the consistent force of this particle in Romans 4, but it also obscures clear conceptual links between 4:9-12 and 4:13-16.⁶⁰

More likely, 4:13-16 provides a reason for what has preceded, most probably to validate, from the perspective of the law, Paul’s final construction of Abraham’s fatherhood in 4:9-12. In other words, Paul seeks to give further proofs that Abraham is the father of both Judean and gentile Christians without the need to undergo circumcision. This is borne out by the fact that the topoi “law” and “circumcision” are tightly linked in 2:25-27. What the connection between 4:9-12 and 4:13-16 implies is that Paul still has in view his recently constructed myth of origins. Exactly what he is doing here is the concern of this section.

Why does Paul use the topos “law” to provide further refutation of the nonessentiality of circumcision? First, by the end of 4:9-12, Paul has established that by trust, Judeans and

56. Vernon K. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science*, ed. Petri Luomanen and Ilkka Pyysiainen Uro, Biblical Interpretation Series 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 109.

57. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 212, who translates γάρ with a causal “for” but totally ignores the connection with what precedes. Similarly, Byrne, *Romans*, 151–52; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 118; Barrett, *Romans*, 94; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 238.

58. Jewett, *Romans*, 325.

59. Citing Byrne, *Romans*, 152; contra Gaston, *Paul*, 45–63, who rejects this position.

60. This is consistent with its other occurrences in Romans 4 (4:2, 3, 9, 14, 15).

gentiles can inherit Abraham's righteousness so that they become his descendants. At 4:13-16, Paul couches this promise as Abraham inheriting the world in the eschatological age. In this way he introduces apocalyptic rhetorolect. Although the content of the promises of Abraham's fatherhood in 4:9-12 and 4:13-16 are essentially the same, they differ in time frame. The former is operative in time contemporaneous with the implied audience, while the latter in the eschatological age. Paul, however, in Fauconnier and Turner's terminology, compressed the intervening time so that both promises are identical although they can be distinguished.⁶¹ His rhetorical strategy is to allow the law to come into play in the rhetoric. The social setting has changed from that of a temple (the firstspace of priestly rhetorolect) to that of the apocalyptic kingdom of God. The resulting secondspace in the implied audience's mind is an imagery of "multiple heavenly assistants" to enforce the law of God.⁶² This terror of God's army will dissuade the implied audience from relying on the law of Moses to realise the promise.

Second, the preceding 2:25-27 makes a connection between the Mosaic law and circumcision. This reveals the cultural intertexture underlying νόμος. Dunn observes that

[t]he argument has narrowed from a vaguely defined 'doing good', through the more specific 'doing the law,' and now to the single issue of circumcision, in a progression the devout Jewish interlocutor would have appreciated. For such a one . . . the point of the law, the privilege of the Jew—could quite properly and fittingly be focused on the one question of circumcision.⁶³

The tight nexus Paul forges between circumcision and the Mosaic law reflects the prevailing cultural practice that circumcision is the epitome of performing the Mosaic law. Thus, Paul defines a Judean as one who relies on the Mosaic law (2:17) and also as someone who is

61. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 96, 125–26.

62. Robbins, *Invention*, 108–9, explains that the experiences of the audience in a social space (firstspace), in this case, in the Roman political kingdom, will generate in the secondspace of the audience's mind "cultural, religious, and ideological places," in this case, "God as Almighty . . . [with] multiple heavenly assistants to God."

63. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 119.

circumcised (2:28). Furthermore, obeying the Mosaic moral law is essential for circumcision to have value (2:25-27).⁶⁴ This implies that when Paul brings in the topos, “law,” as the causal γάρ indicates, his focus is not merely on the law. Rather, he is using the discussion on the Mosaic law to bolster his claims about the nonessentiality of circumcision. Why Paul brings in the topos “law” has to do with circumcision being a “part” of the law and the law being the “whole.” What this means is, since the whole includes the part, the law, which is the “whole,” is consequently more important, and hence, carries the weight of the argument.⁶⁵ This reasoning, however, does not assume an argument that resorts to a locus of quantity.⁶⁶ Rather, law is ascribed greater importance because it is also a locus of quality, that is, the law is that element whose violation invokes divine wrath and which results in a client of God running out of favour with his patron (4:15).⁶⁷

Third, the Mosaic law enters the discussion because it is the main factor that is disrupting the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians. This point has been discussed in my overview of the argument of Romans 1-3.⁶⁸ I demonstrated that Paul was tightening the proverbial hangman’s noose on a Judean interlocutor who took pride in possessing the Mosaic law. The Mosaic law, or more specifically, the boast of possessing the Mosaic law, is a bone of contention that drives the argument that precedes Romans 4. But

64. Cf. also the historical incident that the Hasmoneans required the conquered Idumeans and Itureans to be circumcised before they could be permitted to stay together with the people of the covenant (Josephus *Ant.* 13.257–258: ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς μένειν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ εἰ περιτέμνοντο τὰ αἰδοῖα). These people who are circumcised, as denoted by the anaphoric τοῖς in καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίων νόμοις χρῆσασθαι θέλοιεν, would then be allowed the use of the laws of the Judeans. Here again, there is a tight nexus between circumcision and obeying the law of Moses.

65. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 233.

66. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 85–89, describe this as a *locus* of quantity where importance is ascribed to something which is greater in quantity.

67. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 233, qualify the use of the “loci of quantity” by “loci of quality” to prevent “the part and the whole from being considered as homogenous.”

68. See above, p. 55.

why Paul discusses the Mosaic law immediately after his note on circumcision requires explanation. The Mosaic law, specifically that which disrupts the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians discussed in Romans 1-3, polarises over circumcision because it epitomises observance of the Mosaic law. This polarisation accentuates the extent to which Judeans are called the circumcised and circumcision becomes an ethnic marker that differentiates Judeans from gentiles. Thus, the discussion of the law at this point in 4:13 is timely. I shall now explain how Paul puts the Mosaic law into the right perspective.

Scholars interpret the referent of ἡ ἐπαγγελία variously: the promises delineated in Genesis 12-22 can include a combination of descendants, land, and blessings for the world,⁶⁹ or restoring humankind to the original Adamic status of being a steward of creation.⁷⁰ These interpretations basically look into the Genesis account or look forward to the later chapters of Romans for support. They are not, however, substantiated by any clear evidence within the immediate context of Romans 4. For one, Paul clearly states that the content of ἡ ἐπαγγελία is Abraham becoming the heir of the world (κόσμος). I wish to argue that κόσμος refers to all Christians, specifically, Judean and gentile Christians.⁷¹ Several observations indicate this. If we take the force of the causal γάρ seriously, the promise referred to here must relate to the preceding context, and hence, minimally includes Abraham becoming the father of both Judean and gentile Christians (4:9-12). This understanding is also borne out by the use of the word κόσμος in Romans. This word occurs a total of nine times.⁷² Significant for our

69. Esler, *Conflict*, 191; Moo, *Romans*, 274. Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 152, who identifies the promise as that of the “land.”

70. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 213; in a similar vein, Käsemann, *Commentary*, 120; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 240.

71. Interestingly, Esler, *Conflict*, 191, comes close to my interpretation when he says that “[i]t is not impossible that having the world as one’s inheritance could be another way of saying that Abraham’s seed would be as numerous as the stars in heaven (Gen 15:5), but this may be pushing the latter promise too far.” Unfortunately, he was too quick to dismiss this understanding. The veil that prevented Esler and other interpreters from seeing the (obvious) solution appears to be their recourse to the Genesis account rather than the immediate context of Romans 4 for a solution.

72. Rom 1:8; 1:20; 3:6; 3:19; 4:13; 5:12; 5:13; 11:12; 11:15.

discussion is the fact that, not counting 4:13, in all except for 1:8, the word in this letter invariably refers to the animate world of human beings. This observation, *prima facie*, throws doubt on the physical land as a referent for “world.”

The meaning of Abraham inheriting the world can be discovered by exposing the cultural intertextures of κληρονόμος and πατήρ. Roman family law was founded upon the basis that each family had its *pater familias*, the head of a Roman household. This household included relatives and slaves.⁷³ The oldest living male in the family possessed *potestas*, the authority of the *pater familias*.⁷⁴ This authority was almost absolute. It included the right of the *pater familias* to put to death his own children.⁷⁵ Such unlimited power was only curtailed to inflicting reasonable punishment around the reign of Emperor Justinian (527-65 CE).⁷⁶ When a *pater familias* died, Roman law sought out an heir who would assume all the rights and obligations of the deceased *pater familias*. All descendants of all ages of the deceased *pater familias* were to come under the *postestas* of the new *pater familias*. These descendants were now considered his property. Hence, they could not own any property until they were released from the new *potestas*. That this was the case is evident from the fact that the *pater familias* held the right to sell even his own child into slavery or civil bondage.⁷⁷ In

73. So James C. Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 52–53.

74. Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 216, note that the family included the ancestors as well as the extended family, slaves, and assets of a household.

75. Yehiel Kaplan, “The Changing Profile of the Parent-Child Relationship in Jewish Law,” in *The Jewish Law Annual Volume 18*, Berachyahu Lifshitz (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 29–30.

76. Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 121–23; Andrew Borkowski, *Textbook on Roman Law* (London: Blackstone Press, 1994), 103, 107.

77. Kaplan, “Changing,” 29–30. This right or the *potestas* of the *pater familias* ends when the child becomes a legally independent child (*sui iuris*) by requesting legal independence when he comes of age.

light of the above discussion, Abraham inheriting the world becomes intelligible: it refers to him becoming the *pater familias* of both Judean and gentile Christians. Construing the κόσμος that Abraham inherits in 4:13-15 as comprising Judean and gentile Christians provides a connection with the preceding and succeeding arguments: in what precedes, 4:11-12 emphasises the result of Abraham's trust in God (4:9b) as becoming the father of both Judean and gentile Christians. The same point is also emphasised in what follows: Abraham's trust in God made him the "father of many nations" (4:18).

A possible objection to construing Abraham as *pater familias* must be dealt with. Did Judeans conceptualise Abraham's fatherhood in terms of the Roman *pater familias*? This is possible because the institution of the *pater familias* was part of the larger patron-client system which pervaded every strata of the Roman empire. Furthermore, these two systems are congruous as is shown by the fact that the patron-client relation is modelled on the dominance and subordination of the father-son relationship. The client, like a son in relation to his father, is dependent on the patron for benefactions.

Abraham, however, is not only *pater familias*. He also takes on the role of *pater patriae*, a title attributed to the Roman Emperor Augustus and the emperors who followed. In 2 BCE, Augustus Caesar was proclaimed *pater patriae* (father of the fatherland). Earlier, Cicero and Julius Caesar were called *parens patriae* and *pater patriae* respectively.⁷⁸ Augustus, however, not only took on the honorific title but also fulfilled the role of *pater patriae*.⁷⁹ His authentic role as *pater patriae* can be seen in him using his own money to provide public services (*pecunia sua*) to the public.⁸⁰ Family slaves and freed staff were also assigned to manage his accounts, including money from the *aerarium stabulum* (treasure-

78. Dio Cassius *Hist. rom.* 44.4.4; Suetonius *Jul.* 76.

79. Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 400–401.

80. Severy, *Augustus*, 140–41. Donald Dudley, *The Romans* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), 148, notes that all emperors after Augustus "had to undertake these expensive obligations, which showed that the populace of Rome was in some sense the *clientela* of the Emperor."

house), which was used to fund public service projects. This reflects the expansion of the imperial *familia* into public service.⁸¹ Augustus' wife, Livia, together with his daughters and nieces, managed foreign relations.⁸² That such an authentic role of *patria patriae* also extended beyond Augustus is corroborated by later Latin writers who accorded such a duty to later *patres patriae*.⁸³ My point is that Augustus and subsequent Roman emperors, in taking on the role of *pater patriae*, are essentially functioning as the patron of the Roman Empire in the patron-client system. Considering that Abraham inherits the world comprising minimally all peoples in the Roman empire, Paul's positioning of Abraham as *pater patriae*, the Roman Emperor, is not an overstatement. Such a construal aligns with Elliott's comments that

[t]he observation is now commonplace that some of Paul's most theological significant phrases would have resonated with imperial overtones. His titles for Christ ('lord,' *kyrios*, and "son of God,' *huios tou theou*), for example, were titles that the Caesars also claimed. The terms normally translated 'gospel' or 'good news' (*euangelion*) and 'preach the gospel' (*euangelizesthai*) were readily employed in Paul's world as an element of imperial propaganda.⁸⁴

81. Severy, *Augustus*, 144–45.

82. Severy, *Augustus*, 148–49.

83. For instance, in Seneca *Clem.* 1.14, Seneca exhorted the young Nero that he has inherited the role of a *pater patriae* to care for the interests of his children: "This is the duty of a father, and it is also the duty of a prince, whom not in empty flattery we have been led to call 'the Father of his Country' [Patrem Patriae] . . . we have given the name in order that he may know that he has been entrusted with a father's power, which is most forbearing in its care for the interests of his children." Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 402, comments that since this was addressed to a young Nero, Seneca was not dwelling on the characteristics of a bad prince but what was expected of a *princeps* of Rome. Ando also notes that Tiberius, upon succeeding the throne, also promised to take up the role of the *patria patriae* to the Roman people (Tacitus *Ann.* 1.12).

