

NO MORE WALLS! THE NONOBLIGATORY ORDINANCES
CONTAINED IN THE LAW AND THE CREATION OF ONE NEW MAN
IN CHRIST: EPHESIANS 2:11-22

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

“No More Walls! The Nonobligatory Ordinances Contained in the Law and the Creation of One New Man in Christ: Ephesians 2:11–22” provides an in-depth exegesis of Eph 2:11–22 which in turns sheds new light on God’s desired unity among all who are committed to follow Christ. God has provided reconciliation through His Son’s redeeming death for all people within humanity who learn to trust and obey Him, which at the same time simultaneously reconciles these believers to Himself. In this passage of Scripture, Paul stresses the fact that Christ’s followers need to understand more fully God’s desired unity for His children who comprise *one* family, His family. God’s children must strive against living their lives based on their learned mutual hostility and live according to God’s plan for their lives. In this passage, Paul uses three metaphorical images to teach his predominately Gentile addressees how close-knit God wants their unity to be with Him and one another which includes the Jews. Firstly, Paul uses metaphorical imagery depicting Christ as having done away with the Jewish and Gentile believers’ hostility the same as if He had removed a “party-wall” that had existed between their personal contiguous residences. Secondly, *all* believers exist as part of the same body, in which every part is important for the health of the whole. Lastly, Christ’s followers collectively make up the very building, the home, that God lives in, with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone of its foundation.

The research laid out in this dissertation will bring new understanding to the meaning of two aorist participial clauses τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν and τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας. The difficult nature of both clauses will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3 respectively along with research that sheds new light on the meaning for both clauses that will hopefully find resonance among present and future scholars. Then, an exegesis is given on Eph 2:11–22 using the information gleaned from the research described in chapters 2 and 3 and any additional research needed to discuss several key areas of scholarly concern. This research leads to a thesis statement regarding Christ’s destruction of the ongoing mutual hostility that has long existed between Jew and Gentile for all who obediently follow Him: When Paul said in Eph 2:14–16 that Christ had made the *purity and cultural* ordinances of the Mosaic Law optional as part of His redeeming work on the cross in order to reconcile man to man and simultaneously reconcile them together as one body to God, he used a metaphorical image, an image of Christ acting as a general contractor who had destroyed the “*dividing party-wall*,” between their contiguous residences, in order to place *both* Jewish and Gentile believer, the divided members of God’s family, into a common residence, which in turn represented Christ’s redeeming work destroying the residual traditional ongoing mutual hostility between Gentile and Jewish believers allowing them to interact fully as the family of God that God intended through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The introduction discusses the fact that Eph 2:11–22 is at the heart of Paul’s illuminating theological introduction, which Paul will use to move his predominately Gentile audience from their past cultural bias against Jews to a new mindset that

emotionally and mentally will grasp the significance of God’s desired unity among all who learn to trust and obey Him. Eph 2:11–22 is one of Paul’s clearest passages teaching Christ’s followers the meaning of being reconciled to God and one another as “one new man.” In addition, the Introduction and chapter 4 discuss the difficult grammatical arrangement of Eph 2:14–16, which is one long complex sentence consisting of one main clause, four aorist participial clauses, one present participial clause, two purpose clauses, and six prepositional phrases of which five point back to the beginning of Eph 2:13 which states emphatically that peace comes only “in” and “through” Christ.

Chapter 2 reveals evidence that helps explain Paul’s use of a metaphorical image that he penned to show how the destruction of *the* mutual ongoing ἔχθραν, “hostility,” which had existed for a long time between Jew and Gentile, was destroyed now for those who are following Christ. This learned traditional ongoing mutual hostility had been destroyed by Christ just as if a general contractor from their era had destroyed a μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, “*dividing* middle-wall,” between two contiguous residences thereby creating an environment in which the two reconciled parts of the *same* family, Jewish and Gentile believers, could realize God’s desired unity and live accordingly in their combined living space as the *single* family that they are.

Chapter 3 addresses Paul’s teachings on the place of the Mosaic Law in the life of those who are following Christ in the Messianic Age. In Eph 2:14–16, one learns that Christ has made ineffective τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν, “the *cultural and purity* ordinances contained with the commandments of the Law,” in order to make possible peace on earth for His reconciled Jewish and Gentile believers. By making these

ordinances optional, Christ has made it possible for those who have been reconciled to God and one another through His death on the cross to have true peace on earth as they learn to serve together and take the Gospel to all people. Both Jewish and Gentile believers have been created into “one new man” being reconciled together into “one Body” to God. From the context of the letter itself, it is clear that Paul is not teaching that the Mosaic Law has been abrogated nor made ineffective as a whole (cf. Rom 3:28–31).

After briefly evaluating the whole and subdividing Ephesians into its major parts including a brief section on Eph 2:1–10 which leads into Eph 2:11–22, chapter 4 shows an exegesis of Eph 2:11–22. In this exegesis, Eph 2:11–22 is broken down into three subsections: “*You Gentiles Were without God,*” 2:11–12, “*Christ Provides Reconciliation for Both Jew and Gentile,*” 2:13–18, and “*Jewish and Gentile Believers Are the Household of God,*” 2:19–22. Each subsection is evaluated according to its grammatical construction, textual variants, and its meaning with attention to context, and is concluded with a translation. The key areas where translators have had differing understandings in the past are discussed and lengthy comments placed in the footnotes. Information from chapters 2 and 3 are reintroduced wherever appropriate. It is clear from Eph 2:11–22 within the context of Ephesians and the rest of Paul’s letters that the Mosaic Law is still an important authoritative writing for the those living in the Messianic Age. God expects all believers to follow and exceed the Law’s moral commandments (Matt 5:17–48) as they are led by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:1–4) and has made the *cultural and purity* ordinances optional allowing both Jewish and Gentile believer to live together in true unity on earth as they will someday do in His immediate presence.

In the Conclusion, it is noted that the Law has an ongoing role in the Messianic Age for all who follow Christ. The main message of Eph 2:11–22 proclaims that God desires both Jew and Gentile to follow Christ in “one Body” demonstrating their uniqueness as the “one new man” in true unity. They *both* have been reconciled on earth as the *one* family that God intended and reconciled to God as such. Christ has died on the cross to make this possible, therefore, Christ’s followers are exhorted to make every effort to walk worthy of their calling in godly unity (Eph 4:1–6). Paul’s message to his first-century predominately Gentile audience living in Asia Minor is still valid today for both Jewish and Gentile believers living all over the world. God has commanded those who are committed to Christ *to strive* to live together in godly unity as they are led by the Spirit. When Christ’s followers fail to live according to God’s design, the whole world suffers because God’s greatest witness, the every-day life of believers, is weakened making it harder for those who are rebelling against God to know that He sent His Son to die for all people and to know that God loves those who accept His love and thereby learn to trust and obey Him just as He loves Jesus; *all* who follow Christ are an integral part of God’s immediate family (John 17:20–23).

To God be the glory!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Overview

This dissertation provides an in-depth exegesis of Eph 2:11–22 which in turn sheds new light on God’s desired unity among those who are committed to follow Christ. God has provided reconciliation through His Son’s redeeming death for all people within humanity who learn to trust and obey Him, which at the same time simultaneously reconciles these believers to Himself. In this passage of Scripture, Paul stresses the fact that Christ’s followers need to understand more fully God’s desired unity for His children who comprise *one* family, His family. God’s children must strive against living their lives based on their learned mutual hostility and live according to God’s plan for their lives. In this passage, Paul uses three metaphorical images to teach his predominately Gentile addressees how close-knit God wants their unity to be with Him and one another which includes the Jews. Firstly, Paul uses metaphorical imagery depicting Christ as having done away with the Jewish and Gentiles believers’ hostility the same as if He had removed a “party-wall” that had existed between their personal contiguous residences. Secondly, *all* believers exist as part of the same body, in which every part is important for the health of the whole. Lastly, Christ’s followers collectively

make up the very building, the home, that God lives in, with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone of its foundation.

The Logical Structure of This Exegesis

In order to study Eph 2:11–22 without taking major excursuses, which would break up Paul’s flow of thought, it seems appropriate to evaluate the meaning of its two most controversial participial clauses, τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν and τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, prior to looking at this passage as a whole. These participial clauses will be evaluated in chapters 2 and 3 respectively thus allowing one to study the two most controversial areas of Eph 2:11–22 before fully evaluating the passage as a whole. The advantage of such an approach is that it allows one to study Eph 2:11–22 without taking major excursuses in the middle of that study. The conclusions from chapters 2 and 3 will be interjected into the exegesis of Eph 2:11–22, which is performed in chapter 4, at the appropriate places along with discussions on other areas of concern as they are encountered in the text.

The following research and argumentation brings new insight into the meaning of two aorist participial clauses. The difficult nature of both clauses will be introduced below and developed more fully in their own respective chapters. When one examines the various ways that biblical translation teams have translated these clauses and the various writings on this section of scripture, one sees that there is a need for further clarification. After developing a more comprehensive understanding of these participial clauses, the exegesis of Eph 2:11–22 will develop the intended overall significance of part of Paul’s

illuminating theological introduction, which was penned to help his predominately Gentile audience overcome their present hostility toward Jews and thereby live out their lives in a holy fashion before God, which includes appropriately *realizing* God's desired unity for them as followers of Christ. Paul's teaching in Eph 2:11–22 leads to a thesis statement regarding Christ's destruction of the ongoing mutual hostility that has long existed between the Jew and Gentile for all who obediently follow Him: when Paul said in Eph 2:14–16 that Christ had made the *purity and cultural* ordinances of the Mosaic Law optional as part of His redeeming work on the cross in order to reconcile man to man and simultaneously reconcile them together as one body to God, he used a metaphorical image of Christ acting as a general contractor who had destroyed the “*dividing party-wall*” between their contiguous residences in order to place *both* Jewish and Gentile believer, the divided members of God's family, into a common residence, which in turn represented Christ's redeeming work destroying the residual traditional ongoing mutual hostility between Gentile and Jewish believers allowing them to interact fully as the family of God that God intended through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Today, many have come to realize that Eph 2:11–22 is the heart of Paul's illuminating theological introduction, which he used to prepare the hearts of his addressees in order to change their traditional Greco-Roman world-view to God's world-view and consequently change their lifestyle accordingly. This section coupled with 2:1–10 challenges the Gentiles as a distinct group of people to consider the reality of the quality of their life before and after becoming followers of Christ, then to consider the price that God paid to make possible a true reconciliation of Jew and Gentile who could

be reconciled together to Himself, and finally to live out their lives according to God's desired unity and morality in practical ways. They were saved just as the Jews by God's grace and not by anything that they had done. After considering more fully God's desired outcome and what He had already done to make it possible, Paul asked his addressees to change their day-to-day life style to match God's expectations. Knowing what God had done for them should motivate this predominately Gentile audience both emotionally and intellectually to follow Paul's exhortation to godly living, which he laid out in the second half of his letter, 4:1–6:20. This godly living includes both a *realized* unity and a godly moral life style. God's desired unity for those who are following Christ is just as important today as it was in the Early Church. Jesus made it clear in His recorded prayer in John 17, which was made to the Father just before going to the cross for all humanity, that when His followers live out their day-to-day lives striving for God's desired unity, the world sees God's love for humanity and knows that God sent His Son to be its savior. The converse of that truth is that if Christ's followers do not strive for God's desired unity, the world has a hard time seeing that God loves them and knowing that God sent His Son to be its savior. Today, many of Christ's followers are *not* striving to follow God's desired unity for the Body of Christ.