84. Neil Elliott, *Arrogance*, 44, 45. See also Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, trans. David E. Green (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 86–87, who asks provocatively: "Paul's use of terminology drawn from the law of royal succession in Rom 1:3-4 shows that he is making more than a religious claim . . . Is Paul using the traditional formula in order to support an alternative theory concerning true rulership and the legitimate *princeps*? Is he offering an alternative to the social utopia of Caesarism, with its promise of universal reconciliation and peace as the prerequisite for undreamed achievements resulting in unimagined prosperity?"

Hence, Elliott correctly points out that Romans “is itself Paul’s effective proclamation of an alternative lordship at work as the Romans hear it.” In other words, this letter challenges the lordship of Caesar. However, Paul conceals this political overtone behind the note of “inheriting the world” because he has in mind the eschatological age to which he will refer in Romans 8, and not the immediate hegemony of the Roman empire.

This Roman Emperor cult, besides being part of the cultural intertexture of Romans, also relates to social and cultural texture. Clifford Ando argues that the emperors and the governing class unite the cultural scripts of their subjects by providing Rome with a system of concepts. These concepts are concentrated in the figure of the Roman Emperor or more specifically, the Roman Emperor cult.⁸⁵ Ando follows Pierre Bourdieu, who investigated breakdowns in social orders, by going beyond the (reductionist) level of politics and economics that characterise Marxist ideologies. Instead, Bourdieu, following Victor Turner, situates an individual within the grids of *habitus*, the world of every day experiences, and *doxa*, social memories.⁸⁶ The Roman Emperor cult is one such system that generates a *habitus* and *doxa*. This social texture contributed to a part of the ideology in the Roman Empire that united the cultural scripts of the subjects of the Roman Emperor and the governing class.⁸⁷ By positioning Abraham as *pater patriae*, Paul mobilises ideological power to unite the dissenting Judean and gentile Christians. This construal refines Esler’s conceptualisation of Abraham as a superordinate figure by situating Abraham within the ancient context of the Roman Empire.

The above understanding also coheres with the meaning of ὁ κόσμος. This term κόσμος is used consistently in its other occurrences in Romans to connote the totality of

85. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 27.

86. Bourdieu, *Outline*, 20–21, 78; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 54–55.

87. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 23.

humankind, including minimally the world of the Roman Empire.⁸⁸ Quite clearly, a socio-political dimension underlies the idea of inheriting the world.⁸⁹ When this socio-political aspect of the “world” is read in light of my contention that Abraham is *pater familias*, Abraham takes on the role of *pater pateriae* of the Roman Empire.⁹⁰ This promise that Abraham will inherit the world is also promised to his descendants (4:13). Jewett agrees with Klaus Haacker that this promise refers to Abraham and his descendants’ rule over the entire world.⁹¹ It is a “nonpolitical and at any event nonmilitary” form of imperial rule.⁹² By emphasising Abraham as patron of the world, Paul positions him as a superordinate figure to unite the dissenting Christian factions, namely, Judean and gentile Christians. With the preliminaries in place, we are now in a position to understand the rhetoric of 4:13.

Rom 4:13 serves as the thesis statement for 4:14-16. Paul’s thesis is that Abraham and his descendants did not inherit the promise by means of the Mosaic law. As opposed to inheriting the promise by observing the Mosaic law, Paul argues that righteousness comes by trust in God. Again, righteousness here refers to a favourable relationship between God and his clients, namely, Judean and gentile Christians. This thesis is substantiated by the argument that follows in 4:14-16.

88. For instance, in 1:8, Paul, when praising the Roman Christians, says hyperbolically that their faith is being reported ὅλω τῷ κόσμῳ; in Paul’s conclusion in 3:19, in indicting all of humankind (both Judeans and gentiles) of sin, he refers to humankind as πᾶς ὁ κόσμος.

89. See Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, SNTSMS 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58–101, where he shows that κληρονόμος and ἡγεμονία word groups are often associated with national territory. To say, however, that “Paul indicates that the *how* of the inheritance also subverts the hegemonic and militaristic approach of Rome,” is probably stretching Paul’s emphasis. His point, however, is valid: hegemonic and militaristic overtones are present.

90. John H. Elliott, “Household/Family in the Gospel of Mark as a Core Symbol of Community,” in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 63, thinks that Mark’s rhetoric with its stress on believers as a household is directed at the Roman Emperor’s title of *pater patriae*.

91. Jewett, *Romans*, 325.

92. Klaus Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, THNT 6 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 106.

4.2.2 Rom 4:14-15a

Below is a display of the argumentative structure of 4:14-15a:

Case	14a	εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι,
Result	14b	κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία·
	[Case ₁]	(Judean and gentiles fail to keep the moral law of God)
	[Rule ₁]	[wrath comes from not keeping the moral law of God]
Rule/Result ₁	15a	ὁ γὰρ (Mosaic) νόμος ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται

This paragraph responds to the two-fold thesis of 4:13, that the promise of Abraham inheriting the world comes, first, not by the Mosaic law but, second, by trust in God.

4.2.2.1 Rom 4:14

Assuming for the sake of argument that those who rely on the Mosaic law are heirs, two results, with the perfect tense signifying the resulting state of affairs, follow: trust in God has been nullified (κεκένωται) and the promise has been abolished (κατήργηται).⁹³ Paul is essentially utilising the classic strategy of evaluating an act or event in terms of its favourable or unfavourable consequences. In this case, the act of relying on the law is undesirable because of the consequence faced, namely, the promise is abolished. What is unusual here is that Paul inserts in between the cause (a reliance on the Mosaic law) and its unfavourable consequence (promise abolished) another consequence: trust in God is nullified. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's conception of value transfer in what they call the "pragmatic argument" helps to explain the function of "trust" here.⁹⁴ The value attached to the second consequence of the abolishment of the promise gets transferred not only to the act of relying on the law but also to the nullification of trust in God. In this way, Paul not only denigrates

93. This is a first class conditional statement that assumes the protasis to be true for the sake of argument. See BDF §189; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 690–94.

94. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 266.

the role of the law in securing the promise but also accentuates the importance of trust in God. How a reliance on the law leads to the twin consequences of a nullification of trust in God and an abolishment of the promise is explained in 4:15.⁹⁵

4.2.2.2 Rom 4:15a

Commentators argue over the specific context for understanding how wrath is invoked. Some think that the universality of the law provokes God's wrath on all humankind.⁹⁶ Others think that the law, as made explicit in the Mosaic law, makes sin more grievous so as to provoke God to anger.⁹⁷ Both positions, however, dwell on questions about which Paul is not concerned here. First, the law alluded to here must be the Mosaic law because the argument continues the contentious issue of 4:9-12, namely, circumcision. Second, whether or not the Mosaic law aggravates the seriousness of sin is superfluous. The fact is that in 4:15a, Paul does not explain how the Mosaic law provokes God's wrath. He simply states it because the point that the Mosaic law provokes God's wrath has already been established earlier in 1:18-3:20. The discussion below explains my point.

Why does a reliance on the Mosaic law provoke God's wrath and, consequently, abolish the promise? To properly understand the reason, we need to discern the social intertexture of law in general. In the honour-shame system of the Mediterranean agonistic culture, honour, if not ascribed, needs to be acquired. A means of acquiring this honour is by

95. Moo, *Romans*, 275, thinks that Paul makes this statement on the basis of the preceding argument in Romans 1-3 and Rom 4:15; so also Frank J. Matera, *Romans*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 139; Barrett, *Romans*, 94-95; Schreiner, *Romans*, 229. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 214, seems to imply that Paul bases his conclusion about the nullification of faith on Gen 15:6. This search for a proof is unnecessary since Paul immediately, with an inferential γάρ, indicates that he is about to substantiate his claim. More correctly, Godet, *Romans*, 176-77, states that the proofs are spelled out in what follows.

96. E.g., John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 143-44; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1936), 312.

97. E.g., Godet, *Romans*, 177; Barrett, *Romans*, 95; Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 241.

being virtuous in one's dealings.⁹⁸ For a person living in Roman society, virtuous behaviour must conform to the behavioural standards or laws as dictated by community consensus. In other words, the community is the significant other.⁹⁹ This gains a person honour. In Romans 4, the significant other is God since he alone can grant honour by making a person a descendant of Abraham. As the Mosaic law encapsulates God's moral requirements, the standard by which God grants honour to his clients is the Mosaic law. This law also includes the conception of moral law held in part by the gentiles (2:14-15). One way of acquiring (or losing) this honour is to enter into a game of challenge and riposte with Paul, who, as an apostle (see 1:1), represents God.

With the above understanding of how the Mosaic law functions within the honour-shame system, we are in a position to understand how relying on the Mosaic law provokes the wrath of God according to the argument in 1:18-3:20. According to 2:14-15, Paul contends that the gentiles know, to a certain degree, the Mosaic law: "the gentiles, who do not possess the [Mosaic] law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the [Mosaic] law requires is written on their hearts." The unstated result (Result₁) that the Mosaic law produces wrath is a product of the unstated case (Case₁) that humankind (both Judeans and gentiles) has failed to obey the law and the unstated rule (Rule₁) that wrath comes from not keeping the moral law of God. This wrath of God leads to a loss of honour for the interlocutor in the challenge riposte tussle as demonstrated by the argument of 1:18-3:20. The unstated case (Case₁) has been established in Romans 1-3 as the discussion that follows explains.

98. deSilva, *Honor*, 28.

99. Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Honor: Core Value in the Biblical World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 119; see also Plutarch *Mor.* 6.247: "For as to the exhortations this essay contains, since you are already putting them into practice, you will seem to be giving your testimony in their favour rather than to be encouraged to perform them; and the pleasure you will take in acts which are right will make the perseverance of your judgement more firm, inasmuch as your acts will win approval before spectators, so to speak, who are honourable and devoted to virtue."

First, Paul indicts the gentiles in 1:18-32 who know God (and hence, his moral law) but fail to glorify God. That the gentiles have failed to make the necessary riposte in the challenge initiated by Paul (representing God) is evinced by the fact that they enter a state of dishonour. There, God gives the gentiles over to dishonour (ἀτιμάζεσθαι) their physical bodies and to a depraved mind (εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν). Second, Paul turns his attention to the implied Judean audience. Having obtained the assent of the Judean interlocutor of the guilt of the gentiles, Paul (representing God) challenges the Judeans. They, like the gentiles, have failed to keep the law despite knowing the law. The Judean interlocutor makes several ripostes (2:2; 2:17-23;3:5), but Paul counters these ripostes which the Judean interlocutor fails to ward off. This signifies that Paul (and hence, God), has shown that Judeans and gentiles have sinned against God. Consequently, God's wrath is provoked. Paul (and thus, God) has won the challenge. As a result, Judeans and gentiles incur a loss of honour. This leads to the unstated result, namely, the abolition of the promise as initially articulated by Paul in his opening statement in 4:14b.

The term "law" should not just be considered in light of Judean culture as encapsulated in the Mosaic law. It also contains another social intertexture which involves Roman culture. Such a construal, as I argued above, is reasonable as Roman culture was the dominant culture in Rome.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, it played a major role in Corinth as a Roman colony governed on the model of the Roman republic.¹⁰¹ As the dominant culture, Roman culture "is vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region."¹⁰² In other words, the term "law" in Romans 4 references not only Judean law but also Roman law. The Roman law under consideration involves the role of the Roman emperor. The presence of this social intertexture can be detected when "law" is considered in

100. See above, p. 19.

101. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Corinth," *ABD*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1135–1139. See also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), 5–7.

102. Robbins, *Tapestry*, 168.

light of Abraham inheriting the world, which is tantamount to him attaining the role of the Roman emperor. The Roman emperor was considered a *princeps* (leader of the Senate). From Augustus until the period before the reign of Diocletian (284 CE),¹⁰³ the Roman Empire was a principate and an *imperium legitimum* in which the emperor was not above the law.¹⁰⁴ Authority rested with the people of Rome whose power was expressed via the Senate and the *princeps*.¹⁰⁵ The legislative power of the emperors was largely an extension of the Republic's *ius edicendi* (right of the higher magistrates to proclaim edicts to the people). The emperors did not possess the authority to create, change, or abrogate a law. Thus, popular election was the basis of the office of the principate.¹⁰⁶ That said, the emperor was never elected by the people but “was proclaimed by the soldiers.”¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, this seizure was seen as an act of the will of the Roman populace.¹⁰⁸ Hence, any attempt to allow the heir of an emperor to take the office of the principate without respect for the authority of the Roman populace and the Senate risked invoking the wrath of the army.

The Augustan and post-Augustan eras demonstrate that the military was the mainstay of the Roman Emperor's throne. Although the army in theory had no role in the choice of the ruler, its power was almost always decisive in the choice of a new Roman emperor.¹⁰⁹ This is

103. Starting with the reign of Diocletian, the Roman Empire was *princeps legibus solutus*, that is, a period when the king was above the law.

104. Mason Hammond, *The Augustan Principate in Theory and Practice During the Julio-Claudian Period* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 159.

105. So Theodor Mommsen, *A History of Rome Under the Emperors*, trans. Clare Krojzl (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 82.

106. Mommsen, *History*, 83, also comments that this popular vote was never realised through an election but “by a spontaneous seizure of power by the ruler on the strength of the will of the people.”

107. Mommsen, *History*, 83.

108. So Mommsen, *History*, 83.

109. Hammond, *The Augustan Principate*, 149. For instance, see Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67.

shown by the following observations. Augustus was an army general when he established himself as the supreme ruler of Rome, the *Principis Civitatis*.¹¹⁰ Tiberius accepted the help of the military to establish his rule on the death of Augustus.¹¹¹ The Praetorians' support for Caligula, Claudius, and Nero made possible their reigns.¹¹² Emperors Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian who reigned in the period after the death of Nero in 68 CE, also claimed the throne with the support of the military.

This shows that the social and cultural intertexture that underlies "law" is connected with the installation of a Roman emperor. Why Paul, in discussing Abraham's fatherhood as inheriting the world, brings the topos "law" into his discussion becomes comprehensible. The reason is that both law and emperor were part of the common topoi.¹¹³ Thus, a Roman Emperor could suffer the wrath of the law. Hence, to ascend the position of emperor, a person needed to be loyal to (trust) his patron, the Roman populace, whose power, in practice, was vested in the Roman army.

The above discussed social intertexture informs the reading of 4:15a and mobilises ideological power. How it does this requires clarification. Robbins emphasises the need "to interpret reasoning in argumentation but also to interpret picturing of people and the environments in which they are interacting," or what he calls "rhetography."¹¹⁴ This second aspect of the social intertexture lends itself to rhetography. Lopez refines Robbins' rhetography by pointing out several inhibitions to reading or hearing Paul's letter when they were read out loud. For a start, the literacy rate was low. Also, even if a select few were literate, we cannot assume that they received it in terms of abstract concepts. Rather, the

110. Mommsen, *History*, 83.

111. Suetonius *Tib.* 24.1.

112. Hammond, *The Augustan Principate*, 151–52; Mommsen, *History*, 133. For Claudius, the Praetorian Guards opposed the Senate in favour of their chosen candidate.

113. See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 20.

114. Robbins, *Invention*, 16.

ancient people may have heard the letter by envisioning images while reading the letter.¹¹⁵ Along this line of analysis, Paul's implied audience would probably have recalled images of the army and their attached signification when they heard of the association of wrath and law read out in Romans. A source of such images is found on Roman coins. For instance, figure 1 shows Claudius being pronounced as Emperor by the Praetorian guard. Figure 2 shows the victory of Octavianus (Augustus) and Agrippa at Actium in 31 BCE over Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra. Figure 3 shows Caligula giving a speech to the Praetorian guard who supported him after Emperor Tiberius died.



Figure 1



Figure 2

115. Davina C. Lopez, "Visual Perspectives: Imag(in)Ing the Big Pauline Picture," in *Studying Paul's Letters*, ed. Joseph A. Marchal (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 102.



Figure 3

These coins, however, do not just constantly recall for the implied audience vivid images of the wrath of the Roman army. An example of the Roman army's wrath that would have been well-known to the Roman populace was when the Praetorian guard (Figure 1) helped to secure the throne for Claudius by murdering his predecessor, Caligula, and his wife and child at the imperial palace. The social cultural texture underlying coins is that they contain a locus of quality of being useful, and hence, containing value.¹¹⁶ By inscribing on the coins memories of the strength (and wrath) of the army, the value of the coin and the image of the army are somehow mystically linked together “at the level of the divine vision of reality.”¹¹⁷ In terms of conceptual blending, there is a “compression of vital relations” where the coin (“the part”) contains the power of the Roman army (“the whole”).¹¹⁸ In this way the value of the coin gets transferred to the image as well. The Roman coin which contains a compression of vital relations, namely, that of the power of the Roman army and the Roman law, provides input for the firstspace of apocalyptic rhetorlect. This firstspace creates in the secondspace of the implied audience's mind an image of God as almighty who enlists his multiple heavenly assistants to enforce justice.¹¹⁹ Apocalyptic rhetorlect, thus, mobilises ideological power to dissuade the implied audience from relying on the law for realising the promise .

116. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 89–93.

117. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 331–32.

118. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way*, 97.

119. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

4.2.3 Rom 4:15b-16

The argumentative structure of Rom 4:15b-16 can be presented as below:

Case	15b οὐδὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος οὐδὲ παράβασι
[Rule]	[law is antithetical to trust]
Result	16 Διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν.

4.2.3.1 Rom 4:15b

The emphasis of 4:15b is that only when the law is absent, can there be no transgression that will destroy the promise. But Paul's intent is not to denigrate the law. His objective is to displace the law so as to pave the way for trust to be restored to its rightful place. Trust should be deemed as the means to secure the promise of inheriting the world and becoming a descendant of Abraham. Thus, having displaced the law, Paul now returns to where he left off. He now focuses on the second part of his thesis statement in 4:13: the promise of Abraham inheriting the world, which comprises Judean and gentile Christians, comes by the trust in God that Abraham had. To do that, Paul brings in the critical role of trust via the statement οὐδὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος οὐδὲ παράβασις (4:15b). Most scholars view this statement as performing a subsidiary role of supporting the earlier statement that “the law produces wrath” (4:15a).¹²⁰ Byrne is perceptive when he opines that “[i]t is not clear why Paul formulates this sentence in the negative . . . he might as well—and perhaps better—have said: ‘because the law makes sin into transgression.’”¹²¹ Unfortunately, he does not pursue this line of inquiry and construes it, like the majority of interpreters, as supporting what precedes. I have grouped the last clause in 4:15b with what follows as introducing the pivotal role of trust, rather than concluding what precedes. This answers Byrne's query as to why the

120. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 215, construes 4:15b as explaining “how the process of wrath works out.” In a similar vein, Godet, *Romans*, 177; Moo, *Romans*, 277; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 241; Schreiner, *Romans*, 230–31; more recently also Tom Holland, *Romans: The Divine Marriage* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 139; Matera, *Romans*, 114.

121. Byrne, *Romans*, 158.

last clause in 4:15b is framed negatively. Specifically, it is where the argument that began in 4:13 is heading for. At the same time, 4:15b prepares for the argument that follows.

4.2.3.2 Rom 4:16

At this point, Paul introduces wisdom rhetorolect whose presence is indicated by the topos of Abraham being “the father of all of us” (4:16). After Paul has dissuaded the implied audience from relying on the law by use of apocalyptic rhetorolect, he now uses wisdom rhetorolect whose secondspace contains the conceptualisation of God as father. The implied audience is, thus, urged to rely on God as a kind father who teaches wisdom (thirdspace).¹²²

Before analysing 4:16, several social intertextures need to be surfaced. First, 4:15b (the case) does not lead naturally to 4:16 (the result). An unstated rule in the form of a social intertexture is required to bridge 4:15b to 4:16, namely, the rule that the law is antithetical to trust. That they are antithetical is clear. As explained above (4:15a), honour that comes by the law requires one to perform deeds that conform to the laws of the Roman world. Also, as discussed in 4:4-5, if deeds that earn (acquired honour) are not involved, the only way to gain (ascribed) honour is by trust in, that is, loyalty to a patron. In this case, the honour is gained by becoming a descendant of Abraham. But how does trust realise becoming Abraham’s descendant? This brings me to the second social and cultural intertexture. Adoption offers a way to forge a patron-client or in the case of 4:16, a *pater*-son relationship. But to understand the motivation or the ideological power underlying adoption, we need to expose the social intertexture underlying adoption. Michael Peppard’s investigation of the ancient Roman practice of adoption helps.¹²³ I shall discuss some salient points of his essay in what follows.

Why is adoption a viable and desirable mode of securing an heir? The patron god or *pater* of the Roman Empire was Jupiter. Fears makes the important observation that the concept of *pater* was not about bringing forth descendants but about rule and dependence. The son looks to the *pater* for divine protection from the one who supplies the dependent’s

122. See the secondspace of wisdom rhetorolect in Robbins, *Invention*, 109, where God is regarded as a father who teaches wisdom.

123. Peppard, *The Son of God*, 60–80.

needs.¹²⁴ Jupiter's role as *pater* of the Roman empire, however, was taken over by Augustus after 27 BCE. Such a conceptualisation of adoption probably influenced Paul's thoughts in Romans 4. This is corroborated by the fact that it was only during the reign of Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE) that a conscious effort was made to reinstate Jupiter's role as *pater*.¹²⁵ Thus, during this period, Augustus and his successors took on the role of *pater* of the Roman Empire. That the ideology of the Augustan dynasty as *pater* or patron of the Roman Empire permeated the fabric of the Roman society is evident from several observations. As discussed above, Augustus took on an authentic role of *pater* when he (including his family) was involved extensively in performing public service.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the *genius* and *numen* of Augustus were worshipped in his lifetime and became a part of the official state cult.¹²⁷ Gradel maintains that the emperor as *pater familias* with the worship of his *genius* incorporated into the constitution of Rome took place for the first time during Claudius' reign.¹²⁸ Peppard sums up the matter: "the genius Augusti, the guardian spirit of the imperial gens filled the neighbourhood of the Empire . . . [T]he provinces responded with loyalty to their new father, demonstrating the successful inculcation of imperial ideology." He had become the father of the whole human race.¹²⁹ In light of the benefaction that the Roman Emperor brings to the Roman people, it is no wonder that the Roman populace was so concerned that someone suitable should inherit the throne.

124. J. Rufus Fears, "Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 11.17.1 (1981): 21.

125. Fears, "Jupiter," 89.

126. See above, pp. 219-220.

127. So Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), 151–54, 182, 220, 227. Tiberius initially refused the title of *pater patriae*.

128. Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 187, explains that this was the first time because prior to Augustus the title of *pater patriae* was purely honorary with no practical consequences.

129. Peppard, *The Son of God*, 66.

The modes for choosing an heir were either by natural dynasty or adoption. Hammond explains why adoption was desirable. He notes that from the Julio-Claudians through the Severans, adoption was a mode of transmitting imperial power. He assigns to it a determining role that secured the support of the army and the confirmation of the Senate.¹³⁰ Such support basically represented the choice of the Roman populace which lent ideological power to the mode of adoption. The Roman populace also believed that the adopted heir apparent was a foresight of the *providentia* of the reigning emperor.¹³¹ Adoption, then, demonstrated to the Roman populace the Roman's Emperor's concern for stability after his death for the Roman Empire.¹³² These observations lend ideological power to securing an heir by adoption.

That being said, ascension to the Roman throne by adoption also contained tension.¹³³ Gaius and Lucius were sons of Agrippa and Julia and grandsons of Augustus. They died before they could ascend to imperial power. This led Augustus to begin his will in this way: "Since a cruel fate has bereft me of my sons Gaius and Lucius, let Tiberias Caesar be heir to two thirds of my estate."¹³⁴ Suetonius interprets this will by saying that "these words in themselves added to the suspicion of those who believed that he had named Tiberius his successor from necessity rather than from choice, since he allowed himself to write such a preamble."¹³⁵ The sentiment of the Romans corroborates this disparaging interpretation: "You are no knight. Why so? The hundred thousands are lacking. If you ask the whole tale,

130. Mason Hammond, "The Transmission of Powers of the Roman Emperor from the Death of Nero in A.D. 68 to That of Alexander Severus in A.D. 235," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 24 (1956): 67.

131. Arthur D. Nock, "A Diis Electa: A Chapter in the Religious History of the Third Century," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Z. Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 264–65.

132. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 34.