The Historical Setting of Ephesians

In the opening lines, the author declares that he is Παῦλος, ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus."¹ In his article, "The Letter to the Ephesians,"

¹ Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 14, notes that the earliest known external attributions of

Clinton Arnold notes that there have been three basic arguments used against Pauline authorship: (1) the language contains many words used by the apostolic fathers giving the letter a post-apostolic atmosphere and the style of the letter is elevated above Paul's normal straightforward prose with long sentences consisting of repeated prepositional phrases, abundant participles, numerous relative clauses, and genitive upon genitive, (2) the attention to cosmic-christology, realized eschatology, and advanced ecclesiology appear to be significant theological divergences from Paul's eight recognized letters, and (3) the description of the apostles and prophets as "holy" seems to indicate a later time when the apostles and prophets were receiving increasing veneration.² Arnold states that these arguments against Pauline authorship can be answered by noting that : (1) the apostolic fathers new and quoted Ephesians, and therefore, their vocabulary could have been easily influenced by Paul and not the other way around. Regarding style, the introductory portion of Ephesians benefitted from the author's use of an elevated style of prose versus a straightforward style. The second half of Ephesians compares favorably to the way Paul normally wrote when giving exhortation, and when one considers that Paul used an elevated style of writing in some of his other letters such as Romans (8:38–39; 11:33–36), it makes sense that he would use an elevated style when writing the introductory material in Ephesian because he was writing on such a lofty idea; he was

Pauline authorship for Ephesians comes from Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.8.5; 5.2.3; 5.8.1; 5.14.3; 5.24.4), Marcion, and Tertullian (*Adv. Marcion* 5.17); and cf. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 4, who cites another place where Tertullian states that Paul is the author of the letters that went to Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Rome, and Ephesus (*de Praescriptionibus*, 36).

² Clinton E. Arnold, "Letter to the Ephesians," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 240–41.

writing regarding the interrelationship between God, Christ, and the Church, (2) Paul's theological statements would normally vary in scope depending on the circumstances that he was addressing, and (3) Paul typically denoted believers as ἅγιοι, "saints," and therefore, his description of the apostles and prophets as ἅγιος, "holy," was perfectly natural.³

Donald Guthrie notes that Ephesians, which was considered to be one of Paul's letters from the earliest known sources, appears to have been in wide circulation by mid-second century among both orthodox Christians and heretics such as Marcion; it was not until nineteenth-century criticism that its Pauline authorship came under attack.⁴ A. van Roon aptly demonstrates in his work, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, that there is nothing that has been written in this letter theologically, historically, nor stylistically that should lead one to consider this letter as pseudonymous.⁵ Peter O'Brien concurs with much of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th rev. ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 497.

⁵ A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, ed. W. C. van Unnik et al., *Supplements to Novum Testamentum*, no. 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 100, notes that it would not be reasonable to expect the style, grammar, and vocabulary of Paul's letters to be the same when one takes into account the fact that Paul's letters were written at different times addressing diverse concrete historical circumstances under the influence of various coauthors and amanuenses. Yet, Roon's research has led him to conclude that although one should not expect perfect similarity, there are various components of style in Ephesians that are common with Paul's other letters (p. 439). Ephesians has identical style with 1 Cor 1:1–9 and Rom 1:1–10, close affinity with many passages in Romans, and similar likenesses in a number of passages in 2 Corinthians and Philippians (p. 439). Earlier, Roon had stated that Ephesians followed an epistolary tradition consisting of a *praescript* followed by an eucharistic formulation succeeded by a section containing the sender's request and/or instructions, which was all concluded with a greeting. This form matches closely Colossians, Romans, and Philemon and to a lesser degree the forms of Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and Philippians (p. 70). Roon states that when one compares the structure and elements of Ephesians against the other Pauline epistles, these characteristics point in favor of Pauline authenticity (p. 70). In his conclusion, Roon states that the structure of Ephesians is so typically Pauline and so close to Romans that one has no alternative but to assume that the author of Ephesians was closely involved in the creation of the other Pauline epistles (p. 438). Regarding theology, Roon concludes that the *paraenesis* of

Roon's conclusions, and when comparing Paul's apparent high Christology in Ephesians to his earlier work, he states that those who argue for a high Christological framework are simply incorrect.⁶ Harold Hoehner reminds his readers that Paul's letters should not look identical because he was writing to his various addressees addressing distinct problems at various times.⁷ Having studied the practice of writing pseudonymously during Paul's era, Terry Wilder states that although it was a Greco-Roman practice for students to write at

Ephesians bears a distinct resemblance to the equivalent sections in other Pauline letters. He goes on to say that like the other letters, his *paraenesis* displays Jewish, Greek, and Hellenistic aspects using a complex of traditions that were peculiar to late Judaism (p. 440). In addition, there are a fair number of some of Paul's idiosyncratic expressions giving additional weight to a probable Pauline authorship (p. 440).

⁶ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary, no. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 21–22, who states that those who argue that Ephesians is written in a high Christological framework versus Paul's earlier work are incorrect. O'Brien makes two points regarding this issue: (1) Ephesians is not alone in placing emphasis on Christ's resurrection, exaltation, and enthronement when considering the New Testament as a whole or even when looking at Paul's works in particular such as Rom 8:34, 1 Cor 15:3–28, and Phil 2:9–11, and (2) the death of Christ is not neglected as Paul uses terminology for Christ's death such as "His blood" (1:7; 2:13), "the cross" (2:16), "flesh=death" (2:15), "sacrifice" (5:2), and "gave Himself up" (5:25). For those who see a lack of teaching on justification in Ephesians, O'Brien notes that because of Paul's emphasis in this letter on Christ's destiny becoming the believers' destiny, he uses the concept of salvation, which in reality is referring to the same thing. Regarding the Law, O'Brien does not see Paul's teaching in Ephesians as something at odds with his teachings in Romans and Galatians (pp. 23–24). Regarding the ecclesiology of Ephesians, O'Brien states that although there is a concentration on the universal church both in heaven and on earth, a high ecclesiology, there is no discontinuity in thought from Paul's earlier works where local congregations were visible expressions of that new relationship that believers have with the Lord Jesus (pp. 25–26), which includes such metaphorical developments as Christ being the head of the Body (p. 27). The fourth major argument against Pauline authorship by some is that Ephesians displays a greater realized eschatology than Paul's other letters. O'Brien acknowledges this and states that Paul is doing this in order to strengthen the Christians' walk in the here-and-now (pp. 30–31). He continues by saying that this present salvation has not swallowed up the future expectations of Christ's return when all things will be "summed up" (pp. 31–33).

⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 60–61, who states that variations in the letters can be accounted for due to differences in content, which is written to meet the character and needs of the various recipients. Furthermore, one should not expect a genius such as Paul to express himself exactly the same every time that he wrote. Hoehner goes on to say that Ephesians, as well as Paul's other letters, follows the normal pattern of Hellenistic letters with their three main sections: opening, body, and closing (pp. 70–72). Regarding Paul's theology, Hoehner sees Ephesians as a letter in which many of Paul's theological thoughts are refined and developed to new heights, the quintessence of his thinking (p. 106); and cf. Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, Anchor Bible, no. 34 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 31, who states that it is not difficult to discover that the same message and exhortations in the body of Ephesians can be found in Paul's other letters.

that time under the name of their deceased teachers, it was not a Jewish practice. For Jews, the only form of pseudonymous writing came in the form of Jewish apocalyptic writings where some of the authors wrote under the name of former prophets.⁸ Although there were some pseudonymous letters written during the first few centuries of the Church such as *Letters of Christ and Abgarus*, *Letter of Lentulus*, *Correspondence of Paul and Seneca*, and *Epistle of Titus*, the Church did not receive these letters into its authoritative canon as it did those that were actually written by the apostles or someone directly under their supervision.⁹

⁸ Terry L. Wilder, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament," in *Interpreting The New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 298–300; and cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 60, who states that the early attestations of Pauline authorship is highly significant, because not only was the Early Church closer to the situation, they were very astute in their judgment of genuine and fraudulent compositions; and cf. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 15, who poses the question of whether or not someone writing pseudonymously would follow a letter like Colossians so closely and then take the risk of rejection by departing from its structure so radically at times. As he considers parts of the two letters such as the vice list of Col 3:5 and Eph 5:3, 5, O'Brien notes that there are enough differences between them that it does not seem that parts of one were copied from the other; it seems more probable that both authors depended on earlier Pauline material or that Paul actually wrote both (pp. 16–17).

⁹ Wilder, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament," 301, states that Christians were widely committed to truth as a moral ideal, and, therefore, it follows that pseudonymous letters purporting to be works of the apostles were not well received (p. 301). He states that within the New Testament itself, there is warnings about accepting false teachings which apply to pseudonymous letters (2 Thess 2:2; Rev 22:18–19; p. 302). The idea of the Holy Spirit being the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 16:3) presents the idea that being truthful and above board was important to the early Church in all matters (p. 303). Wilder concludes by giving several reasons why one should not expect any of the New Testament writings to be pseudonymous: (1) the internal evidence of the writings themselves, (2) the external evidence showing that the early Church did not look at pseudonymous writings with the same authority as the New Testament writings, (3) the ethical dilemma of writing pseudonymically in a Church committed to truth, and (4) the Church's requirement that all New Testament Scripture had to be written by an apostle or under the close supervision of an apostles (p. 323). Wilder had noted that even though Hebrews was anonymous, most of the Early Church considered it to be written by one of the apostles (p. 324); and *contra*, Best, *Ephesians*, 10–13, 260, argues that it would have been acceptable for someone to write for the Church under someone else's name. He does not think that pseudonymity was considered dishonest during this era, and therefore, Best states that it would have received by the Early Church. Best makes no definitive decision on the authorship of Ephesians other than that the author was probably a Jewish male who was not Paul. In his book, Best designates the author of Ephesians simple as "AE."

Regarding the addressees, this letter has some ambiguity. The oldest texts that are currently available do not contain the words ἐν Ἐφεσῷ leaving the original addressees as somewhat of a mystery.¹⁰ There is substantial evidence that the original addressees were not the Saints who were living in Ephesus. Early in the letter, Paul indicates that he has never met the addressees as he states that after ἀκούσας τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους, “having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all Saints,” he has not stopped praying for them during his prayers, praying that they may know God more fully.¹¹ Later in this letter, Paul stresses his calling to bring Gentiles into God’s kingdom through Christ in a way somewhat similar to the way that he addressed the Saints living in Rome, whom he had also not seen nor taught at the time of writing Romans.¹² In addition, he wants this group

¹⁰ Some of the oldest sources that we currently possess, P⁴⁶, X, and B, do not show an addressee.

¹¹ Eph 1:15–16.

¹² Cf. Rom 1:1–11 to Eph 1:15–17; 3:1–7. One of the few significant difference in the two letters is that Paul is not planning on visiting those in Asia in the near future compared to his plans to visit the Saints in Rome; Colossians is another city that Paul has not personally visited (Col 2:1), but he probably wrote to them on behalf of himself and Timothy knowing that he had sent Timothy to minister to this group while he was teaching and preaching in Ephesus. Luke informs us that Timothy was in Ephesus with Paul (Acts 19:22). A second dissimilarity between Ephesians and Colossians is that Paul also mentions sending Onesimus, who was from Colossae (4:9), back with Tychicus to Colossae, but not to the addressees of the letter called “Ephesians” showing a different group of Gentiles other than those living in the region consisting of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. It appears from Paul’s letter to the Colossians that if a person lived in one of these cities as Epaphras did, he was probably known in all three (Col 4:12–13); cf. Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 86, who while researching the authenticity of Ephesians notes that Paul only used his own name by itself in the salutation of Ephesians and Romans, both of which he had never personally ministered to. In his conclusion, Roon reiterates that the reason that only Paul’s name was given as the sender is similar to Romans: the apostle is most likely making his first direct contact with this particular group of addressees (p. 438); and cf. Barth, *Ephesians*, vol. 1, 10–11, who points to Eph 1:15, 3:2–3, and 4:20–21 as texts that indicate that Paul did not know the addressees. In addition, he notes further indicators within the overall text such as: (1) there are no references to specific conditions or events regarding the city or church of Ephesus, (2) only Gentile Christians are addressed [Ephesus has a synagogue

of Gentile believers to know something of the depth of what God is doing in bringing Jew and Gentile into a *joint*-participation in Christ. This is something that he would have covered thoroughly in the past while living with them, if he had already personally lived with them and taught them as he had the Saints living in Ephesus.¹³

After surveying this letter, it appears that although Paul had not taught the addressees in person, he had expected them to have already heard and accepted the Gospel message and to be aware of his special ministry to the Gentiles. In this letter, Paul shares a crucial truth with this predominately Gentile audience giving them reason to strive for unity with their Jewish Brothers in Christ, who were the first to be called into the Kingdom of God (1:3–12). Paul points to his own suffering as an indicator of how important it is to know the truth of the Gospel, which had been hid from previous generations but now has been revealed showing how God has made the believing Gentiles co-citizens and co-heirs with believing Jews (2:14–19; 3:1–9). Paul is a suffering servant on their behalf (3:1–13). Knowing the truth of the Gospel with its good news regarding the death of the Messiah on everyone’s behalf and how much Paul is willing to suffer for them should motivate them to examine their present behavior and make any necessary

and should have Jewish believers], (3) there is no personal greeting from Paul or one of his associates, and (4) according to a few early important manuscripts, the words “in Ephesus” does not belong.