133. Peppard, *The Son of God*, 73–80.

134. Suetonius *Tib.* 23.

135. Suetonius *Tib.* 23.

you were an exile at Rhodes.”¹³⁶ When Nero took the throne of Claudius, Tacitus called it a “ruinous adoption” and said that Claudius had destroyed the purity of his lineage.¹³⁷ The common people also disapproved of the adoption of Nero: “When the transaction [of adopting and designating Nero as the future heir] was over, no one was so devoid of pity as not to feel compunction for the lot of Britannicus.”¹³⁸ Peppard puts into proper perspective these two somewhat conflicting and yet complementary modes of assuming the throne:¹³⁹

In Roman culture, where political, economic, and social powers were governed by father-son relations, natural family lines were undoubtedly important. Family ideology was *so* important, in fact, that any successor to great paternal power ought to be construed as the son of that father. If the most powerful fathers in the cosmos—paradigmatic emperors such as Augustus and Trajan—did not have eligible natural sons, the adoption of sons would therefore be necessary and appropriate to the propagation of Roman power and ideology . . . Whenever a man in the Roman world is the son of a powerful father, whether through decree or narrative characterization, his sonship can be interpreted anew in the pervasive light of Roman family ideology, which was concentrated in the imperial household. And the more powerful a father is—even all-powerful, as a god—the more relevant adoption becomes to understand that father’s relationship to his son.¹⁴⁰

Noteworthy is the observation that whether the Roman throne is taken up by an adopted son or a natural son, both modes highlight the importance Romans attach to a son ascending the throne. Several facets of this ideology are at work in 4:16. First, Judean Christians are natural sons of Abraham while gentile Christians become heirs of the world through adoption. Second, underlying trust in a patron is a social intertextual link to adoption. This link forges a father-son relationship between Abraham and gentiles. Third, in view of the fact that the

136. Suetonius *Tib.* 23.

137. Tacitus *Ann.* 12.52, 13.2.

138. Tacitus *Ann.* 12.26.

139. Peppard, *The Son of God*, 67–85.

140. Peppard, *The Son of God*, 85.

relevance of adoption is proportional to the power of the father, Abraham's extensive fatherhood makes adoption relevant. Fourth, this adoption is realised by narrative characterisation, or more precisely, by a construction of myths in 4:2-8, and defended in 4:9-12 and 4:13-16. That a myth of origins is implied is demonstrated by the prepositional phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ. Hodge clarifies the prepositional phrase ἐκ πίστεως. She argues that it can be translated in contexts of descent and kinship as "those whose line of descent springs from faithfulness."¹⁴¹ Thus, Paul concludes his defence against the Mosaic law in support of a myth of origins for gentile Christians which says that by trust in God through adoption, not only Judeans but gentiles can also become heirs of Abraham. I shall now analyse 4:16.

The causal διὰ τοῦτο refers to the preceding argument in 4:13-15a. In view of the fact, however, that νόμος includes also the earlier discussed concepts ἔργον and περιτομή, 4:16 probably brings to a conclusion the foregoing argument in 4:2-16. That νόμος is an all-inclusive term is demonstrated by it being a centrepiece in the preceding argument of Romans 1-3 under which deeds of the Mosaic law and circumcision were subsumed (e.g., 2:25; 3:30). Thus, the reason indicated by διὰ τοῦτο refers to the inability of the deeds of the Mosaic law (4:2-8; 4:13-16) and circumcision (4:9-12) to realise the promise of the worldwide fatherhood of Abraham. The prepositional phrase ἐκ πίστεως when read together with the causal phrase means that the Mosaic law (including circumcision) has been rendered ineffective. Hence, trust is required. More precisely, the object of trust is a patron. In the Roman imperial system, the reigning emperor selects an heir. Constitutionally, however, the emperor's authority is vested in the Roman populace and approved by the Senate. Likewise, although one inherits Abraham's inheritance by becoming his descendant, God is the one who grants that favour (grace). Hence, the real patron is God. The purpose (ἵνα) is to cause the clients, Judean and gentile Christians, to enter into a position of favour with the patron God. The final result is the procurement of the promise of inheriting the world given to all (παντί)

141. See Hodge, *If Sons*, 79–91, for a listing of ancient references that contain such a meaning. These include Aristotle's discussion of the mechanics of procreation in *De Generatione Animalium*; Plato's *Menexenus*; the LXX, and Paul (Phil 3:5; Rom 11:1; 9:6; Gal 2:15; 1:15; 4:4, etc.)

Judean and gentile Christians alike (referring indirectly to the letter's major concern) as Abraham's descendants.¹⁴² At this point, with a οὐ μόνον . . . ἀλλὰ καὶ construction, Paul qualifies that this resulting promise is given not only to those who possess the Mosaic law. This not only recalls Paul's foregoing rhetoric in 4:2-15, but also more importantly, it brings to the fore his major concern of Romans 1-4: to divest Judeans of their reliance on the Mosaic law. This promise is also granted to those who are descended from the trust of Abraham. The function of the dependant clause ὅς ἐστιν πατήρ πάντων ἡμῶν should be read in light of the emphasis of 4:16, that trust in God is necessary because the Mosaic law has failed to realise the promise of making Abraham a father. This dependant clause reinforces the viability of receiving the promise by trust in God because Abraham was given the promise that he would inherit the world, that is, he would become the father of both Judean and gentile Christians. Rom 4:17-25 also bears out this observation.¹⁴³ Furthermore, important for our discussion is the observation that Abraham is described as πατήρ ἡμῶν. This contrasts the partitive description (Judeans/gentiles; circumcised/uncircumcised) that characterises what precedes. It indicates that Paul has finished removing Judean ethnic identity markers (the Mosaic law, including circumcision) as barriers that divide Judean and gentile Christians. At the same time, this final dependent clause of 4:16 introduces the main concern of the final section 4:17-25 which seeks to instate the role of trust in realising the worldwide fatherhood of Abraham.

4.3 Rom 4:17-25

After displacing the role of the Mosaic law (4:2-16), in this section Paul explains how trust in God realises righteousness that will result in Abraham's worldwide fatherhood. Paul first spells out the object of Abraham's trust, namely, God who raises the dead (4:17). Then he emphasises the degree of his trust (4:18-19a) by saying that Abraham trusted that God could do the impossible. Finally, he elaborates on the content of Abraham's trust (4:19b-22).

142. Jewett, *Romans*, 330, notes that this "crucial" word has occurred 19 times already.

143. See below, p. 237.

Topoi related to death (4:17, 19, 24, 25) and life (4:17, 24) and the reversal motif of death to life dominate this section. These inputs form the firstspace of miracle rhetorolect to create in the secondspace of God as a transforming power. The firstspace and secondspace will blend in the thirdspace to move the implied audience to seek after “a human body [that] is healed and amazingly transformed.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, the object of the rhetoric in 4:17-25 is to move the implied audience to seek after a body that is raised from the dead. By this argument, Paul seeks to arrive at the conclusion that Judeans and especially gentiles by trust in God become Abraham’s descendants. Rom 4:17-25 offers a counter argument, and hence, a conclusion to the implicit contention of the Judean interlocutor in 4:1 that Abraham became the forefather of Judeans by means of human efforts. To understand the argument of 4:17-25, two social intertextures that underlie death and life need to be explained. The first, “death and pollution,” holds that death contains spiritual pollution; the second, “patrilineal descent,” believes that a person is present in his father in seminal form.

4.3.1 Death and Pollution

Malina observes that human beings

share in the basic human experience called the sacred. The sacred is that which is set apart to or for some person. It includes persons, places, things, and times that are symbolized or filled with some sort of set-apartness that we and others recognize . . . Some common synonyms for the sacred include *holy*, *saint*, and *sacral*.¹⁴⁵

The opposite of the “sacred” is the profane whose synonyms include the unholy and the non-sacred.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, deSilva adds,

144. See the thirdspace of miracle rhetorolect in Robbins, *Invention*, 109. David A. deSilva, “Toward a Socio-Rhetorical Taxonomy of Divine Intervention,” in *Fabrics of Discourse*, 316, sharpens the parameters for identifying miracle rhetorolect by noting that its presence is not denoted by every outward manifestation of divine intervention. Rather, miracle discourse should testify “to God’s interventions in the past story of God’s people . . . not expectations of how God will act in the future.”

145. Malina, *Cultural*, 163.

146. Malina, *Cultural*, 163.

People of a particular culture create a system that defines what is proper and improper to specific places, times, and people. This is part of a natural social process of creating order within the particular social entity and defining and defending the boundaries of that social entity.¹⁴⁷

Judeans and gentiles in the ancient world were no exception: they too had their conceptualisations of what were sacred and profane. deSilva also elaborates that gentile Christians would have no difficulty understanding the NT authors' re-working of Judean purity codes. This is due to the fact that the "meaning and significance of pure versus defiled, of sanctified versus profane, would already be deeply inscribed in his or her mind" due to Greek culture which was pervaded with pollution taboos.¹⁴⁸ The same applies to Roman culture as well. In other words, gentile Christians would have been significantly influenced by the dominant Greek or Roman culture when reading NT letters including the Letter to the Romans. The discussions below explain how Judeans and gentiles construe death as a religious pollution.

4.3.1.1 A Roman Perspective

As I argued above, Roman culture, being the dominant culture of Rome and to a lesser extent Corinth, asserted its influence on a broad territorial region.¹⁴⁹ Its sphere of influence would include the majority of the Roman Christians as they were gentiles living in Rome. Romans, including those who lived morally blameless lives, considered themselves ritually polluted by events of birth and death.¹⁵⁰ An ordinary ancient Roman understood

147. David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 113.

148. deSilva, *Introduction*, 114. See also p. 115-116 for his comments on how the pollution caused by murder and the required purification drive the Greek tragedy "Oedipus the King." Such pollution taboos, as deSilva correctly insists, would have influenced the ethics of gentiles.

149. See above, pp. 19 and 226.

150. Elaine Fantham, "Purification in Ancient Rome," in *Rome, Pollution and Propriety*, ed. Mark Bradley and Kenneth Stow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

“pollution/sin . . . [as] that sense of something (a person, an object, an activity) was amiss, or out of order, in relation to the gods.”¹⁵¹ They believed that a corpse had the ability to contaminate those who came close to it.¹⁵² That ancient Romans regarded death as a religious pollution is shown by the way they viewed objects and people who had contact with a corpse.¹⁵³ The house of the deceased became a *funesta* (unclean) household, in contrast to a *familia pura* (pure household). Precautions were taken to guard against accidental exposure to the dead.¹⁵⁴ These include placing branches of cypress around the door to show that death had occurred in the household; playing flutes and horns to a distinctive tune that accompanied the corpse; and having family members cover their heads with ashes and wear a mourning gown (*toga pulla, atra, toga sordida*). Bodel comments that magistrates, high priests, the Pontifex Maximus, and the Flamen Dialis were the main people concerned as their religious purity affected the welfare of the state.¹⁵⁵ The descriptions of funerary workers also imply the idea of religious pollution. Workers who cremate corpses were described as *sordidus*; a mortician was called a *pollinctor* since he was a “perfumer of the polluted”; a funeral director was *inquinatissimus* (most foul). These terms denote religious pollution.¹⁵⁶ Funerary workers at Puteoli were also refused entry into the town except on official business. The

2012), 62.

151. So Roger Beck, “Rome,” in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 509.

152. Hugh Lindsay, “Death-Pollution and Funerals in the City of Rome,” in *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*, ed. Valerie M. Hope and Eireann Marshall (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 152.

153. John Bodel, “Dealing with Death: Undertakers, Executioners and Potter’s Fields in Ancient Rome,” in *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*, ed. Valerie M. Hope and Eireann Marshall (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 141; Jack Lennon, “Carnal, Bloody and Unnatural Acts: Religious Pollution in Ancient Rome” (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2011), 27.

154. See Bodel, “Dealing,” 141.

155. Bodel, “Dealing,” 141.

156. Bodel, “Dealing,” 141.

above observations show that ancient Romans attached to death the notion of religious pollution. Coupled with the fact that an average of 1,500 corpses were unclaimed and unwanted annually, the problem of death-pollution must have weighed on the minds of ancient Romans, including Paul and the audience of Romans.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the life span in ancient Rome was generally very short. Hope estimates life expectancy in ancient Rome as a whole to be around 25 to 30 years. If a child survived infancy, a life span of about 40 to 50 years was realistic. The risk of death for babies and children, however, was high.¹⁵⁸ In view of these short life spans, contact with dead bodies would certainly be a taboo for the ancient Roman society.

The danger that pollution posed to the living included infertility. Lennon's observation is helpful:

Contact of any sort with death could be particularly damaging, especially with regard to the fertility of the bride, which we have already seen in the death-based pollution caused by menstrual blood whether against crops, animals which have consumed it, or even pregnant women who come into the slightest contact with it.¹⁵⁹

Seneca the Elder believed that fertility in a marriage could be endangered if someone who was thinking of marriage or having a child met a man who had just returned from the graveyard.¹⁶⁰

157. See Bodet, "Dealing," 129, for a conservative estimate in the period 100 BCE to 200 CE.

158. So Valerie M. Hope, *Death in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 10. Of the 12 children born to the mother of Tiberius and Gaius (as it was reputed), only three survived to adulthood. See also D. S. Potter and D. J. Mattingly, *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 88, who estimates life expectancy to be in the lower twenties. Walter Scheidel, "Disease and Death," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 49–52, while doubting the validity of ages recorded on tombstones and high mortality life tables, nevertheless, agrees that the general outlook was for a very short life expectancy.

159. Lennon, "Carnal," 193. See also Pliny the Elder *Nat. Hist.* 28.79–82.

160. Seneca the Elder *Ex. Con.* 4.1: "Senex, orbus, infelix, hoc tantum inter miserias

4.3.1.2 A Judean Perspective

Judeans also view death as containing religious pollution. Nelson's observations are helpful. Lev 10:10, "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean," introduces two pairs of terms that frame the purity system of ancient Israel.¹⁶¹ The first pair is "clean" and "unclean." An object is "clean" when it is confined to certain boundaries or is in its proper place. Its external boundaries are also complete and intact. The reverse is true for an object that becomes unclean: it is not in its proper place or classification, and the integrity of its external boundaries have been compromised in some ways.¹⁶² It is capable of causing religious pollution.¹⁶³ Death makes a body unclean because the boundary between the living and dead is broken. The external boundary of a body is compromised as a dead body is decaying from wholeness to the eventual state of bones.¹⁶⁴ Thus, anyone or anything that comes in contact with a dead body becomes unclean (Lev 11:31-32). The second pair is "common" and "holy." The term "common" refers to the space in which human beings ordinarily function and live.¹⁶⁵ The corresponding term "holy" describes objects or spaces that have been set apart from the ordinary or "common" for God.¹⁶⁶ Places, times, people, and objects which belong to the

solatium capio quod miserior esse non possum. Cineres meorum in sepulchro uideo. Magnum solatium est saepius appellare liberorum non responsura nomina. Hic mihi uiuendum est ne cui de nuptiis, ne cui de liberis cogitanti dirum omen occurrat"; see Lennon, "Carnal," 193–94.

161. Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 20. Similarly, deSilva, *Introduction*, 118.

162. Nelson, *Raising*, 21–22, adds that "common" carries with it no negative connotations. See also deSilva, *Introduction*, 118.

163. deSilva, *Introduction*, 118; David P. Wright, "Holiness (OT)," *ABD*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:246–47.

164. Nelson, *Raising*, 23.

165. Nelson, *Raising*, 25; deSilva, *Introduction*, 118.

166. deSilva, *Introduction*, 118.

“common” social space could become holy. For instance, “common” objects like vestments (worn by priests), the altar, and sacrifices when set apart for God become holy.¹⁶⁷

For most of the time, an Israelite was clean and common. A woman who had a bloody bodily discharge would be unclean and common. Dead bodies were also unclean and common.¹⁶⁸ Food sold in the market was clean and common and could be eaten by the common lay Israelite. Tithes given to the priests would be clean and holy. In this case, only priests who have kept themselves holy could consume these tithes. Common Israelites were disallowed from eating these tithes. In other words, different permutations of the two pairs, “clean” and “unclean,” and “common” and “holy” were legitimate. The one combination that cannot be allowed is when “holy” and “unclean” come together.¹⁶⁹ deSilva concludes,

It was the duty of Israel to preserve the holy from being brought into contact with the impure (the unclean), so that the source of holiness, God, would continue to show favor toward Israel and would not be provoked either to withdraw from the people or consume them.¹⁷⁰

In the case of Rom 4:17-25, such an antithesis between the unclean and holy exists: Abraham who has a dead, and hence, unclean reproductive organ attempts to seek the favour of Yahweh, the holy God, for descendants through his dead reproductive organ.¹⁷¹

4.3.2 Patrilineal Descent

It was well known in Mediterranean culture that a descendant is present in seminal form in the father.¹⁷² Aristotle believed that the matter that makes up the physical body of a child was passed on from the mother to the child.¹⁷³ The father was thought to shape the

167. Nelson, *Raising*, 26.

168. deSilva, *Introduction*, 118.

169. Nelson, *Raising*, 34.

170. deSilva, *Introduction*, 118. See Nelson, *Raising*, 34 who cites Isa 35:8; 52:1, 11; 6:3-5 which illustrate the “antithesis between the holy and the unclean.”

171. See the discussion below, p. 244.

body and the character of his child.¹⁷⁴ In another ancient text, in an effort to spurn the teachings of his mentor, Macro, Gaius Julius Caesar argued that just as the actions of a man are preserved ἐν τοῖς σπερματικοῖς, so also is his aptitude to govern.¹⁷⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, when Rebecca asks God about the children who are struggling in her womb, God explains that the two children represent two nations. In other words, “each twin is not only an individual but also a whole people (*ethnos* or *laos*). Thus, many descendants are contained in Rebecca’s womb.”¹⁷⁶ With these two social intertextures clarified, we shall investigate the rhetoric of 4:17-25.

4.3.3 Rom 4:17

Rom 4:17 spells out the object of Abraham’s trust—God who is able to raise the dead to life. Paul begins by anchoring the preceding final dependent clause ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν upon Scripture by citing verbatim Gen 17:5 (LXX).¹⁷⁷ There is, however, a difference. Abraham’s fatherhood as πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν (Judean and gentile Christians) is now expanded to that of πολλῶν ἐθνῶν. The rationale of Paul’s argument is to include the part (Judean and gentile Christians) in the whole (all nations).¹⁷⁸ The whole (the promise of Abraham’s worldwide fatherhood)¹⁷⁹ carries absolute value because it is founded upon

172. Hodge, *If Sons*, 94–103, points out several ancient texts which show that the Mediterranean world believed that a person was contained in the seeds of his ancestors.

173. Aristotle *Gen. Ani* 2.4: “The female contribution . . . contains all the parts of the body *potentially*, though none in actuality.”

174. Aristotle *Gen. Ani* 1.20: “The male is that which has the power to generate . . . out of which . . . the generated offspring comes into being.”

175. Philo *Legat.* 1.55.

176. Hodge, *If Sons*, 96–97.

177. In the other 13 occurrences (not counting 4:17) of καθὼς γέγραπται, all refer to what immediately precedes.

178. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 231–41.

179. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 63.

Scripture.¹⁸⁰ If the “whole” promise is fulfilled, then a part of this “whole” promise will also be fulfilled. This makes Gen 17:5 (LXX) an apt citation. The text, however, also poses a difficulty as there is no mention in Genesis 17 (LXX) that Abraham ἐπίστευσεν. One possible solution is to see ἐπίστευσεν as a reference to Gen 15:6 where the aorist tense signifies an event that took place before the account of Genesis 17.¹⁸¹ This solution, however, is untenable as the nature of Abraham’s trust in 4:17 is one that believes in God who raises the dead. Abraham’s trust cannot be extricated from the setting of Genesis 17 which centres on Abraham and Sarah’s old age. A more probable solution is to see trust as encapsulated in the rite of circumcision that Abraham performed on his household. This way of construing circumcision is borne out by 4:9-12 where Paul argued that circumcision confirms a righteousness that comes by trust.

The promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations is fulfilled by trust. Some scholars view the object of Abraham’s trust as the promise.¹⁸² Although they also include God in the object of trust, this interpretation misses Paul’s point. This verse spells out clearly the object of trust. The direct object of ἐπίστευσεν is the relative pronoun οὗ. This pronoun refers to God and with its case being attracted to θεοῦ.¹⁸³ The aspect of trust is specific and is denoted by the parallel participial expressions τοῦ ζῳοποιῶντος τοὺς νεκροὺς and καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα. That these should be construed as parallels is evinced by two observations. First, syntactically, the one who makes alive and the one who calls are the same person.¹⁸⁴ Second, they are structurally similar, where both contain a substantive

180. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 77–79.

181. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 217; Jewett, *Romans*, 333, construes it as an extended midrash drawn from Gen 15:6.

182. E.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 333; Schreiner, *Romans*, 235; Moo, *Romans*, 280.

183. BDF §294.

184. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 271–72, for his discussion on what constitutes a right application and an abuse of Granville Sharp’s rule.

participle that takes on a direct object. Thus, the object of trust is God who makes alive the dead.¹⁸⁵

When 4:17 is read together with the social intertexture underlying “death” as a form of religious pollution, God is construed as someone who can remove religious pollution. Furthermore, when 4:17 is read together with the social intertexture of patrilineal descent, God’s ability to raise to life includes also his ability to raise descendants from a person’s dead body. In the case of Abraham, God’s ability to bring life aids the fulfilment of the citation of Gen 17:5 (LXX), that is, Abraham’s worldwide fatherhood. How Abraham’s trust in God realises the promise of his worldwide fatherhood is explained in what follows.

4.3.4 Rom 4:18-19a

Rom 4:18-19a is framed by the common motif of a high degree of trust: “hope against hope” (4:18) and “not having been weakened in trust” (4:19). Thus, this section emphasises the extent or degree of Abraham’s trust in God.

The relative pronoun ὃς refers not simply to Abraham but to the subject of the preceding verb ἐπίστευσεν. This observation implies that what follows continues to delineate the content of Abraham’s trust. Abraham’s trust is further described as παρ’ ἐλπίδα ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι. The meaning of the prepositional phrase παρ’ ἐλπίδα is debated. It can mean either “beyond hope”¹⁸⁶ or more likely, “against hope.”¹⁸⁷ First, this prepositional phrase should be read together with the adjoining ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι which means “on the basis of hope.” These two

185. Various commentators, e.g., Moo, *Romans*, 279–80; Schreiner, *Romans*, 236–37; dismiss a reference to the tradition of *creatio ex nihilo*. Contra Dunn, “Salvation,” 218; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 244; Otfried Hofius, “Eine Altjüdische Parallele zu Röm 4:17b,” *NTS* 18 (1971): 93–94; Jonathan Worthington, “*Creatio Ex Nihilo* and Romans 4:17 in Context,” *NTS* 62 (2016): 59.

186. So Jewett, *Romans*, 335, on the basis of Philo *Mos.* 1.250, where a king of Canaan obtained an easy victory that was παρ’ ἐλπίδα, that is, better than what he had hoped for. Similarly, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 245.

187. So most commentators, e.g., Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 219; Moo, *Romans*, 283. More recently, Matera, *Romans*, 116; Holland, *Divine Marriage*, 140.

prepositional phrases when read together should form a polarity of how Abraham views his ability to have descendants. Such a polarity coheres with the repeated emphasis in 4:17-21 that he believes the hope given by God will be realised despite his “dead body” which does not carry any hope of having a descendant. The focus of *παρ’ ἐλπίδα ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι* teases out the nature of the trust: it is one which is thoroughly focused on God. More specifically, this hope in God is expressed by the infinitival purpose clause *εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα πολλῶν ἔθνων*. Abraham’s fatherhood is promised by God as it is warranted by Scripture. Unlike the earlier recitation in 4:17 which is introduced by *καθὼς γέγραπται*, the recitation of Scripture in 4:18 is introduced by *κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον*.¹⁸⁸ As discussed in 4:1, by using the verb *λέγειν*, Paul intimates that he is arguing against the Judean interlocutor’s main contention in 4:1 that gives rise to the rhetoric of Romans 4, namely, that Abraham received fatherhood by human efforts. The content of the citation proves my point.

The oral-scribal recitation *οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου*, is taken verbatim from Gen 15:5 (LXX). The focus of this recitation is debated. Some scholars do not give much attention to the significance of this recitation.¹⁸⁹ This ignores Paul’s emphatic use of *λέγειν* to introduce the recitation which indicates that what follows seeks to refute the contention of the Judean interlocutor in 4:1. Others group it together with the promise of many descendants of Gen 17:5.¹⁹⁰ Such a construal fails to explain why Paul cites only the last clause of Gen 15:5 (LXX). I contend that this recitation highlights the fact that Abraham’s worldwide fatherhood is a result of God blessing Abraham personally, as the second singular person *σου* and the singular *σπέρμα* emphasise. In this way, Abraham’s personal act of trust in God that realises his fatherhood comes into sharp focus.

188. Lenski, *Romans*, 323, notices the difference in the way this citation is introduced (as compared to 4:17). Unfortunately, he does not pursue the otherwise critical difference.

189. So Barrett, *Romans*, 97; Bryan, *Preface*, 118.; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 387; Schreiner, *Romans*, 237.

190. So Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 246–47; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 219; Moo, *Romans*, 283; Jewett, *Romans*, 336; Matera, *Romans*, 116.

How the final participial clause καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει (4:19a) is related to the finite verb κατενόησεν is controverted. Some position the finite verb κατενόησεν as being subordinate to the participle ἀσθενήσας.¹⁹¹ This amounts to the unlikely option of treating the participle ἀσθενήσας as an independent participle, an understanding that should only be used as a last resort.¹⁹² Some think that this participle substantiates (at least conceptually) the thought in 4:20.¹⁹³ This view, however, still fails to explain how the participle qualifies the main verb κατενόησεν. I propose that this participle is related grammatically to, and hence, qualifies the preceding main verb ἐπίστευσεν. Thus, 4:18-19a could be translated as “Hoping against hope, he trusted [ἐπίστευσεν] that he would become ‘the father of many nations’ . . . He did not weaken [ἀσθενήσας] in trust.” Not only is this grammatically legitimate, it is also contextually satisfying: it is similar in thought to the double prepositional phrase παρ’ ἐλπίδα ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι which also qualifies ἐπίστευσεν. The similarity is that both emphasise Abraham as trusting God when it is seemingly impossible to do so. This participle also concludes the emphasis of the recitation of Gen 15:5 (LXX) that Abraham’s unflagging trust is instrumental to his worldwide fatherhood.