¹³ Eph 3:1–7; Acts 19:1–20:1; and cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 5, who notes that Paul appears to have only a general knowledge of his readers (1:13, 15, 16) and questions whether they had heard of his administration of God’s grace in ministering to Gentiles (3:2). O’Brien goes on to state that Paul questions their reception of the instruction they had received (4:21), and then he asks why would Paul, who first arrived in Ephesus at the end of his second missionary trip in the autumn of A.D. 52, had ministered to them for two and one-half years on his third missionary journey leaving them in the spring of A.D. 56, and then visiting the elders for a short time on his return to Jerusalem, know so little about his addressees and treat them so impersonally, if he had spent so much time with them.

adjustments in order to realize the unity that God desires between those Jews and Gentiles who follow Christ. They are now united in one Body; they have been created into “one new man” and are therefore living in close association with the Messiah who is now reigning through the Church during this portion of His messianic reign (4:1–6; 2:13–18). In this letter, above all else, Paul teaches this predominately Gentile group of believers the reality of God’s desired unity for *both* Jew and Gentile, who are part of the *same* family in Christ and must learn to live accordingly.

Regarding the approximate time when Paul wrote this letter and additional information regarding the identity of his original addressees, it is helpful to use the chronology of Paul’s travels as depicted by Luke in Acts in relationship with Paul’s other letters to approximate the time of writing and more fully identify the original addressees. On the return trip of his second missionary trip from Antioch, Paul stopped in Ephesus briefly and taught in the Jewish synagogue located there (Acts 18:18–22). Prior to coming to Ephesus on his way home to Antioch, Paul had left Corinth during the time that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12), which was from A.D. 51–52. On Paul’s third missionary trip, Paul visited Ephesus early-on in the trip and spent at least two and one-half years proclaiming the Gospel there. Historically, it is known that Paul was held in prison in Caesarea from approximately A.D. 58–60 and then in Rome from approximately A.D. 60–62 placing his time in Ephesus on his third missionary trip out of Antioch from approximately A.D. 53–56.¹⁴ During this time, while teaching first out of the synagogue

¹⁴ Felix’s imprisonment was followed by a brief imprisonment under the new procurator, Porcius Festus around A.D. 59–60 (Acts 24:27), and then Paul was sent to Rome under Roman guard and subsequent house arrest that lasted for at least two additional years (Acts 28:30).

and later out of the school of Tyrannus, it would seem likely that Paul would have sent out missionaries to the surrounding areas, which includes cities such as Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. Geographically, Ephesus, Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis were tied together by a main Roman road that paralleled the general path of the Meander River. It is easy to envision Paul having sent out individuals such as Tychicus, who were originally from this area, on missionary trips to cities such as Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis while he remained teaching in Ephesus. It is also known that individuals from this area such as Philemon came to Ephesus to hear Paul preach and teach and became followers of Christ through his teaching (Phlm 19).¹⁵ It is also likely that Paul stayed in contact with this area through missionaries such as Tychicus who continually ministered with him and were already known and trusted by its citizens. Therefore knowing that the carrier of this letter was Tychicus (Eph 6:21), that it was written at approximately the same time of Colossians, that the addressees of Ephesians were a group of Christians that Paul had never met, and that it eventually it ended up with the name Ephesians, it is a reasonable conclusion to consider that Tychicus had been sent to a specific group of addressees who lived in reasonable proximity to Ephesus.

¹⁵ Luke tells his readers that during this time in Paul's ministry, all of the Jews and Gentiles living in Asia heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10). When Paul left Ephesus, one of his new students from this area, Tychicus, joined him and his group of co-ministers as they headed for Macedonia and later to Achaia (Acts 20:4). While Luke along with others stayed with Paul during a portion of his imprisonment in Rome, Paul sent Tychicus and Onesimus to Colossae and the surrounding area including Laodicea (Col 4:7-14). This fact coupled with the fact that neither Timothy nor Onesimus were mentioned in Ephesians leads one to think that the original addressees of this letter did not live in the close-knit area east of Ephesus consisting of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis—otherwise Paul would have mentioned Timothy and Onesimus, who was one of their own (Col 4:9), to them.

It appears that the letters, Ephesians and Colossians, were sent out during the same time period. The saints living in this general area would definitely fit the profile of the addressees of Ephesians. In addition to being delivered by the same messenger, there is a similarity of structure and phraseology especially in their openings and closings.¹⁶ Eph 1:16–17 and Col 1:9 both state that Paul is not ceasing to pray for them in order that they may have additional spiritual wisdom and revelation. Out of all of Paul’s letters, it is only in Ephesians and Colossians where Paul uses the metaphor of Jesus as the Head of the Body directly to show Jesus’ headship of the Church.¹⁷ In both Ephesians and Colossians, Paul uses the same wording, τὴν οἰκονομίαν (τῆς χάριτος) τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι, “the household plan of God, which was given to me,” to describe God’s plan of salvation.¹⁸ In the closing of both letters, it is Tychicus whom Paul is sending “Ἴνα δὲ εἰδῆτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ’ ἐμέ, τί πράσσω, πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος ἐν κυρίῳ, “in order that you (pl.) may know how things are going for me, what I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful

¹⁶ Cf. Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 192, who states that the style of Colossians corresponds closely to Ephesians. He goes on to say that there is very little to differentiate between the grammatical detail and vocabulary of these epistles and the slight differences in style (p. 194); and cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xlviii, who states that out of the 2,411 words used in the composition of Ephesians, 26.5% of them are used in Colossians. Lincoln goes on to say that such statistics do not in and of themselves reveal the great extent of the similarity between the two letters. Colossians comes the closest of all of Paul’s letters to the distinctive style of Ephesians including its long sentences, frequent relative clauses, genitive constructions, and prepositional phrases beginning with ἐν. Even the overall structure and sequence of the letters are similar.

¹⁷ Eph 1:22–23; 5:23, 29–30; Col 1:18, 24.

¹⁸ Eph 3:2 and Col 1:25.

servant in the Lord shall make all things known to you.”¹⁹ Because the messenger is the same, and the time of writing, style, and phraseology are close, it appears that the two letters, Ephesians and Colossians, were written about the same time by Paul as he attended to the individual needs of some of the local churches in Asia Minor. Due to the fact that Paul is in prison while writing these letters and that Onesimus came to know Paul and receive the Gospel while he was in prison (Phlm 10), it is highly probable that Paul wrote this letter during his Roman imprisonment around A.D. 62.²⁰ It is harder to imagine a runaway slave like Onesimus running away from his master in Asia Minor and going to Caesarea, where Paul had been imprisoned earlier, rather than Rome to make a new start on life.

The Difficult Grammatical Arrangement of Ephesians 2:13–18

One of the biggest difficulties of interpreting Eph 2:13–18 correctly is deciding how the various parts of 2:14–16 are interconnected. Specialized translating teams and individual scholars alike are not in agreement on how the various parts interrelate to one another. Eph 2:14–16 is a complex sentence that is closely coupled to 2:13 and 2:17–18. Part of the problem in placing the various parts of this section together comes from misunderstanding Paul’s metaphorical image in 2:14b and the intended meaning of the participial clause τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας of 2:15a in

¹⁹ Eph 6:21; cf. Col 4:7.

²⁰ Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 96, who along with the majority of the scholars who support Pauline authorship, conclude that the traditional view that Paul wrote this letter during his imprisonment in Rome has the best biblical support.

context with the rest of this letter and Paul's other letters. Eph 2:13 is the transitional sentence that holds two keys to understanding 2:13–18 as a whole. Firstly, as Paul speaks to his addressees, he is talking about the present versus the past, the immediate present. After asking his predominately Gentile audience to reflect on what their life was like in the past without God, Paul uses transitional markers to change the time frame from the past to the immediate present, *νυνὲ δέ*, “but now.” Secondly, Paul introduces this section using the prepositional phrase, *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, in order to emphasize the fact that everything that God has done has been done “in” and “through” Christ. As he transitions through his argument in this section, Paul emphasizes the fact that God's desired unity for them has come at a great price “in” and “through” Christ by using six more prepositional phrases that are used instrumentally and/or locatively to show the importance of Christ and His redeeming work. This act of mercy and grace on God's part is to bring about His desired reconciliation and resulting unity among all of them and at the same time between them as one group to Him.

Regarding Eph 2:14b–15a, if one allows the sequential grammatical flow to indicate how the parts are to go together versus altering the flow to match some preconceived theological framework, the two aorist participial clauses, which are written together, *τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας*, can be subdivided as such: (1) *λύσας τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, τὴν ἔχθραν, ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ*, and (2) *καταργήσας τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν*. The instrumental prepositional

phrase ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, “through His flesh,” is a good grammatical point of division, which divides the two clauses naturally. Although the modern critical editions of the Greek text do not place a comma after τὴν ἔχθραν, the mutual hostility between the Jew and the Gentile would not have come about through the death of Christ nor would it come about for any who were in close association with Christ. Therefore, it is more logical to place a comma after τὴν ἔχθραν and place it grammatically in apposition with τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ. This understanding makes destroying τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ that existed between the Jew and Gentile a metaphorical image comparable to Christ’s actual destruction of the ongoing mutual ἔχθραν, “hostility,” through His flesh, His death on the cross. The disadvantage for those who want to grammatically shift τὴν ἔχθραν across the prepositional phrase and place it alongside τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν is that “the hostility” either has to be considered a metaphorical or literal description of all or part of the Law. Either consideration will not work without grammatically altering the literal sentence. It is best to allow the two aorist participial clauses to remain as written and translate them according to the grammatical sequence in which they were written.