4.3.5 Rom 4:19b-21

Against most interpreters, I argued above that the clause containing the participle ἀσθενήσας (4:19a) concludes the preceding thought. Thus, 4:19b begins a new thought by elaborating on some details of the content of Abraham’s trust. The important question is how

191. See Moo, *Romans*, 283, where he refers to Maximillian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 263, 376. Also, Schreiner, *Romans*, 237.

192. James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1979), 152.

193. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 247, thinks it is a causal participle whose main thought lies in the verb διεκρίθη. Cranfield even considers the possibility of adopting a minor reading where a particle of negation is attached to κατενόησεν. This reading (found in D F G Ψ and other late manuscripts) is correctly rejected in favour of the one without the particle of negation in view of the attestation of earlier manuscripts (⋈ A B C) and the principle that the more difficult reading is the more likely reading. Jewett, *Romans*, 336, thinks this participle stands in antithesis to ἐνεδυναμώθη.

4:19b and what follows, which describe in some detail Abraham's trust, mobilise ideological power.

Paul reconfigures Gen 17:17 (LXX) and describes Abraham's body as *νεκρωμένον ἑκατονταετῆς που ὑπάρχων*. The word *νεκρῶν* can signify a state of impotency.¹⁹⁴ In a somewhat similar vein, several English Bible versions seem to regard this death as figurative: "as good as dead."¹⁹⁵ This perhaps stems from the explanatory "being about a hundred years old." The problems with this construal are several. Paul does not use any particle of comparison.¹⁹⁶ Neither is there any clear indication from the context of Romans 4 that some kind of an analogy is involved. The explanatory note about Abraham being a hundred years old does not constitute evidence as it merely points to the cause of this death.¹⁹⁷ The contrary, however, is true. The immediate context of Romans 4 describes Abraham's trust as one that trusts God who is able to make alive *τούς νεκρούς* (4:17). Also, in applying Romans 4 to the implied audience, God is described as the one who raised Jesus *ἐκ νεκρῶν* (4:24). Thus, when Abraham considers his body *νεκρωμένον*, it should also take on this meaning, namely, a *σῶμα* that is void of physical life. Several observations clarify the scope of *νεκρῶν*. In Paul's major discussions (1 Corinthians 6 and 7) on issues pertaining to sexuality, it is significant that he uses *σῶμα*.¹⁹⁸ In these discussions, this word is viewed as the medium by which sexual intercourse is performed. Thus, Abraham's dead *σῶμα* refers to

194. BDAG, "νεκρῶν," 668.

195. So NRSV, NIV, ESV.

196. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 675, on the uses of comparative conjunctions.

197. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 631, notes that causal participles often precede the main controlling verb. He observes, however, that causal participles that come after the main verb are also attested (e.g., John 4:6; 11:38). They are also represented in the NT.

198. 1 Cor 6:13, 15, 16, 18, 19; 7:4; also, Rom 1:24. See also Karl O. Sandnes, *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*, SNTSMS 120 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14–60, who argues that presuppositions underlying the working of the belly are the same as those regarding the body. He also surveys Graeco-Roman literature to show that the belly is often thought of as the medium by which sexual desires are experienced.

the inability of his body to provide the necessary semen for procreation. This conclusion ties in with the fact that dead sperm is often connected with death in antiquity.¹⁹⁹ Such a conceptualisation coheres also with how Sarah is described: her μήτρα is dead, and hence, is unable to conceive. In other words, Abraham's and Sarah's reproductive organs are physically dead. When read in light of the social intertexture underlying death, Abraham's and Sarah's reproductive organs are dead and contain pollution. This implies also that the descendants present in Abraham's body in seminal form (according to the social intertexture of "patrilineal descent") are also dead, and hence, polluted.

Despite Abraham's and Sarah's dead reproductive organs, however, Abraham demonstrates trust in God, as Paul says in the words εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. Here, the particle δέ is construed as an adversative that contrasts with the thought begun in 4:19b where Abraham recognises his and Sarah's dead reproductive organs (4:19a). Abraham does not doubt (οὐ διεκρίθη)²⁰⁰ because of unbelief.²⁰¹ Instead, he believes that God is able to realise the promise (τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν) for him.²⁰² The

199. Bodel, "Dealing," 137: "Artemidorus [1.78] comments on the case of a man who, having dreamed he had entered a house of prostitution and was unable to leave, died a few days later: 'it is reasonable that this place should resemble death, because a whore-house is known as a common place (koinos topos), like that which receives corpses, and much sperm perishes there.'"

200. So most commentators, e.g., Moo, *Romans*, 284; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 248; Godet, *Romans*, 181; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 75. Cf. F. C. Syngé, "Not Doubt but Discriminate," *ExpT* 89 (1978): 203, who by drawing a contrast between this deponent verb and faith suggests the translation "to decide that a thing is impossible." This overstretches the immediate context as "works" is not immediately in view. Similarly, Michel, *Römer*, 173, seems to be reading into the word more than what the context allows: "Der Glaube überwindet den Unglauben, der die Verheißung in Zweifel auflösen will."

201. The dative phrase τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ here is instrumental (see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 162) as trust in 4:17-25 is thought of as that which brings about the promise of Abraham's worldwide fatherhood.

202. The preposition here should contain the same force as in the other εἰς + accusative constructions in Romans 4 (4:3, 5, 9, 22). In these other occurrences, the construction εἰς δικαιοσύνην indicates a result where the client is ascribed honour by the patron. Righteousness, then, becomes a possession of the client. Likewise, here, Abraham also possesses the promise.

reappearance of ἐπαγγελία is significant after having dropped out of the text since its earlier appearance in 4:13-16. In all probability, Paul by using ἐπαγγελία intends for the implied audience to recall not only the content of the promise (Abraham inheriting the world) but also the contrast between ἐπαγγελία and νόμος and the absence of wrath in 4:13-16.²⁰³ Thus, that which Abraham does not doubt is not merely that God is able to make alive his dead body (σῶμα) and Sarah's dead womb. Abraham also trusts that God is able to remove any wrath which results from religious pollution that may hinder the fulfilment of the promise. That wrath is immediately in view is corroborated by the juxtaposition of transgression and righteousness in 4:25. This understanding also coheres with the social intertextures of the cognates of νεκρ- where death is perceived as containing religious pollution. Specifically, death is a consequence of sin.²⁰⁴

Instead of doubting, Abraham does the opposite. He is ἐνεδυναμώθη by means of trust.²⁰⁵ Most commentators understand that that which is ἐνεδυναμώθη is trust, giving the sense of a growing trust. Such a construal goes against several observations. For one, to describe Abraham's trust in God in Romans 4 using incremental terms undermines Paul's rhetoric as Paul builds his present rhetoric on Abraham's high degree of trust as signified by the expression παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν. Also, describing Abraham's trust as being strengthened by trust seems redundant.²⁰⁶ More likely, that which is ἐνεδυναμώθη is Abraham's σῶμα. This interpretation coheres with the usage of the verb elsewhere. In Pauline usage, the object that is strengthened is Paul himself so that he can accomplish a particular aspect of his ministry.²⁰⁷ Similarly here, Abraham's body is strengthened so that

203. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 248, is one of the few commentators (see also Jewett, *Romans*, 337, following Cranfield) who comments on the “vitally important” occurrence of ἐπαγγελία at this point, although he fails to properly elicit its significance.

204. See below, p. 260.

205. The dative phrase τῇ πίστει is instrumental as its contrast τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ.

206. Godet, *Romans*, 182, chooses to attach the verb ἐνεδυναμώθη to the participle δοῦς.

207. See Phil 4:3; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:1; 4:17. For instance, in Phil 4:13, Paul was

his reproductive organs can function normally, and hence, procreate. Scholars take the aorist participle in the clause $\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \delta\acute{\omicron}\xi\alpha\nu \tau\tilde{\omega} \theta\epsilon\tilde{\omega}$ as being contemporaneous with the aorist verb $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\acute{\omega}\theta\eta$. More likely, it should be construed as indicating the cause that gives rise to the main verb.²⁰⁸ This agrees with a possible construal of the time of the verbal nature of an aorist participle that its action took place before the action of the main verb. Thus, the sense of the interpretation is that Abraham is strengthened because he gave glory to God. This fits the use of the verb $\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\upsilon\nu$ in 1:21 where the gentiles' refusal to give glory to God brought adverse consequences.²⁰⁹ Here, in 4:20, Abraham was strengthened in his body by God because he gave God glory. In an honour/shame culture, this equates to Abraham giving honour to God the patron so that God gives Abraham strength to procreate. Paul has chosen the language of the honour/shame culture to impress on the implied audience the need for God's help as they would look to their patrons for provision. This mobilises ideological power to persuade the implied audience to imitate Abraham's trust which is elaborated in what follows: $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} + \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma, \kappa\tau\lambda.$ The connective $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}$ is expegetic. What follows in "because he was fully convinced that that which he has promised, he is able to do" (4:21) refers to the way that a client honours his patron by trusting in his patron's ability to provide for the client.²¹⁰ Paul accentuates the role of trust by using the verb $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ which carries the basic meaning of "to be full of," in this case, trust in the patron. As in 4:20, the verb $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\eta}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\tau\alpha\iota$ recalls the juxtaposition of wrath and promise in 4:13-16. Thus, Abraham

strengthened by God giving him the secret ($\mu\epsilon\mu\acute{\upsilon}\eta\mu\alpha\iota$) of eating to the fullest and going hungry. Cf. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 527, who refers to God's power that gave Paul contentment. In 1 Tim 1:12, this strengthening empowers Paul for ministry so that Christ can demonstrate his patience to those who would believe. Cf. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 137.

208. See BDF §339; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 631.

209. Edward Adams, "Abraham's Faith and Gentile Disobedience: Textual Links Between Romans 1 and 4," *JSNT* 65 (1997): 47–66, is probably right to see in 4:20 an allusion to 1:21.

210. deSilva, *Honor*, 115.

trusts God to avert wrath so that the promise of his worldwide fatherhood can be realised. In light of the above mentioned social intertextures, pollution results in infertility. Hence, Abraham also trusts God to remove pollution in his reproductive organs and pollution in his future descendants who are present with him in seminal form.

4.3.6 Rom 4:22

With an inferential $\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron$, Paul starts to conclude the preceding section. Instead of concluding with a statement about Abraham's worldwide fatherhood, however, Paul returns once again to his recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX). Scholars who insist that the main rhetoric (rather than a supporting thesis) of Romans 4 is about justification by trust have not provided a satisfactory connection between 4:22 and what immediately precedes. Moo, for example, acknowledges that 4:22 primarily concludes what immediately precedes. He thinks that the citation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) summarises Abraham's demonstration of trust in Genesis 17 and also in his later life.²¹¹ Others in this camp contend that $\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron$ reaches back to the argument starting with 4:3.²¹² These interpretations, however, ignore the focus of 4:13-21 which is about how Abraham's trust in God achieved his worldwide fatherhood and is not merely a demonstration of his trust in God (in general).

To understand how the recitation of Gen 15:6 concludes what immediately precedes and yet also reaches back to the argument starting with 4:3, we need to recall my earlier point about Gen 15:6 (LXX). I argued that the righteousness referred to in Gen 15:6 (LXX) is not just about forensic justification. Rather, it is a relational term that denotes a state of cordial relationship, that is, a relationship that is characterised by righteousness between a client (Abraham) and his patron (God). This cordial relationship that was realised by Abraham's trust in God culminated in God granting him many descendants, namely, a worldwide fatherhood. The close connection between 4:22 which contains the citation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) and what immediately precedes (4:17-21) which discusses Abraham's worldwide

211. Moo, *Romans*, 286; in a similar vein, Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 250.

212. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 221; Godet, *Romans*, 183.

fatherhood confirms my earlier interpretation of Gen 15:6 (LXX) and its meaning in 4:3: the “righteousness” in Gen 15:6 (LXX) has to do with Abraham’s worldwide fatherhood.

Why does Paul conclude with Gen 15:6 (LXX)? Scholars generally agree that this recitation concludes the entire rhetoric. The question is in what way. I contend that Paul, by harking back to the beginning of the argument, is drawing the implied audience back to the point where he first used Gen 15:6 (LXX). There, he used this citation to refute the Judean interlocutor’s contention in 4:1: “What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?” In this introductory question in 4:1, the Judean interlocutor, whose question is articulated by Paul, is attempting to argue that Abraham became the forefather of Judeans’ by means of human efforts, that is, deeds related to the Mosaic law. Starting with 4:3, Paul frames his entire argument with the recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX). He disproves the Judean interlocutor’s contention and shows instead that Abraham became the Judeans’ forefather by trust. Paul then concludes his rhetoric in 4:22 with the Hebrew Bible text (Gen 15:6 [LXX]) that began his refutation in 4:3.