**The Meaning of Christ’s τὸ Μεσότοιχον
τοῦ Φραγμοῦ Λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν**

In Eph 2:14, when Paul said that Christ’s redeeming death and alteration of the requirements of the Law destroyed the mutual ongoing hostility between the Jew and Gentile who committed to follow Him, he was saying that the family of God was not

divided into two families. Although there was still an ongoing mutual hostility between those Jews and Gentiles who were not following Him, there was no place in the Messianic Age for any hostility among the members of the Body of Christ; all Jewish and Gentile believers are equal members of God's one and only household. What has perplexed scholars for many years is Paul's metaphorical referent, the μεσότοιχον. What did Paul mean when he compared Christ's destruction of the Jew-Gentile mutual hostility to the destruction of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ? In the last century, the predominate view is that Paul was using a literal physical example. This group understands Paul to be speaking of a two-fold destruction, the ongoing mutual hostility between Jew and Gentile and the wall in Herod's Temple, which was used to isolate the Gentiles from the Jews. If Paul wrote this letter, this particular wall was still standing, and therefore, Paul could not have been speaking of its literal destruction. He could have used it as a referent in the sense that it was a "dividing-wall" that was still separating Jews from Gentiles, but Paul was not talking about abolishing the mutual hostility of Jew and Gentile in general, he was speaking of removing any residual mutual hostility from the past for those who were a new man in Christ, the Jewish and Gentile believers. In either case, this theory runs into a problem of familiarity. A metaphor is only good if the addressee(s) is fairly familiar with it. There is a high probability that Paul's predominately Gentile audience would not have had a clear understanding of this wall, which was located in a distant land, and therefore, it would not have known how to apply its ongoing Jewish function of keeping the Gentiles out of the Temple's holy area. When Paul wrote this letter, it is important to remember that he was addressing a Gentile audience asking them to discard their

traditional Greco-Roman hostility toward their new brothers in Christ, not the other way around. A second view with considerably fewer supporters is that Paul was speaking of an invisible wall that humanity had created when it sinned against God, an invisible wall between the earthly and heavenly spheres when he spoke of Christ's redeeming work having destroyed τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, τὴν ἔχθραν. This group ignores Paul's emphasis in Eph 2:14–16 directed toward his predominately Gentile addressees that God is reconciling *both* Jew and Gentile into "one Body" to Himself and focuses solely on the reconciliation of the "one body" to God addressed in 2:16. In reality, this way of thinking ignores the overall emphasis of 2:13–22, which is teaching Gentiles why they need to put aside their ongoing hostility toward Jews and start living in unity with those who are in the Body of Christ as God desires. Harold Hoehner represents a third view that understands τὸ μεσότοιχον to represent some type of metaphorical wall of separation, but does not have enough information to pin down a possible referent beyond the idea that Paul is referring at the very least to some type of a wall or the general idea that the function of a wall is normally to isolate one side from the other. Representing a fourth view, Ernest Best learned from his friend, Professor Peter Richardson, that the term μεσότοιχον had been used seven times in a temple inscription in Asia Minor to denote some type of dividing wall used in conjunction with the construction of stairs in a temple construction. Understanding that it would be normal for Paul to have used a well-known term for his metaphor, Best concluded that μεσότοιχον must have been a well-known architectural term for Paul's era.

The research laid out in chapter 2 proposes a fifth scenario. This theory will go *beyond* Hoehner's idea of the dividing nature of walls in general and Best's referent of an ordinary architectural term relating to dividing-walls used in temple constructions. When one looks at the Greek and Latin literary evidence from this era coupled with archeological evidence, one comes to the conclusion that this term was used to describe more than just some type of wall used in temple constructions. As will be demonstrated, Paul was using a term that was a common architectural term of his day that normally denoted the solid walls that were used to separate the multi-occupancy buildings into individual areas used for separate residences, businesses, and shops. Multi-occupancy building were very common in Paul's day. In addition, the term μεσότοιχον was used to denote a dividing wall used to subdivide some of the temples of that era, and it was even used at times to denote solid boundary walls, which were used to isolate one property from another. In context, when Paul used this particular metaphorical image, he was placing a picture in his addressees' heads of Christ's destruction of the ongoing mutual hostility between Jew and Gentile being similar in some respects to a contractor of their day destroying a solid dividing wall that had been separating two individual residences turning the larger space into one large residence. Paul was addressing a problem of disunity between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Asia Minor. He has just stated that Christ is the One who provides peace for *both* Jewish and Gentile believers. Now, with the use of this familiar architectural term used as a metaphor, Paul wants his audience, the Gentile believers, to envision themselves living next door to their Jewish brothers and sisters in a common multi-dwelling building as one family living next to the other being

separated by a “middle-wall.” When Paul tells them that Christ has destroyed the ongoing mutual hostility between the Jews and Gentiles who are following Him just as metaphorically Christ might have acted as a general contractor and destroyed the “*dividing* middle-wall,” he is developing a *personal family* image. Paul wants his addressees to envision themselves living next door in a multi-residential building to their Jewish brothers, who are now an intimate part of their family, and then to understand that Christ has removed their traditional hostility just as He, acting as a general contractor, might have removed a solid “*dividing* middle-wall” in their common building that had been separating them from their Jewish brothers and sisters who were also following Christ. In reality, Christ had removed any reason for them to maintain their old mutual hostility when they became children of God through His redeeming death on the cross. Now, they, Jew and Gentile, were an intimate part of the *same* family. God’s family was not to be divided for any reason, traditional or otherwise; for those who are in Christ, there is only *one* family, not two. With the destruction of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, “the *dividing* middle-wall,” Jewish and Gentile believers were to live together in the larger space that God provides as one big family at peace with one another. In the next breath, he states that *both* have become “one new man” being reconciled *together* to God and now are *collectively* being built into God’s holy Temple. All of the imagery in this section shows that Christ’s peace is to be taken very personally. There are no dividing walls in the Body of Christ.

**The Meaning of Christ's τὸν Νόμον τῶν Ἐντολῶν
ἐν Δόγμασιν Καταργήσας**

This clause has been considered controversial on two fronts. One of the differences in interpretation stems from the fact that there are two possible ways to interpret Paul's use of the phrase τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν. Only context can guide one to Paul's intended meaning. Most agree that τὸν νόμον with its descriptive genitive τῶν ἐντολῶν refers specifically to the commanding or legal portion of the Torah, which is sometimes denoted as the Mosaic Law or its collective parts as *halakhah*, versus the non-legal portion of the Torah, which is sometimes designated as *haggadah*. The difficulty for those of us who are so distant in time from first-century Judaism is deciding how to interpret the prepositional phrase ἐν δόγμασιν. In the immediate context, it can either function to restrict or limit the action of the participle καταργήσας on "the commandments of the Law" to a specific subset, or it can be used to emphasize or even clarify that God personally "decreed" all of the commandments of the Law.

In chapter 4, it will be demonstrated that the context of Ephesians directs one to understand that Paul meant for the prepositional phrase ἐν δόγμασιν to be considered as restrictive. In Eph 4:25–6:20 alone, Paul uses fifty-one combinations of imperatives, jussives, and participles, to exhort his predominately Gentile addressees to live out their lives according to God's desired unity and morality. In Eph 6:1–3, Paul specifically exhorts the children of those following Christ to obey and honor their parents and states that this is the first commandment with promise. This commandment and promise

matches closely the first commandment with promise given to Moses for God's people at Mt. Sinai. In addition to following closely one of the key commandments given on Mount Sinai, thirty-six of the fifty-one exhortations given in Eph 4:25–6:20 have close affinities to some of the moral commandments contained within the Mosaic Law. Knowing that Paul still relies heavily on the authority of the moral aspect of the Mosaic Law leads one to realize that Paul is not teaching an abrogation nor a “making ineffective” of the total Law. Therefore, in the context of Ephesians, the prepositional phrase, ἐν δόγμασιν, must be considered as a restrictive prepositional phrase pointing to some specific ordinances contained within the commandments of the Mosaic Law.

A second point of uncertainty is over the interpretation of the Greek verb καταργέω. If one were to evaluate the standard lexicons for referents, the primary referent for καταργέω is “to make something ineffective.” It can also mean to “hinder, render idle, make inactive, make idle or unemployed, nullify, cancel, destroy, abolish, and do away with.” In context with Paul's teaching in his other letters including Rom 2:11–15 and 3:23–31, it will be argued that the Law as a whole is not to be put aside but instead established; believers are not making the Law ineffective, but instead establishing the Law. In Ephesians, Paul is teaching that the purity and cultural regulations contained within the commandments of the Law have become optional. This is discussed fully in chapter 3 along with an overview of modern thought regarding the place of “works of the Law” in the Messianic Age. In addition to looking at the meaning of ὁ νόμος and ἔργα νόμου, the research in chapter 3 will carefully look at the Old Testament for possible

subdivisions of the Law, which at that time might have been used to consider the various commandments and ordinances that had been established to regulate the cultural, purity, and moral aspects of the life of God's chosen people. The evidence will show a normal breakdown of the תּוֹרָה, "Law," into three categories: (1) מִצְוֹת, "commandments," that normally make up a code of moral and civil law, (2) חֻקִּים, "statutes or ordinances," that normally deal with religious practices including religious purity, and (3) מִשְׁפָּטִים, "ordinances or customs," that deal with the manner or way of life of a specific people group. In addition, some of the authors thought of the Law in terms of two subgroups, מִצְוֹת, "commandments," paired with either חֻקִּים, "statutes/ordinances," and מִשְׁפָּטִים, "ordinances/customs." This evidence indicates that Paul would not have been breaking new ground when compared to Old Testament teachings, if he chose to speak of the Law as subdivided into two parts, the moral commandments and ordinances. In addition, the possible referents for the word δόγματα were studied in order to find its semantic range, which ranges from laws, official decrees, teachings, to proposals. Then, a proposal is presented for Paul's intended meaning of Christ τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολοῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας taking into consideration the context of Ephesians and the rest of Paul's letters with the result that its intended meaning is proposed as "having made ineffective the *cultural and purity* ordinances contained within the commandments of the Law."

Looking Ahead

The exegesis of Eph 2:11–22, which is shown in chapter 4, will bring out Paul’s main point of spiritual enlightenment that he has been praying for his addressees to understand. He wants his predominately Gentile audience to come to know and understand God’s desired plan so that they will live out their lives more in step with God’s will for their lives. After asking these Gentile believers to remember their empty past without God compared to their full life with God now, Paul wants them to realize that God’s redemptive act through Christ’s death on the cross *demands changes* in their lives including their daily attitude toward Jewish believers. It does not matter how deep their ongoing mutual hostility had been in the past, now it is time for a radical change because God has stepped into His creation and performed a radical, merciful, and gracious act to bring εἰρήνη, “peace,” to those who will learn to trust and obey Him based on their learned love for Him. God’s plan does not allow His obedient children to love Him and not one another. When Christ died on the cross for the redemption of all from all ages who will learn to trust and obey God, Paul says that He died on the cross in order that He may create ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, “one new man,” bringing about peace for them in order that He may reconcile τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους, “both,” into ἐνὶ σώματι, “one body,” τῷ θεῷ, “to God,” bringing about peace between the one Body and God. Gentile believers must strive to walk in unity with their Jewish brothers and sisters *in Christ* as God intended (Eph 4:1–6). Paul’s proclamation of peace and unity matches well the apostle John’s proclamation that if one is walking in the light as God walks in the

light, that one has fellowship with other Saints and Christ's death on the cross is καθαρίζει, "continually cleansing," that one from all sin (1 John 1:7). The apostle John continues this line of thought by stating that if one is truly obedient to God, God's love is perfected in him and he loves his brother as he walks in the light (2:3–10; cf. 4:10–21).

The Conclusion will give an overview of the primary points made in this dissertation and then look at what possible significance Paul's message in the first century has for the Church with all of its various parts today. One thing is clear from Paul's letters, whether to the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, or to those living in fairly close proximity to Ephesus, no divisional walls were allowed in the Church. Through his letters, Paul clearly teaches the Church of all ages that God does not approve any walls to be fabricated within the Church whether doctrinal, social, ethnic, or something based on past history. Therefore, the believers of the twenty-first century must decide if they want to do the will of God and *strive* to walk in a manner worthy of their calling as "one Body," the *one and only* family of God, in one Spirit onto God, or do they want to continue splintering into thousands of isolated parts in direct defiance to God's will. Matt 7:21–23 recounts Jesus saying that only those who do the will of the Father will abide with Him in eternity excluding even those who call Jesus lord but do not obey the Father (cf. Matt 12:50; 1 John 2:17).

CHAPTER 2

A FIRST-CENTURY MEANING OF ΤΟ ΜΕΣΟΤΟΙΧΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΜΟΥ

Laying the Foundation: A Contemporary Misunderstanding Regarding Paul's Use of This Metaphorical Image

In Eph 2:14b, Paul used a metaphorical aorist participial clause to help the Gentiles understand the intimate unity that Christ's death on the cross had made possible for all who learn to trust and obey Him, both Jew and Gentile. This clause is followed by another aorist participial clause in 2:15a that explains a change in the Law for the Messianic Age that allows *both* Jew and Gentile to realize God's desired unity as *one* family now. The meaning of Eph 2:15a will be developed in the next chapter. In this chapter, the meaning of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ will be investigated within the context of Ephesians. The word μεσότοιχον was used only one time in the New Testament by Paul or one of his amanuenses¹ and never in the Greek Septuagint; in addition, none of the authors of the New Testament nor the Septuagint used any form of the compound of the neuter μεσότοιχον, which is the masculine μέσος τοῦχος, forcing one to look outside the Bible for possible referents.

¹ It is generally understood that although Paul is the actual writer and author of his letters, he may have at various times used an amanuensis due to illness, imprisonment, or for whatever other reason that he may have had. Therefore, with this being understood, the word amanuensis or secretary will not be used throughout this dissertation in reference to someone else possibly writing parts or all of any of his letters.

An important consideration in understanding Paul's intended meaning of the word μεσότοιχον is that Paul used this word as part of a metaphorical clause to help his addressees understand what it meant for God to destroy the hostility between those Jews and Gentiles who became part of His family. A metaphor is *only effective if* the addressees are familiar with the meaning of the term that is used metaphorically, which is sometimes called the secondary subject of the metaphor. When Paul compared breaking down a μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, "a middle-wall of partition," to destroying the mutual "hostility" that existed between Believing Jews and believers from the other nations of the world, his predominately Gentile audience knew the possible referents for μεσότοιχον, and therefore, they readily understood how to apply the appropriate attributes from Paul's metaphorical participial clause to Christ's destruction of the ongoing mutual hostility between Jew and Gentile. Today, two thousand years later, scholars are no longer familiar with Paul's intended primary first-century referent for μεσότοιχον. Therefore, in order to understand more fully the associated imagery of this term so that its attributes may be applied correctly within the framework of the clause, τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, to the primary subject of the metaphor, ἔχθρα, which is part of an appositional clause, λύσας τὴν ἔχθραν, "having destroyed the hostility," a thorough investigation is needed.

Contemporary Thought Regarding the Meaning of Μεσότοιχον

Before anyone can develop an understanding of Paul's intended meaning of the clause λύσας τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, one needs to correctly understand the

meaning of the term *μεσότοιχον*. The meaning of *μεσότοιχον* has been widely debated throughout the twentieth century. This can be clearly seen through the variety of interpretations given by modern commentators and through the various interpretations given by some of the best literal contemporary Bible translators regarding Eph 2:14b–15a.

Some scholars such as John Eadie, Markus Barth, and Ernest Best have stated that there is much dispute over the meaning of *μεσότοιχον* without any credible theory that would promote an endorsement from the majority of the scholars.² Many recognize the fact that Paul is using the term *μεσότοιχον* metaphorically and realize that Paul would not have used a term that would not have been easily recognizable by his predominately Asia Minor addressees, but the actual referent has remained elusive for contemporary scholars. Yet, even if one does not understand what the referent is, many modern scholars know that at the very least, it is some type of wall and that a common sense of all walls is that they normally divide. Best comes the closest to uncovering the referent by realizing that Paul was probably using the term purely in a metaphorical construction without special religious referents. With his understanding of the common application of metaphors and based on a temple inscription in Asia Minor in which a writer used the term *μεσότοιχον* seven times to denote a dividing wall as part of the construction of stairs in this particular temple, he decided that this term was probably an ordinary

² John Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to The Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 172–73; Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, The Anchor Bible, no. 34 (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 285–86; and Ernest Best, *A Critical Commentary on Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 253–57.

architectural term for Paul's era.³ Some such as Andrew Lincoln understand *μεσότοιχον* to refer to a spiritual wall which was incorporated into Ephesians as part of an earlier hymn,⁴ while others before him such as Nils Dahl understand the referents to be possibly both a spiritual wall between God and humanity and the physical wall in the Jerusalem Temple separating the Gentiles from the Jews.⁵ Rudolph Schnackenburg asks why the author of Ephesians used such an unusual metaphor and after describing several of the various ways that some have interpreted its referents in the past went on to bypass the metaphorical aspect of *μεσότοιχον* altogether and decided that the term somehow pointed directly to the Law.⁶ Klyne Snodgrass does not take a definitive stand, but instead allows the reader to assume that the referent for *μεσότοιχον* follows the thinking of older

³ Best, *A Critical Commentary on Ephesians*, 257.

⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, no. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 128–30.

⁵ Nils A. Dahl, "Bibelstudie über den Epheserbrief," in *Kurz Auslegung des Epheserbriefes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 35, states, "Das Bild dürfte vom Tempel in Jerusalem genommen sein, in dem eine Mauer den Hof der Heiden von den inneren geheiligten Bereichen abtrennte. . . . Nach einer anderen Deutung erinnert das Bild der Mauer an den Gedanken einer kosmischen Mauer, durch die die jenseitigen himmlischen Wohnplätze Gottes und seiner dienenden Engel von der Menschenwelt getrennt wurden. Die beiden Bilder schließen sich nicht gegenseitig aus, da Gottes jenseitiger Wohnort als ein himmlischer Tempel angesehen wurde, und umgekehrt die Tempelarchitektur die Struktur des Universums symbolisierte: The image may be taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, in which a wall separated the courtyard of the Heathens from the inner sacred area. . . . According to another explanation, the image of the wall reminds (us) of the thought of a cosmic wall, through which the distant heavenly living place of God and His serving angels has been divided from the human world. The two images do not rule each other out mutually, because God's transcendent dwelling place has been considered as a heavenly temple and conversely the architect of the Temple [has been considered] symbolically the structure of the Universe"; and side-note: this theory probably derived its initial impulse from the long version of Ignatius' "Letter to the Trallians," 2.9.4, in which the author used the words τὸ μέσοτοιχον to represent metaphorically a wall separating heaven from earth. Jesus destroyed this dividing wall for all Saints when He died on the cross.

⁶ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 113–14.

commentators, who predominately set the referent as the barrier on the Temple grounds that prohibited the Gentiles from entering the area reserved only for Israelites.⁷ Peter O'Brien recognizes Paul's usage of "an unusual metaphor," and yet does not offer any options on possible referents other than to say that whatever this metaphor means is elucidated by the clause that follows.⁸ At this juncture, O'Brien considers τὴν ἔχθρα to be in apposition with τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν instead of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ and equates the abolition of the enmity as equal to the abolition of the whole Law.⁹ John Muddiman, recognizing a problem with our contemporary understanding of Paul's metaphorical usage of μεσότοιχον, decided that perhaps Paul was referring to "all expressions of social enmity, familiar to any Jew or Gentile in the Hellenistic world."¹⁰ After teaching at Dallas Theological Seminary for over thirty years, Harold Hoehner has recently published *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, which is truly a *magnus opus*.¹¹ His work concentrates on correctly understanding the meaning of Paul's words in Ephesians by taking into account their proper literary and historical contexts. When he discussed the word μεσότοιχον, Hoehner stated that the word was

⁷ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 131–33.

⁸ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 195.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 195–96.

¹⁰ John Muddiman, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Continuum, 2001), 127–28.

¹¹ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).

rarely used in classical literature, not used at all in the Septuagint, and occurs only once in the New Testament.¹² As he analyzed possible referents, Hoehner dismissed the most popular one, the wall in the Temple that separated the Gentile court from the rest of Jewish Temple area because: (1) there were no references to the Jerusalem wall in this context, (2) this Temple wall was never designated in any writings by this particular Greek term, (3) this wall was still standing when Paul wrote this letter, and (4) this wall was probably unfamiliar to Paul's predominately Gentile addressees.¹³ Not finding a specific reference, in a mindset similar to Muddiman's, Hoehner states that the phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ was referring to a metaphorical wall of separation and allows the dividing nature of "any wall" to give meaning to the term.¹⁴

The best theories regarding Paul's intended referent for the word μεσότοιχον taking into consideration that his intended addressees were predominately Gentiles living in Asia Minor are: (1) a wall that divides the supernatural realm from the earthly,¹⁵ (2) the wall in Herod's Temple that separated the Jews from the Gentiles, which as stated above is the most dominant theory,¹⁶ (3) no particular referent, just the dividing nature of any

¹² Ibid., 368.

¹³ Ibid., 369.

¹⁴ Ibid., 371.

¹⁵ Barth, *Ephesians*, 285–86, while considering Gnostic influences, presents a brief discussion using Schlier as a sounding board and looks at the possibility of the term μεσότοιχον depicting a cosmic barrier; cf. Best, *A Critical Commentary on Ephesians*, 254–55, who discusses those who look at the Long Recension of Ignatius' letter to the Trillians and notes that the author of Ephesians never discusses a separation between heaven and earth. Lincoln's and Dahl's positions are stated above.

¹⁶ Eadie, *Commentary of the Epistle of Paul to The Ephesians*, 172, states that this was the popular view of his era; Brooke Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London; New York: MacMillan,

wall,¹⁷ and (4) an architectural term denoting some type of wall used in temple constructions that would be understood by those living in Asia Minor.¹⁸ At this time, there are no theories that adequately describe Paul's referent of τὸ μεσότοιχον and how the attributes from this metaphor placed along side τὴν ἔχθραν might help his predominately Gentile audience understand God's desired unity for the Jewish and Gentile believers that now make up the Body of Christ, the family of God.

1906), 37, states that μεσότοιχον "is probably suggested by the Chel (חֵיל) or 'partition which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Temple proper'"; Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 37, states that this letter is late and that it was the actual destruction of the barrier in the Temple which shut the Gentiles out of the rest of the Temple that was being referred to in Ephesians; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1961), 54, notes that frequently the wall in the Temple area dividing the Jews from the Gentiles is suggested for Paul's use of "middle-wall"; Theodore O. Wedel, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Interpreter's Bible, no. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953; reprint, 1995), 655, states in his mid-twentieth century commentary on Ephesians, "the middle wall of partition" is a reference to the wall that divided the Gentiles from the inner court with a threat of death for those who went past it; Larry J. Kreitzer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Epworth, 1997), 86, states that "As a symbol of division and separation it is hard to imagine a better ancient example than this temple barrier in Jerusalem"; and in a recent publication, David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 246, states that Paul might be speaking of the Temple wall that divides the Jews and Gentiles in Eph 2:14.

¹⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 371.

¹⁸ Eadie, *Commentary of the Epistle of Paul to The Ephesians*, 172–73, along with many nineteenth-century expositors were inclined to think that Paul had some graphically intelligible figure in mind when using this phrase, but they were not sure what it was; e.g. Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1856), 131–33, works backwards using the rest of the text to figure out that "the ambiguous phrase middle wall of partition" is pointing to the "mutual hatred" that was dividing the Jews and Gentiles. He did not state what the ambiguous phrase might have meant but knew that it was connected to the mutual hatred, which is better than many of his successors; cf. Barth, *Ephesians*, 286, who discusses the fact that at the present time, there is no explanation of the term μεσότοιχον that completely rules out alternatives. He goes on to say that the sources and scholarly methods available at present permit more skepticism about some than about others, but that they are not sufficient for a final decision; and cf. Best, *A Critical Commentary on Ephesians*, 256–57, who states that it is possible that the term μεσότοιχον was simply being used metaphorically without going beyond ordinary understanding. He says that it was a well known architectural term, being used seven times in Asia Minor in the instructions for the erection of the temple at Didyma and then, considering Paul's usage, notes that Athenaeus used the term metaphorically in a secular context.

Metaphors

In order to understand Eph 2:14b–15a more fully, one must develop an understanding of Paul’s usage of the metaphorical clause τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας. He penned this letter while addressing a predominately Gentiles audience living in Asia. It is important that Paul’s metaphorical clause be properly understood so that its attributes may be associated correctly with its targeted appositional clause λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν, “having destroyed the hostility.” It is important to understand the literal aspects of the metaphorical imagery in order to transfer properly the attributes of the particular “middle-wall,” that Paul is pointing to and saying that Christ has destroyed so that *both* Jewish believer and Gentile believer may live together as *one* family. The “middle-walls” of the first-century equate to our modern day “party-walls.” In addition to this one metaphorical usage, Paul uses two more metaphorical images in Eph 2:11–22: one in 2:16 and another in 2:20–22. In Eph 2:20–22, Paul uses a second architectural metaphorical image as he compares the Gentile addition to the household of God as being similar to each believer, Jew and Gentile, being an appropriate pieces of the wall of God’s temple. They would have related this temple, a ναός, to the numerous ναοί, temples, which were at that time understood to be the houses for many gods. These temples or houses were scattered throughout their lands. Paul was teaching his addressees that being in Christ meant that they along with the Jews were collectively, the *house* that the one true God was living in. Placed in between these two metaphorical images was a third metaphorical image depicting God’s desired unity, a biological image of a body. This well understood

image helped the Gentiles understand God's desired unity from the perspective of the desired unity of all of the body parts, which allows the body to function properly. If some of the parts are missing, inoperable, or even weak, the whole body suffers.