4.3.7 Rom 4:23-25

Scholars agree that this section applies the implications of the foregoing rhetoric to the audience.²¹³ What is unclear is how this application takes the argument of Romans to the next stage. In what follows I shall explain how it does so.

4.3.7.1 Rom 4:23

In 4:23 the word, ἐγράφη, refers to the citation of Gen 15:6 (LXX). Paul, however, further abbreviates it to ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ so as to accentuate his point: “But it was not written because of him only.” Scholars debate how Gen 15:6, which was addressed specifically to Abraham, could also be written for others. Explanations include Paul adopting a typological interpretation,²¹⁴ viewing it as a promise-fulfilment,²¹⁵ or applying a universal principle

213. E.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 239; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 388.

214. Goppelt, *Typos*, 127–29; also, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 222; cf. Leonhard Goppelt, “Paul and Heilsgeschichte: Conclusions from Romans 4 and 1 Corinthians 10:1–13,” trans. Mathias Rissi, *Int* 21, no. 3 (1967): 315–26.

common to both Christians and Abraham.²¹⁶ As my discussion below will explain, 4:23 should be understood in light of the social intertexture of “patrilineal descent.”²¹⁷

4.3.7.2 Rom 4:24-25

In light of the above discussed social intertexture of “patrilineal descent,” the phrase ἀλλὰ καὶ δι’ ἡμᾶς implies that the seminal form in Abraham includes a large group of people to whom God will reckon righteousness. In view of the emphasis on Abraham’s worldwide fatherhood throughout 4:17-22, the pronoun ἡμᾶς must include both Judean and gentile Christians. As I argued above, by the pronoun ἡμᾶς, Paul is no longer engaging the Judean interlocutor but is now addressing directly the implied audience.²¹⁸ Significant for our discussion are several points. First, this corroborates my proposal that Paul cites Gen 15:6 (LXX) not to prove justification by trust but to show that this righteousness so attained by Abraham obtains for him a worldwide fatherhood. Also, that Paul should, after this recitation of Gen 15:6 (LXX), proceed to apply his rhetoric to the implied audience sharpens the focus of the purpose of this rhetoric, which is to prove the worldwide fatherhood of Abraham. Second, this social intertexture lends ideological power to Paul’s use of the Scripture text Gen 15:6 (LXX): when God reckoned Abraham as righteous, Abraham’s descendants were included because they were with Abraham in seminal form.

At this juncture, Paul has demonstrated by the foregoing rhetoric several pivotal points. He started the rhetoric by asking if Judean Christians had a case that Abraham obtained righteousness (which gained him worldwide fatherhood) by way of human efforts (4:1). In response, Paul first undermines the role of the deeds of the Mosaic law (4:2-8), circumcision (4:9-12), and the Mosaic law itself (4:13-16). He then brings in the role of trust

215. Schreiner, *Romans*, 241.

216. Lenski, *Romans*, 326; Barrett, *Romans*, 98–99; Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 250; Matera, *Romans*, 117–18.

217. See above, p. 243.

218. See above, pp. 123-124.

via the topoi death and life (4:17-25). These topoi offer Paul a gateway to introduce the topos of “sin” and the critical linchpin, “Jesus the Lord,” who unites the dissenting factions of Judean and gentile Christians. How he does that is the subject of the discussion that follows.

First, as for Abraham, the Christian’s object of trust is God. This is in keeping with the social intertexture of “patrilineal descent” that Paul utilises to mobilise ideological power that Abraham’s descendants must do as their ancestor Abraham did (4:12) since descendants bear resemblance to their ancestors.²¹⁹ A social and cultural texture also underlies God as the object of trust. Paul is using God as the superordinate prototype to unite the dissenting factions. Second, having stated earlier in 4:19 that Abraham’s body is dead, and hence, contains religious pollution, the descendants who are with him in seminal form are also ritually unclean. This implies that religious pollution, brought about by death, is present not only in gentiles but also in Judeans. Judean Christians do not possess righteousness just because they possess the law. In this way, ideological power is mobilised to diminish the boast of Judean Christians toward gentile Christians by de-legitimizing the Mosaic Law as an ethnic identity marker for Judeans. Hence, expiation is required for both groups. The social and cultural intertexture that underlies death and expiation, as explained below, shows that such a need weighs heavily on the minds of the ancient implied audience.

Upon death in a Roman house, a series of purification rites took place. These rites only seemed to have ceased around 200 CE.²²⁰ After removing the corpse for burial, the *euerriator*, usually the heir to the family cult, was responsible for sweeping the house where death had occurred. An incomplete purification procedure had serious repercussions since it was thought that failure to do so would be expiated by death.²²¹ During the days of rest and mourning after death (*feriae denicales*), several meals were undertaken for purification purposes. At the tomb a meal called *silicernium* was eaten.²²² On the ninth day, a meal

219. See above, p. 243.

220. Lindsay, “Death-Pollution,” 165–66.

221. Lindsay, “Death-Pollution,” 166.

222. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Baltimore and

called *novemdial sacrificium* was observed that concluded *feriae denicales*.²²³ This meal required a sacrifice of a wether (a castrated ram) to the tutelary spirit Lar of the Roman household. A sacrifice (*porca praesentanea*) of a sow was also mandatory in the presence of the corpse to cleanse pollution that resided in the Roman *familia*.²²⁴ Upon return from the funeral, anyone who had participated in the interment had to go through a purification rite called the *suffitio* where a laurel branch was used to sprinkle water on the participant. He also had to go under a fire.²²⁵

Roman pontiffs chose inhumation over cremation as they were concerned that the deceased should receive a *locus religiosus*, that is, a respected place of burial. Thus, even after cremation, the *os resectum*, a small piece of the corpse, was retained for burial. This concern stemmed from the notion that if the dead were not properly buried, the ghost of the deceased would return to trouble the living. This was claimed to have happened in the case of Caligula, who was hurriedly buried. The caretakers of the garden of the Lamian family claimed to have seen frightening apparitions every night. It was thought that his ghost was only appeased after his sisters returned from exile to perform the necessary funeral rites to expiate the pollution.²²⁶

That religious pollution required expiation was also well known from public disasters. When Rome encountered military disasters inflicted by Hannibal at Lake Trasimene, the Sibylline Books (books guarded by the Roman senate that recorded prophecies) were

London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 50; Lindsay, "Death-Pollution," 166.

223. Hugh Lindsay, "Eating with the Dead: The Roman Funerary Banquet," in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 73, notes that this meal comprised two parts: a sacrifice and a subsequent banquet.

224. Lindsay, "Death-Pollution," 166.

225. Toynbee, *Death*, 50; Lindsay, "Death-Pollution," 167; cf. Fantham, "Purification," 65, who adds that the participant in the interment possibly had to leap across the fire while being sprinkled with laurel.

226. Suetonius, *Cal.*, 59.

consulted. It was revealed that the disasters were a result of an unfulfilled vow made to Mars, which was regarded as a religious pollution. Expiation took the form of a *lustratio*, a procession of animal sacrifices. Another example took place when the consul Marcus Licinius Crassus was preparing to leave Rome to attack the Parthians in 55 BCE. The consul was cursed by the tribune Gaius Ateius Capito because the war initiated by Crassus was considered to be unjust. Two years later, Crassus and his legions were destroyed. The whole of Rome suffered national guilt as they felt that they had been punished for impiety. These themes were taken up by the Augustan poets, Vergil and Horace, who stressed the need for expiation of the impiety of Romans. Some say that the narratives composed by these poets were designed to promote Augustus' statesmanship. Whatever the reasons were, discourses on collective sin, divine punishment, and expiation were, thus, written.²²⁷ The need for expiation as a result of pollution and sin, then, constitutes a social intertexture underlying death and its resulting pollution.

A similar cultural intertexture also underlies a Judean's perception of religious pollution. Various rituals recorded in the Hebrew Bible provide for the expiation of sin. If someone dies in the presence of a Nazirite, and thus, pollutes the "consecrated head," religious pollution is expiated by sacrificing two turtledoves or two young pigeons one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering (Lev 6:11). If someone dies in a tent, then everyone who comes into the tent or is in the tent becomes unclean. Religious pollution is expiated by being sprinkled with hyssop dipped in water that is mixed with the ashes of the purification offering. This expiation process applies to everyone who came into contact with objects related to the dead body, including bones, the slain, the corpse, or the grave.

Hence, both Judeans and gentiles required the expiation of religious pollution. They needed, like Abraham, to trust God who could raise the dead to life. Scholars debate over the similarity of the content of Abraham's and the implied audience's trust. That both trusts are parallel is evinced by similarities in the key words πιστεύειν (4:17; 4:24), λογίζεσθαι (4:22; 4:24), and the idea that both Abraham and the implied audience trust God who makes alive

227. Beck, "Rome," 510.

the dead (4:17; 4:24). But what God did for Abraham does not seem to be exactly parallel to what God will do for the implied audience. Whereas God raised to life Abraham's body, God raised to life Jesus and not the implied audience. This leads Jewett to conclude that "[w]hile the words 'trust' and 'reckon' link them to the Abraham story, the content of their trust differs substantially" since, unlike the implied audience's trust, Abraham's trust has to do with progeny.²²⁸ Similarly, Moo agrees that while "the locus of faith has shifted . . . the ultimate object of faith has always been the same." By that, he thinks that the promise given to Abraham finds fulfilment in Christ and the Christians.²²⁹ These interpretations are not satisfactory, however, as they undermine Paul's rhetoric. Paul, by making clear a parallelism between the implied audience's trust in God and Abraham's trust in God, positions Abraham as the superordinate figure of all who trust God. In other words, Paul's persuasion is only as strong as the similarity in the trust of Abraham and that of the implied audience. If this parallelism is broken, the ideological power of Paul's rhetoric to persuade the implied audience of the viability of trust would also be undermined.

The trusts of both Abraham and that of the implied audience are the same. Several observations support my position. First, Paul explicitly states that Abraham's trust in God brings righteousness simultaneously to *both* Abraham and (proleptically) to the implied audience (4:23-24). Hence, the trust in God that the implied audience now needs to exercise cannot be different from that of Abraham. The difference is not in the content of the trust but in the effects brought about by trust. For Abraham, the result was fatherhood. For the implied audience, the result was sonship, that is, the implied audience became Abraham's descendants and heirs. The same idea is operative in 4:13. Whereas Abraham received the promise when he became the father of the world which comprised both Judean and gentile Christians, the Judean and gentile Christians receive the promise when they become Abraham's descendants. Second, that both trusts in God are the same is required by the need for Abraham's descendants to walk in the "footsteps" of the trust in God of their "father

228. So Jewett, *Romans*, 341.

229. So Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 251; Barrett, *Romans*, 24; Godet, *Romans*, 183.

Abraham” (4:12). Third, Abraham’s body was dead (4:19) and consequently those of his descendants also, as they were present in Abraham seminally. Hence, both require a trust in God that can expiate them of religious pollution, that is, of sin. But how is God going to expiate religious pollution? This question can be expected to weigh heavily on the minds of the implied audience due to the above discussed social and cultural intertextures underlying death, specifically, the need for expiation of religious pollution. At this point, Paul aptly introduces Jesus who can expiate their religious pollution. The religious pollution that affects the implied audience, however, does not appear to be the same as that of Abraham’s: Abraham’s problem was death; the implied audience’s problem was trespasses (4:25). “Death” and “trespasses,” however, are clearly connected as Paul later makes clear in 6:23, when he claims that the wages of sin or trespasses is death. Several comments clarify this apparent incongruity. By making a parallel comparison between the trust of Abraham and that of the implied audience (4:23-25), Paul understands the religious pollution caused by death to be parallel in some way to that caused by trespasses. Paul’s construal builds on a social intertexture in which “death” is a consequence of trespasses/sin (Rom. 6:23). deSilva notes that in Graeco-Roman literature, such as the Oedipus Greek tragedy, murder, sacrilege, or other serious offences must be prosecuted. If they are not, avenging gods will destroy entire families or even cities.²³⁰ For example, the whole of Rome suffered national guilt after the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE when Marcus Licinius Crassus and his legions were destroyed by the Parthians. Romans felt that they had been punished for impiety by this humiliating defeat.²³¹ The Letter to the Romans also sheds a similar light on the cultural intertexture of death. In Romans 6, the Greek word νεκρός is contrasted with the new life that Christ experiences after his resurrection. This life describes one that has been freed from bondage to sin. A σῶμα is also νεκρόν because of sin (8:10). Thus, in Romans, the word νεκρός denotes a state that is a consequence of sin. To remove the religious pollution caused by sin, the implied audience needs to trust their patron, God, to provide them someone who

230. deSilva, *Introduction*, 115–16.