As Gregory Dawes looks at the functioning of metaphors in their relationship with the literal counterparts that they are illuminating, he points to the part of Max Black's theory that states that a metaphor projects a set of associated implications [attributes] onto the subject needing illumination.¹⁹ Black notes that a metaphor, which he classifies as a secondary subject, does not have to cause a mental picture; for a term to be used as a metaphor, its only requirements are that the intended addressees should be familiar with its properties [attributes].²⁰ This becomes the crux of the problem for modern scholars. Contemporary scholars no longer have a firm idea of the associated attributes or imagery of the Greek phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ or its core term τὸ μεσότοιχον. Without a proper understanding of the literal meaning of the word μεσότοιχον, one cannot apply the attributes of destroying a τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ to destroying τὴν ἑχθρὰν that exists between Jew and Gentile. Without this understanding, one can not understand fully what Paul was saying to his addressees when he taught them that just as someone might destroy a μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, Christ had destroyed the ongoing mutual ἑχθρὰν for both Jew and Gentile believers. He had done this through His redeeming death on the cross and through His declaration as the sent Lawgiver from the

¹⁹ Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21–33* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 32–33.

²⁰ Dawes, *The Body in Question*, 34–35.

Father that certain ordinances contained within the commandments of the Law had been made “ineffective”; they are now optional. This aspect regarding making part of the Law ineffective will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

In his discussion of Paul’s usage of body imagery in Eph 5:21–33, Gregory Dawes noted that one needs to recognize and understand the key terms used metaphorically in order to come to a proper understanding of the primary subject of the metaphor.²¹ Philip Wheelwright separates metaphors into two categories: the “epiphor” and the “diaphor” with “-phora” denoting “motion/ movement,” “epi-” denoting “over on to,” and “dia-” denoting “through.”²² When one considers the work of a metaphor through an epiphorical lens, which has been attributed to originating in Aristotle’s work *Poetics*, one looks at how the metaphor transfers information and imagery associated with its own literal meaning to a second literal term needing greater elucidation, the primary subject.²³ The reader automatically transfers the attributes from the metaphor onto the second term needing elucidation. For example, when Paul tells the Church that there are many members, but only one body (1 Cor 12:20), he has used a physical body metaphorically to apply to the actual Body of Christ, the primary subject (12:27). Believers can visualize more effectively how all of the members of the Church form one organizational body with Christ as the head as they transfer some of the attributes of a physical body to the

²¹ Ibid., 1.

²² Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor & Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 72, 79.

²³ Ibid., 72.

literal meaning of “the Church.” Wheelwright basically follows Black’s methodology at this juncture.

When looking through diaphorical lenses, one looks at how the metaphorical term or phrase would alter the literal term or phrase being affected, producing a new meaning simply by their close proximity on the page. It changes the meaning of the term or phrase by juxtaposition without having anything else in common.²⁴ This type of metaphor is less common than an epiphore. Earl Mac Cormac states that all metaphors possess both epiphoric and diaphoric elements that arise from similarities and disparities among the attributes of the metaphor and its targeted term or phrase.²⁵

Considering both “epiphoric” and “diaphoric” classifications, Paul’s use of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ falls predominately into an “epiphor” classification and should be evaluated accordingly. In reality, both Black and Wheelwright are following a line of thought that goes all the way back in time to Aristotle. Regarding the essential mark of an “epiphor,” Wheelwright states that the essential mark of epiphor is to express a similarity between something relatively well known or concretely known and something which, although of greater worth or importance, is less known or more obscurely known; the epiphorical metaphor must be able to project an image or idea onto the primary subject.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid., 72, 78.

²⁵ Earl R. Mac Cormac, *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor*, 1985 (Cambridge: Bradford Books, 1988), 40.

²⁶ Wheelwright, *Metaphor & Reality*, 73.

It is clear that in order to understand how an ancient term was used as an epiphorical metaphor, one must understand the properties of the metaphor as they were understood in their own day. In his work, *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor*, Mac Cormac reminds his readers that language is constantly changing with some words going through transformation and others remaining stable during any one time period.²⁷ This is an important consideration for those twenty-first century scholars who are trying to understand Paul's intended meaning when he transferred imagery from "destroying the τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ" to "destroying the hostility" that existed between the Jew and the Gentile. What was clear in Paul's day regarding this clause is not as clear today. The other consideration in evaluating metaphors is evaluating how the addressees' cultural experiences including emotions might be effect the "sense" of the metaphor.²⁸ Because current readers have not experienced Paul's culture, they may have a hard time understanding the emotional aspects associated with some of his metaphors and their primary subjects. It is now time to seek evidence regarding the meaning of Christ's τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας more fully in order to understand the meaning of Christ's λύσας τῆν ἔχθραν between Jew and Gentile believers more fully.

²⁷ Mac Cormac, *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor*, 181.

²⁸ Ibid., 189, 203, 227, 229.

Paul and Architectural Metaphors

Paul Was Not Alone in Using Architectural Metaphors

It was not uncommon for first-century Mediterranean writers to use architectural terms as metaphorical images in order to bring greater understanding to complex ideas. Following an example of a third-century B.C. writer, Ariston, who uses the dividing nature of a μεσότοιχον metaphorically to show mentally that an individual cannot live a life of pleasure and virtue simultaneously, examples from two first-century writers, Philo and Epictetus, are given to demonstrate that Paul was not alone in his usage of architectural metaphors to help convey complex ideas to his audience. Philo was a Hellenistic Jew from Alexandria, and Epictetus was a Stoic philosopher who was banished from Rome in A.D. 89 along with other philosophers during Domitian's reign.²⁹ This section concludes with a few examples taken from one of Paul's letters to the Corinthians and his letter to the those living in close proximity to Ephesus.

Ariston: Third-Century B.C. Philosopher

Ariston, a Chiosian philosopher of the third-century B.C., was quoted by Athenaeus, a philosopher from the late second-century of the Christian Era. Athenaeus quoted Ariston saying,

²⁹ Brad Inwood, "Epictetus," in *OCD: Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed., ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 532.

Ἄριστωνος τοῦ Χίου, ὃς ἦν εἷς τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς, ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ Ἄριστωνι παρεμφαίνει τὸν διδάσκαλον ὡς ὕστερον ὀρμήσαντα ἐπὶ τρυφῆν, λέγων ὧδε· “ἤδη δέ ποτε καὶ τοῦτον πεφώρακα τὸν τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀρετῆς μεσότοιχον διορύττοντα καὶ ἀναφαινόμενον παρὰ τῆ ἡδονῆ.”³⁰

Ariston, as quoted by Athenaeus, used the architectural term μεσότοιχον, “middle-wall,” metaphorically to transfer imagery of a divisional wall existing between virtue and pleasure. It is easy to see from his metaphoric picture that one can *not* easily live in both worlds. One must choose as he did to live a life of virtue or a life of pleasure. Ariston’s work illuminates two relevant points regarding the word μεσότοιχον: (1) the basic meaning of μεσότοιχον when used metaphorically in this text implies a solid “dividing-wall,” and (2) whether Athenaeus put words into Ariston’s mouth or Ariston actually used this metaphor, the time fits Paul’s era and this secular metaphorical usage of μεσότοιχον is similar to Paul’s religious use recorded in Ephesians 2:14.

Philo Judaeus: First-Century Jewish Writer

In the following three passages, Philo used architectural terms as metaphors to help illuminate his teachings: *On the Cherubim* 2.101–02, *On The Giants* 2.266.30, and *On Dreams* 5.660.19–21. The architectural terms are underlined in the text below.

³⁰ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, in *TLG: Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, CD-ROM, vers. E (Irvine: University of California, 1999), 7.14.18–22; an alternate source for this text is Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, trans. by Charles B. Gulick, vol. 3, LCL (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1929), § 281, 262; the author’s translation follows: Regarding Ariston of Chios, who was a Stoic—in the work written about Ariston—he (the writer) shows the teacher (Ariston) as one coming to the end (of his life), having started out against indulgence, saying here (at the latter point in his life), “But now and then, I have searched out the middle-wall (dividing-wall) of pleasure and virtue, and having dug through, I have been seen on the side of pleasure.”

In the first example, Philo applies the metaphorical imagery of a house as a dwelling place for God with his primary subject being the human soul. God can live in a worthy soul as people live in worthy houses. Then, Philo applies the imagery of a well laid foundation of a house being comparable to having a “good natural disposition” and receiving “instruction,” which are the primary subjects of the metaphor. He proceeds to build the imagery of the edifice being constructed out of “virtues” and “good works” with its ornamentation consisting of a “good secondary education” as shown:

ἀξιόχρεως μέντοι γε οἶκος ψυχῆ ἐπιτήδειος. οἶκον οὖν ἐπίγειον τὴν ἀόρατον ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀοράτου θεοῦ λέγοντες ἐνδίκως καὶ κατὰ νόμον φήσομεν.

ἵνα δὲ βέβαιος καὶ περικαλλέστατος εἴη ὁ οἶκος, θεμέλιοι μὲν ὑποβεβλήσθωσαν εὐφυΐα καὶ διδασκαλία, ἀρεταὶ δὲ μετὰ καλῶν πράξεων ἐποικοδομείσθωσαν αὐτῷ, τὰ δὲ προκοσμήματα ἔστω 102 ἢ ἀνάληψις τῶν ἐγκυκλίων προπαιδευμάτων.³¹

In a second example from his work, *On the Giants*, 2.266.30, Philo applies the metaphorical imagery of having ἀγνοίας, “a lack of knowledge, ignorance,” and ἀμαθίας, “a lack of learning,” as having a poor θεμέλιος πρῶτος, “main foundation,” which is normally associated with the foundation of a building. This lack of building a

³¹ Philo, *Cherubim*, in *TLG*, 101–02; an alternate source for this text is *Philo*, vol. two, trans. by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, LCL (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1929), 69–70; and H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education In Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 176–77, discusses ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, “general education,” and προπαιδεύματα, “secondary education,” showing that προπαιδεύματα prepared the mind for more advanced stages of education that would normally come out of philosophical schools following a particular philosophical view such as Stoicism or Cynicism. Therefore, a good definition for ἐγκύκλιος προπαιδεύματα is an “all-around/general secondary education”: the author’s translation follows: Nevertheless, a worthy soul is a suitable house/dwelling place (for God). Therefore, we are right in saying that the earthly house of the invisible God is the invisible (worthy) soul, and this we are saying according to the Law. And in order that the house might be durable and exceedingly beautiful, having let the foundations be laid with good natural disposition and instruction, let virtues along with good works be built upon it, and let the ornaments (of the house) be 102 the acquirement of an all-around preparatory (secondary) education.

good foundation from which to build one's house is related to not building a good foundation of divine wisdom, the primary subject of the metaphor, from which to guide one's life. Philo states that it is humanities' fleshly nature that cripples the development of wisdom. Yet, even if one were to have a good foundation, they would still need to live out their lives correctly before God, because whenever a bad house is constructed upon a good foundation, the end product is still a bad house.

In a third example taken from *Dreams* 2.8.1–3, Philo again applies the metaphorical imagery of architectural θεμελίων, “foundations,” to a primary subject, one's past instructions, and then tells his audience that ἐποικοδομῶμεν, “we should build-upon,” what we have learned as we follow the pattern that the σοφῆς ἀρχιτέκτονος, “wise master-builder,” known as Allegory has set. Here, it is noted that Philo is again using architectural terms transferring images to his various primary subjects: “one's past instructions,” “the next set of instructions,” and “Allegory” respectively.