231. See above, p. 258.

can expiate their sins. By this, I am also positing that Abraham's trust in God was the same as that of the present implied audience who lived centuries later. To what extent Abraham was aware of Jesus who would come to expiate his pollution is a moot point, since Paul does not make this clear. That being said, however, this point being moot does not undercut this interpretation, as Paul's persuasiveness is not compromised. In fact, the converse is true: by maintaining Jesus as the only one who can expiate sin, Paul mobilises ideological power by holding up Jesus prominently as a superordinate figure to unite the dissenting factions. For religious pollution, understood as sin, to be expiated, the implied audience need to trust God "who raised (τόν ἐγείραντα) Jesus our Lord from the dead (νεκρῶν)" (4:24).

Important for a correct understanding is the point that Paul brings Jesus into his rhetoric as the solution to the deadness of Abraham's body and as the response of God to Abraham's trust (4:17-25). Jesus is also the solution to how Abraham was going to attain worldwide fatherhood. This role of Jesus is appropriately introduced into the rhetoric using two rhetorolects.

The first rhetorolect is precreation. Its presence is indicated by Paul positioning Abraham as the *pater patriae* of the Roman Empire²³² which fits the firstspace of a "political empire."²³³ Robbins also comments that the element of time that is "before creation" must be present for a rhetorolect to be regarded as precreation:

[P]recreation rhetoric . . . presupposes that Jesus' knowledge is in Jesus as a result of the intimate relation he, as the only begotten Son of God, has had with God since before creation . . . The Father sends his son out into his empire to distribute the benefits of this eternal wealth to those who profess unconditional loyalty and friendship to the son.²³⁴

Precreation rhetorolect is detected in 4:24 when Jesus is described as being raised from the dead by God: Jesus' resurrection recalls his preexistence. According to 1:3, Jesus' status as

232. See also above, pp. 219-220.

233. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

234. Robbins, *Invention*, 95.

the son of God was made explicit by his resurrection from the dead.²³⁵ By using this rhetorolect, Paul mobilises ideological power to persuade the implied audience that Jesus is capable of helping the implied audience receive resurrection and eternal life.²³⁶ Second, apocalyptic rhetorolect is also present as the word “resurrection” contains eschatological overtones.²³⁷ In using apocalyptic rhetorolect, Paul is aiming to create a new culture, and hence, a new superordinate ethnic identity to unite both Judean and gentile Christians. A social and cultural texture is present where Jesus functions as a broker in the Mediterranean culture. This lends ideological power to Paul’s rhetoric by persuading the implied audience of the need for someone to expiate religious pollution. Two things make Jesus a worthy broker between God and Christians.

First, Jesus was handed over (to death) for the trespasses of the audience. That the verb *παρεδόθη* should take on the unstated object “death” (*νεκρός*) is apparent from the contrasting statement “and he was raised because of our righteousness.” Jesus’ dying for trespasses recalls the temple and altar. This provides the input for the firstspace of priestly rhetorolect. Here, Jesus functions as the priest-messiah in the secondspace to generate purity between God and humans in the thirdspace.²³⁸ By using priestly rhetorolect, ideological power is generated to persuade the implied audience that the apocalyptic state, when Abraham is the father of all nations, is achievable.

235. See also Phil 2:6-12. The inner-texture of Phil 2:6-12 comprises the opening (2:6), and the closing (2:9-12). The closing, 2:9-12, should be construed as the response to the opening, 2:6. This observation implies that the resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates what had not been previously obvious when Christ took the form of a slave (2:7), that Jesus Christ is equal with God. For scholars who view Phil 2:6-12 as presupposing a preexistent Christ, see, e.g., Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 375; O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 236.

236. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

237. So Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 223, who comments that God’s making Jesus alive is “the eschatological counterpart of” his making Sarah’s womb alive.

238. Robbins, *Invention*, 109.

Second, Jesus “was raised because of our righteousness (δικαίωσιν).” Several observations point in the direction that δικαίωσις refers, minimally, to a life of ethical living. The underlying cultural intertexture often attaches resurrection with ethical living. This is prevalent in Romans. For example, in words similar to 4:24, Paul in 6:4 says that because Christ ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, Christians by way of being identified with Christ’s death are able to walk in newness of life. This refers to the ability to live an ethical life (cf. 6:9-10). In 7:4, because Christians have died to the law, they now belong to a new master, the one who was raised from the dead (τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι), in order that “we might bear fruit for God.” Paul contends that because the Spirit of God who τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν dwells in Christians, God will give life to σώματα ὑμῶν. This life is given by the Spirit. But for the Spirit to give life, the Christian must put to death the deeds of the body (8:13) and live ethically according to the Spirit (8:5-6). In other words, the life that God raises from the dead manifests itself in ethical living. Rom 4:24-25, thus, concludes that Jesus not only expiates the pollution due to death so that the implied audience can become Abraham’s descendants, he also enables these descendants to live an ethical life. But since an ethical life in Romans is measured against the law of Moses (Romans 2; 7:7-8; 8:1-4), trust in God who raised Jesus from the dead enables Judean Christians and, in particular, gentile Christians to fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic law. By living an ethical life, Christians affirm their trust in and, loyalty to God their patron. As a result, God the patron would regard such Christians as righteous.²³⁹

Thus, Paul’s rhetoric of Abraham’s trust (faith) has adequately responded to the two-fold concern enunciated at the beginning of this section, that Judean Christians do not have an edge over gentile Christians. The reason is because both were formally dead in Abraham’s body due to religious pollution from death and, more specifically, sin. Furthermore, gentile Christians are now able to live up to the ethical demands of the Mosaic law. Judean Christians and, in particular, gentile Christians are, therefore, righteous in their relationship

239. See above, pp. 81-91, where I argued that Christians need to fulfil the ethical demands of the Mosaic law to be regarded as righteous by God. Cf. also above, footnote 205.

with God. Also, Paul has made it clear that Judean Christians possessing the law of Moses no longer have a reason to boast towards the gentile Christians of the church in Rome.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Using a diatribe, Paul engages in an intra-Judean debate with a Judean interlocutor with the implied audience, comprising Judean and gentile Christians, listening to the debate. Paul articulates a question posed by the Judean interlocutor: “What shall we say? Have we found, according to human efforts, Abraham to be our forefather?” This question is directed at the implied audience, Judean Christians, who think that Abraham by his human efforts became the forefather of Judeans. This is a rhetorical question that expects to be negated by the implied audience comprising Judean and gentile Christians. The question is asking if it is possible to argue for the case that Abraham acquired righteousness, and hence, honour, so as to become the father of Judeans by means of human efforts, namely, by observing the Mosaic law (4:1). Undergirding this question is the social and cultural texture that descendants resemble their ancestor(s). Thus, if the Judean interlocutor has a case, Abraham gained righteousness by deeds of the Mosaic law and Judeans, then, can gain righteousness by doing likewise. Paul sets out to refute this contention in 4:1 in several stages.

First, Paul argues that doing the deeds of the Mosaic law did not earn Abraham a righteousness that gained him fatherhood (4:2-8). By dissimulation, Paul assumes the role of Judean sacred Scripture and recites Gen 15:6 (LXX) as a *chreia* to begin his refutation. This *chreia* is to the point as it is about Abraham’s fatherhood. Its implication is clarified by the social intertexture that favour and deeds are opposing concepts. In other words, a client who receives from the patron a benefaction, righteousness by trust, receives a favour. The patron does not expect to be reciprocated in kind. Rather, reciprocation takes the form of loyalty and trust. David, as patriarch of the messianic kingdom, whose nature is that of an extended household, is also invoked. This mobilises ideological power to persuade the implied

audience to do as David their patriarch did. To further his persuasion, Paul recites Psa 31:1-2a (LXX). The sensory-aesthetic texture containing “bless/blessing” repetitions motivates the implied audience to attain righteousness by trust. This recitation also recalls the whole psalm. The rhetoric emphasises that forgiveness of sins and a righteous relationship between the patron and client is attained by repentance from sin. Righteousness is, hence, not attained by doing the deeds of the Mosaic law.

Second, Paul refutes the role of circumcision in attaining a righteousness that achieves fatherhood for Abraham (4:9-12). This rite is chosen for discussion as it is the epitome of the deeds of the Mosaic law. He contends that Abraham was regarded by God, the patron, as being righteous when he was in a state of uncircumcision. This fits Abraham for the role of father of gentile Christians. Moreover, Abraham’s trust was affirmed through circumcision. This suits him for the role of the father of Judeans. Thus, righteousness can be ascribed to both gentiles and Judeans. Paul’s construal of Abraham’s circumcision as a proof of righteousness also maintains the importance of circumcision, an ethnic identity marker of Judeans. This preserves the ethnic identity of Judeans and makes them favourably disposed to accepting righteousness that comes by trust. Hence, Abraham becomes a superordinate figure who unites Judean and gentile Christians. Unity is possible not only because they have a common ancestor. More importantly, this common ancestor ascribes to both Judeans and gentiles righteousness so that Judean Christians no longer have a reason to boast over gentile Christians as they now satisfy purity rules through Christ.

Third, Paul argues against the role of the Mosaic law (4:13-16) from the perspective of promise in order to further undermine the role of circumcision (as circumcision is part of the Mosaic law). The gentile and the Judean interlocutors lost the series of challenge-riposte and counter-riposte games in 1:18-3:20, and hence, are indicted for breaking the moral law. This forms the unstated case. Together with the rule that breaking the law leads to wrath, the consequence is that the Mosaic law results in wrath for both the gentile and the Judean interlocutors. Consequently, the promise would be abolished if one relies on the Mosaic law. Also, Paul’s description of Abraham as “heir of the world” positions him as the *pater pateriae* of the Roman Empire. This allows Paul to bring into the argument the social and

cultural intertexture that the Roman Emperor does not ascend the throne by the law. Instead, he needs to receive the favour of his patron, the general Roman populace. In this way, the role of the Mosaic law as contributing to righteousness is undermined.

Fourth, having undermined reliance on the Mosaic law and its deeds by the preceding argument in 4:2-16, Paul is now ready to bring in the role of Abraham's trust (4:17-25). The ideological power of the rhetoric of Abraham's trust builds on two social intertextures: death carries religious pollution, and descendants are present in seminal form in their ancestors. The reason Abraham's trust in his patron, God, brought him worldwide fatherhood was because he trusted in a God who was able to raise to life the dead. God's resurrection power entails removing religious pollution in Abraham's dead reproductive organs and in the descendants who were seminally present with Abraham. This religious pollution, sin, is removed via Jesus who acts a broker between God and humankind. Jesus' death expiates religious pollution. This results in Abraham becoming a father of many descendants and the implied audience becoming Abraham's descendants. Jesus' resurrection enables the implied audience to live an ethically righteous life and one that, minimally, satisfies the requirements set by the Mosaic law. In this way, not only Judean Christians but also gentile Christians can become righteous. The Judean Christians' boast toward the gentile Christians is, thus, removed.

5.2 Conclusion

In Romans, the dissension between Judean and gentile Christians is a deep-seated one because it occurs along the fault lines of Judean ethnic identity. It is deep-seated because members who belong to an ethnic group will not allow their ethnic identity to be erased. In this letter, Judean Christians define their ethnic identity as a people who possesses the Mosaic law. Furthermore, Judeans are part of a society that is set within the Mediterranean agonistic culture where honour is the main core value, and hence, is the most sought-after good. Consequently, Judean Christians use the Mosaic law to gain honour from gentile Christians. The reason why the Mosaic law is a means to honour is because, from an emic perspective, Judeans construe possessing the Mosaic law as gaining them righteousness. This

righteousness is not only a social marker, but more importantly, it is also an ethical construct. It is this resulting ethical righteousness, from the Judean emic viewpoint, that gains them honour in the eyes of the significant other, God. The consequence is that gentile Christians are considered inferior by Judean Christians. To alleviate this dissension, Paul uses the rhetoric of Abraham's trust or faith.

Fortunately, ethnicity is not a primordial construct but is a malleable one. Romans 4 represents Paul's discursive strategy for re-constructing the ethnic identity of both Judean and gentile Christians so that both groups have equal honour. To achieve his objective, Paul first removes the Mosaic law as a means to acquiring honour. At the same time, he reconstructs the ethnic identity of Judean Christians without obliterating their present Judean identity which is particularly associated with circumcision and the Mosaic law. The end of Paul's rhetoric is to make Judean Christians Abraham's descendants by trust in their patron, God. He also reconstructs the ethnic identity of gentile Christians that makes them Abraham's descendants by trusting in the same patron, God. In this way, gentile Christians can receive honour by ascription.

Paul also explains why Abraham's trust in his patron, God, resulted in descendants. Abraham trusted a God who was able to raise the dead. God was able to make alive his dead body and the descendants who were present in Abraham in seminal form. Specifically, God's power enables God to remove religious pollution, that is, sin, that inhibits life. God accomplishes removal of religious pollution by means of a broker, Jesus Christ, who expiates sin. Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection life also enables both Judean and gentile Christians to live an ethical life that results in a state of righteousness. Thus, both ethnic groups, Judean and gentile Christians, can fulfil the Mosaic law and be regarded as righteous before the significant other, God. In this way, gentile Christians gain honour so that Judean Christians no longer have a valid reason to consider them as inferior.

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