As Philo wrote in Greek in order to express Judaic principles to a Greco-Roman world, he is metaphorically: (1) comparing a worthy soul with a house that God could live in, (2) discussing the cause of a soul's corruption using architectural terminology, and (3) discussing the interpretation of dreams by defining the type of dreams, laying a foundation, and then preparing to follow the instructions of a personified Allegory, a master-builder, to guide them in “building-up” a correct technique of interpretation.

Epictetus: Late First-Century Stoic Philosopher

Likewise, Epictetus, a mid first-to-second-century Stoic philosopher from Hierapolis, which is located near Ephesus,³² used architectural terms as metaphors to help his readers understand his teaching. Following is an example:

οὐ θέλεις τὴν ἀρχὴν στῆσαι καὶ τὸν θεμέλιον, τὸ κρίμα σκέψασθαι
 πότερον ὑγιὲς ἢ οὐχ ὑγιὲς, καὶ οὕτως λοιπὸν 2.15.9 ἐποικοδομεῖν αὐτῷ τὴν
 εὐτονίαν, τὴν ἀσφάλειαν;³³

Epictetus' point is that one must consider carefully one's decisions in life and then stand by them so that one may go forward and make new decisions based on one's past decisions. He applies the metaphorical imagery of a θεμέλιον, "foundation," to his primary subject, "first-decisions." Using architectural terms, he proceeded to tell his students that after considering reflecting on their earlier decisions, which form the foundation for future decisions, they are ἐποικοδομεῖν, "to build upon," their foundation of older decisions with new decisions. The above examples provide insight on how architectural terms were used metaphorically to effectively elucidate hard concepts.

Paul of Tarsus: First-Century Christian Leader

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul uses architectural terms metaphorically in a similar fashion to Philo and Epictetus as discussed above. In 1 Cor 3:9–10, he compared himself

³² Brad Inwood, "Epictetus," in *OCD*, 532.

³³ Epictetus, *Discourses*, in *TLG*, 2.15.8–9; the author's translation follows: Indeed, do you not wish to establish the beginning, indeed the foundation, to examine carefully your κρίμα, "judgement/decision," whether it is sound or unsound, and then, finally, to build upon it (the foundation) determinately, confidently?

metaphorically to a wise ἀρχιτέκτων, “master-builder,” of a house as he compared the Corinthian believers to one of his houses.³⁴ Paul said that according to the grace of God he had set the θεμέλιον, “foundation,” as a σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων, “a wise master-builder,” but, another ἐποικοδομεῖ, “shall build upon” that foundation that he laid which was the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jay Shanor discusses the master-builder’s role in supervising the other tradesmen (subcontractors) as they each worked in their areas of expertise. His job was to guide the project daily insuring the desired final product.³⁵ Alison Burford discusses the type of case where an ἀρχιτέκτων worked under the guidance and direction of a city’s building commission, a group of elected men who represent their city’s interest in a building project.³⁶ From Burford’s discussion, a parallel can be drawn between God and the city commissioners and Paul, the master-builder, who was directing the rest of the subcontractors, who represented metaphorically the various teachers at Corinth including Apollos, Timothy, and Stephanas. Paul emphasizes the point that his work will stand because he has laid down a secure θεμέλιος, “foundation.”

³⁴ Alison Burford, *The Greek Temple Builders at Epidauros: A Social and Economic study of Building in the Asklepiian Sanctuary, during the Fourth and Early Third Centuries B.C.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 138–39. According to our contemporary usage, architects normally design and check on building progress. But, during Paul’s era, the ἀρχιτέκτων, “architecton, master-builder,” was basically the master-builder and advisor regarding the practical aspects of implementation, not the designer.

³⁵ Jay Shanor, “Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians,” *New Testament Studies* 34, no. 3 (1988): 465.

³⁶ Burford, *The Greek Temple Builders at Epidauros*, 127–30, states that the city elects their building commission, designs the building, hires the master-builder, and reports to the citizens. He says that with the citizens being involved, there is indication that the technical terminology for temple building had to be understandable to the general public.

After saying that Gentile believers are fellow citizens with all saints and household members of God, Paul taught his audience that God lives in those who are following Christ (Eph 2:20–22). Then, Paul reminded the Gentiles that they as well as the Jews have been built upon the θεμέλιος, “foundation,” of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the ἀκρογωνιαίος, “cornerstone”; they were now part of the Holy Temple of God. In saying this, Paul used a variety of architectural terms to paint his picture as he said that πᾶσα οἰκοδομή, “each construction,” συναρμολογουμένη αὕξει, “that is being fitted together is growing,” into a holy ναόν, “temple,” through Jesus including the Gentiles who are also συνοικοδομείσθε, “being built up together (with the Jews),” to form a κατοικητήριον, “a dwelling place,” for God through the Spirit.³⁷

In Ephesians 3:17, Paul uses architectural terms metaphorically as he states that κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, “Christ is dwelling through faith in your hearts,” you (pl.) having been rooted and τεθεμελιωμένοι, “having your foundation laid,” through love. Here, Paul uses architectural verbs to denote “dwelling” and “laying a foundation.” Both verbs relate to a house or building. The first presents the idea of occupancy, and the second brings an image of a well laid foundation from which to build the rest of the structure. Christ is dwelling in believers as one dwells in a house, and Christ with His great love is building a foundation under the lives of His followers that is similar to an ἀρχιτέκτων, “master-builder,” building a good foundation under a house so that the house may stand for many years.

³⁷ At this juncture, Paul’s metaphorical language has some similarities to Peter’s in 1 Pet 2:4–7.

In Ephesians 4:12–16, Paul continues to use architectural terms metaphorically. In 4:12, he stated that Christ had given apostles, prophets, preachers, shepherds, and teachers to prepare the Saints for a work of service εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, “for the construction of the Body of Christ.” In 4:16, Paul stated that through Christ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον, “all of the Body was being fit together,” and being united. He went on to state that through the proper working of each part, the Body ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, “is building itself up into an edifice through love.” Again, Paul transfers attributes from the architectural world (secondary subject) to the relational image (primary subject) that exists between Christ and His Followers.

In 4:29, Paul presented his last relational image in Ephesians using an architectural metaphor. He stated that believers should not say any words that cause destruction, but instead they should let good words come forth πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, “for the edification of a need,” in order that the good words will bring grace to those listening. Paul used the noun οἰκοδομή, “a construction, an edifice,” to paint a picture of someone speaking edifying words that would build up and fill a void in someone else’s life. Believers’ words should be a blessing to those listening.

Primary Extra-biblical Literary Evidence for the Meaning of Μεσότοιχον

Early Greek Lexicons

Two ancient lexicons help illuminate the proper technical category and give clues to the possible meaning of the term μεσότοιχον, “middle-wall.” They do so by showing that this word belongs to an architectural categorization, and that a “middle-wall” was used in association with either a roof or upper level structure of a building. Hesychius, a fifth-century Greek lexicographer, includes μεσότοιχον as one of several words and phrases used to define the Greek term κατηήλιψ. Following is a list of words that Hesychius wrote in his lexicon to help define the word κατηήλιψ:

μεσόδμη, “a tie beam,” μεσότοιχον, “a middle-wall,” δοκός, “a main roof or floor beam,” ἢ ὑπότονος βαστάζουσα τὸν ὀροφον, “or a rope that is used in securing the roofing,” οἱ δὲ ἰκίωμα τὸ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ, ὃ καὶ βέλτιον, “and the joists in the house, indeed that which is stronger.”³⁸

The general definition that LSJ gives for κατηήλιψ is a “ladder, roof-beam, or upper story.” It would appear from Hesychius’ lexicon that κατηήλιψ is a term that is used primarily to describe the upper part of a building consisting of main μεσόδμαι, “tie beams,” that may cross and possibly be supported by μεσότοιχα, “middle-walls,” and end walls. There may be additional ceiling beams that may rest across the tie beams to support the roof or upper levels of a building. It appears that rope was somehow used to secure part of this upper level construction.

³⁸ Hesychius, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, ed. Ejnar Munksgaard, vol. 2 (Munich: Beck, 1966), 444.

Photius' ninth-century Greek Lexicon, *Photii Patriarchae Lexicon*,³⁹ uses the term *μεσότοιχον* with the article to help define the word *θυραία*. Photius says that a *θυραία* is equivalent to *τὴν τοῦ μεσοτοίχου δακοπήν*, “the cutout in the middle-wall.” Photius' next entry is *θυραία*, which uses the phrase *τὸ ἄνοιγμα τῆς θύρας*, “the opening of the door,” to define a *θυραία*. Photius' lexicon produces an idea that if a *μεσότοιχον* was cut through for a doorway, the cutout would be technically called a *θυραία* and the door itself a *θύρας*. This definition brings to mind Solomon's cutout in the solid wall at the back of the Temple that was used to separate the Holy of Holies from the Holy area as described by Josephus (*A.J.* 8.71).

Three key points emerge from studying these two *lexica*: (1) the term *μεσότοιχον*, “middle-wall,” was used to give meaning to other architectural terms thus showing that it also was used as an architectural term, (2) *μεσότοιχον* was not defined in either lexicon, and yet it was used in both to aid individuals in understanding other architectural terms implying that its meaning must have been well understood by its intended readers—there was no need to define it and at the same time it could help clarify the meaning of other architectural words, and (3) the information gathered from the two lexicons tell their readers that a *μεσότοιχον*, “a middle-wall,” may have a cutout in it, and that it is associated with load-bearing tie beams while the other sources from this era

³⁹ Photius, *Photii Patriarchae Lexicon*, ed. Christos Theodoridis, vols. E-M (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 311.

will show that a *μεσότοιχον* could support a roof system or an additional level(s) above the main level.

In addition to the ancient lexicons, contemporary classical Greek dictionaries, such as Liddell & Scott, show that the classical world differentiated between a *τοιχος*, a wall associated with house or business construction,⁴⁰ versus a *τείχος*, which denoted a wall used to subdivide sections of a city or to surround the city for protection.⁴¹ The type of “middle-wall” that Paul was talking about denoted dividing walls used inside buildings to separate the total space, it was not the type of wall that was used in some cities to separate the living areas of different nationalities.

Greek Literature Regarding Architectural and Boundary Walls

A First-Century Architect, Vitruvius

In his book, *Ten Books on Architecture*, Vitruvius, a contemporary of Emperor Augustus, elaborates on the range of building styles from single level family rural and urban houses to multi-level apartment complexes within highly populated areas and gives insight into some of the ways to build outer, inner-partition, and inner subdividing-

⁴⁰ In their research for some of the common usages for Greek words, James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 400, noted that there was a good probability that the word *μεσοτόχων* was an alternate form of *μεσοτοιχων*, a term used as part of the language regarding the sale of house property at Hermopolis around the turn of the second century of this era—the text may be examined in volume 2, papyrus 98, line 9 of *Amherst Papyri*, ed. William Tyssen-Amherst, Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, 2 vols. (London: H. Frowed, 1900–01; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁴¹ LSJ, 1802a and 1767a respectively; cf. Joseph H. Thayer’s listings for *τοιχος* and *τείχος* from *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, corrected ed. (New York: American Book, 1889), 627, 617, respectively; and Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 41, states that Greek cities in the east were often subdivided into self-governing divisions, *politeumata*, based on nationality.

partition walls.⁴² Vitruvius explains that the outer walls for a building built in Rome needed to be strong because of the necessity for multi-storied buildings; there was not enough land for this highly populated area, and therefore, it was important to build multi-storied buildings for many of those living in Rome.⁴³ Through his research of this era including his reading of Vitruvius' work, John McRay notes that the Romans had developed a strong concrete by the second century B.C. allowing them to build multiple floored buildings up to six stories high; Vitruvius' work showed that there were different wall constructions depending on purpose including strong burnt brick walls and party-walls constructed from rubble with rubble walls being constructed out of small stones embedded in mortar.⁴⁴ In addition, there were less expensive wall constructions that were more hazardous and broke down faster than concrete, stone, and brick; these walls were normally built using wooden frames and were covered with various materials such as stucco.⁴⁵ McRay states that it was normal for the ground floor of these multi-level buildings to be subdivided into shops and the upper levels to be subdivided into living areas with each upper level having its own access via inside or outside staircases leading

⁴² Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris H. Morgan, illustrated by Herbert L. Warren (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), iv. Vitruvius was an architect who was considered to be a contemporary of Emperor Augustus; and a Latin source for Vitruvius' work is *Vitruvii De Architectura* (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1899).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.8.17, 57–58; cf. John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 175, who states that multistory *insulae*, “large apartments,” were the most common type of residences in Rome and Ostia.

⁴⁴ John McRay, *Archaeology & The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991; reprint, 1997), 83.

⁴⁵ Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, 2.8.20, 57–58.

directly to the street below.⁴⁶ Jo-Ann Shelton states that in Rome, apartments might be located in apartment buildings, in specified sections of private homes, or above shops and factories; these apartments were normally small and residents normally shared cooking and bathroom facilities.⁴⁷

Flavius Josephus: First-Century Jewish Priest

Josephus and Lucianus the Philosopher are two Greek writers writing in the first and second century respectively who use the term *μεσότοιχον* to denote a physical wall used in the construction of buildings. In his work, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 8.67–68, Josephus used a plural form of *μεσότοιχον* one time and a singular form another as he described Solomon’s construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Regarding the plural form, he wrote,

καὶ τοῖς μὲν οἴκοις ἴδιος ἦν οὗτος ἑκάστω πρὸς τοὺς πλησίον οὐ συνάπτων, τοῖς δ’ ἄλλοις ὑπῆρχεν ἡ στέγη κοινὴ δι’ ἀλλήλων δεδομημένη μηκίσταις δοκοῖς καὶ διηκούσαις ἀπάντων, ὡς τοὺς μέσους τοίχους ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν συγκρατουμένους ξύλων ἐρρωμενεστέρου 8.68 διὰ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ McRay, *Archaeology & The New Testament*, 82–83.

⁴⁷ Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 63.

⁴⁸ Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, in *TLG*, 8.67–68; an alternate source is Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 5–8*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934; reprint, 1977); the author’s translation follows: And regarding (some of) their houses/chambers, each of these was not joined to the neighboring houses, but regarding others, the roof was common throughout each other’s (houses) having been constructed with the longest load bearing beams, which are extending through all, as the middle-walls are being strengthened collectively by the wooden beams, which are (also) being made stronger 8.68 on account of this (type) of construction.

Although Josephus' context does not give an exact understanding of the function of μέσους τοίχους, "middle-walls," it is seen that they are used in conjunction with load-bearing wooden beams to support common-roof structures of contiguous houses. In this type of construction, the tops of the μέσοι τοίχοι, "middle-walls," are stabilized by the crossing wooden beams and the long wooden beams are strengthened by resting on "middle-walls" at various points. It should be noted that Josephus differed from Paul in that he used a compound version of μεσότοιχον, μέσος τοίχος. The main point is that Josephus used τοὺς μέσους τοίχους as an architectural term describing walls that must be able to support the load bearing beams of a roof-ceiling structure or an upper level structure of some sort.

Josephus went on to discuss Solomon's division of the ναός, "Temple," of Jerusalem into two parts, the ἄδυτον meaning "that which is not to be entered," which is also called the Holy of Holies, and the ἅγιον ναον, "holy temple," which is also called the Holy Place. Solomon accomplished this by building a μέσος τοίχος, "middle-wall," from one of the side walls to the opposite wall. Josephus wrote,

ἐκτεμών δὲ τὸν μέσον τοίχον θύρας ἐπέστησε κεδρίνας χρυσὸν αὐταῖς πολὺν ἐνεργασάμενος καὶ τορεῖαν ποικίλην.⁴⁹

Here, Josephus discusses a "middle-wall" being constructed with the purpose of *dividing* a large temple area into two smaller isolated areas. The smaller area was not to

⁴⁹ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, in *TLG*, 8.71; the author's translation follows: And having cut out the middle-wall, he (Solomon) set doors of cedar with much gold and carving having been worked into them.

be entered by anyone except the High Priest, and he could enter only once a year.

Josephus classified this smaller area as τὸν ἔνδοθεν οἶκον, “the inner house.”⁵⁰ In the second case, Josephus makes it clear that a particular type wall, a μέσος τοῖχος—not just a τοῖχος—was used to separate the Temple into two smaller spaces.

Solomon’s temple construction was unique in that its “middle-wall” had a cutout. Many temples of other areas that had a back room during this era did not have an access opening cut through the “middle-wall.” Dividing “middle-walls” were normally solid. It was interesting to note that Josephus used the term “middle-wall” once for construction within a temple and once as part of the construction of the οἴκων, “houses, chambers,” that surrounded the same temple. This demonstrates some flexibility in usage of this term going beyond construction of only the temple *per se* and including houses around the temple that probably housed priests as well as supplies.

Most temples other than those of the Near Middle East housed their gods in the larger temple area separated from the smaller back area by a solid “middle-wall.” The people did not expect their gods to live in a small inaccessible area such as in Solomon’s temple. Lucian’s description of eight paintings within an Athenian temple below illustrates a Temple with a solid “middle-wall.”

Lucian of Samosata: Second-Century Philosopher

In his work, *The Hall*, Lucian used the words τὸν μέσον τοῖχον to describe the back wall of an Athenian temple as he described the interior. In this temple were various

⁵⁰ Ibid., 8.71–72.

paintings painted into the walls, and there was a statue of Athena centered on the back wall of the temple accessible to the people. According to Lucian's writing, as people entered the temple through the main front doors, they would see four pictures painted on the wall to their right and four pictures painted on the wall to their left. They would also see a white stone statue of Athena that had been raised up and located along the back wall directly across from the entrance.

In his descriptive tour of the Athenian temple, one would start the tour on the right side of the hall entrance after entering. One would see initially four pictures along the right τοῖχος, "wall."⁵¹ Lucian describes the four pictures on the right and then describes the location and statue of Athena, which is located directly in front of τὸν μέσον τοῖχον, "the middle-wall," which is the Hall's back wall,

Κατὰ δὲ τὸν μέσον τοῖχον ἄνω τῆς ἀντιθύρου Ἀθηνᾶς ναὸς πεποιήται, ἡ θεὸς λίθου λευκοῦ, τὸ σχῆμα οὐ πολεμιστήριον, ἀλλ' οἷον ἂν γένοιτο εἰρήνην ἀγούσης θεοῦ πολεμικῆς.⁵²

Therefore, when Lucian used the words τὸν μέσον τοῖχον to refer to the back wall of an Athenian temple, it gives one a clue to its style of construction; one would expect this temple to have had a room behind the main sanctuary. It was normal to extend the sides of the temples past the back wall of each main temple area in order to form a back porch or in some cases a back room. These back walls did not normally have a

⁵¹ Lucian, *De Domo*, in *TLG*, 21; an alternate source is *Lucian*, trans. A. M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), § 21, 198; the author's translation follows: And in front of the middle-wall (the back-wall), raised up and opposite the doorway, a shrine for Athene has been constructed. The goddess is (made) of white stone, her appearance is not as a warrior, but as such a one as a young goddess of war might appear during peace.

⁵² *Ibid.*, § 26.

doorway cut into them.⁵³ Lucian used the same term as Josephus, μέσος τοῖχος, to describe a wall used within a temple to subdivide its interior into two parts.

Physical Boundary Walls: A First-Century Fable, The Lives of Aesop

The anonymous writings about Aesop, who was depicted as a wise man whose life was full of witty sayings and adventures, date back as early as the sixth century B.C. with its final form manifesting itself in the final form of *The Lives of Aesop*, which came into existence in first-century of the Christian Era.⁵⁴ In its final form, this fable uses the compound term τὸ μεσότοιχον, “middle-wall,” to express the thought of someone crossing over a “boundary or divisional-wall” along the property line of adjoining neighbors. The writers put these words into the mouth of Aesop’s master’s wife as she speaks to Aesop about fulfilling a promise that he is breaking,

ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν ἐμόν σε ἐμισθωσάμην ἀγρὸν σκάπτειν· σὺ δὲ ὑπερβὰς τὸ μεσότοιχον εἰς τὰ τοῦ γείτονος ἔσκαψας. ἀπόδος οὖν, καὶ λάβε τὴν στολήν.⁵⁵

In this document that reached its final form around the first century, the term τὸ μεσότοιχον was used to represent a boundary or divisional wall between neighbors. In

⁵³ J. A. North, “Temple,” in *OCD*, 1482.

⁵⁴ Jeffrey S. Rusten, “Aesop,” in *OCD*, 29. There are legends of Aesop dating back to the sixth-century B.C. with an accompanying biography as early as the fifth. It included a large repository of slave anecdotes about Aesop and his hapless Samian master; and *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Works*, comp. Luci Berkowitz and Karl A. Squitier, 2d ed. (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 398. Berkowitz and Squitier date the final form of *Vitae Aesopi* to the first-century of the Christians era.

⁵⁵ *Vita Aesopi Westermanniana*, in *TLG*, 75.14–16; the author’s translation follows: I have hired you to dig (plow) my field, but you have gone over the boundary wall to the neighbor plowing his fields (τα). Therefore, fulfill (your promise) and receive the cloak (that I promised in return).

Lloyd Daly's translation of this term, he simply translates τὸ μεσότοιχον as "the property line."⁵⁶

Latin Law and Literature Regarding Architectural and Boundary Walls

It is clear even from the limited number of Greek sources discussed above that the architectural term, μεσότοιχον, which is a contracted form of μέσος τοίχος, had been used by others prior to and contemporaneous with Paul to describe walls that were designed to separate one area from another within buildings and between adjoining properties. Metaphorically, Athenaeus used the architectural term μεσότοιχον to describe an invisible barrier between a life of virtue and a life of indulgence. One cannot live in both worlds. What is missing from this Greek research is an abundance of evidence to sustain the idea that the word μεσότοιχον or its compound equivalent, μέσος τοίχος, was commonly used by those living in the first-century Mediterranean world to denote the actual physical "party-walls" used in construction to divide a multi-dwelling building into individual residences. Although Josephus used the term μέσος τοίχος in such a way as to show that "middle-walls" were used in the construction of contiguous οἴκοι, "houses," these houses were associated with a temple construction. In their research of the Greek language, James Moulton and George Milligan stated that there was a high probability that the word μεσότοιχων was an alternate form of μεσότοιχον, and this term was used to describe a part of a house that was up for sale in Hermopolis around the turn of the

⁵⁶ *Aesop Without Morals*, trans. Lloyd W. Daly (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961), 67.

second century of this era; this again indicates that “middle-walls” were associated with οἴκοι, “houses,” in addition to ναοί, “temples.”⁵⁷ Therefore, from the existing Greek evidence given above, there is still some question as to how common it would have been to use the word μεσότοιχα to denote “party-walls” for homes and shops in the first-century Mediterranean world.

Although Greek was the predominate language of the Eastern Mediterranean World and known throughout all of it, the West used Latin alongside Greek. Therefore, it is important to research some of the surviving Latin texts looking for additional clues to the meaning and general usage of “middle-walls.” Starting with references to the New Testament, Tertullian writing in late second century and early third century discusses the letter of Ephesians in his work *Adversus Marcionem*, “Against Marcion.” In this work, Tertullian states that Christ is our peace having made the Jew who was near to God and the Gentile who was distant into one entity and then goes on to say that this happened because of the *solutio medio pariete inimicitiae*,⁵⁸ *in carne sua*,⁵⁹ “middle-wall of hostility having been destroyed through His own flesh.”⁶⁰ A couple centuries later, Eusebius

⁵⁷ Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, 400, found this evidence in volume 2, of *Amherst Papyri*, papyrus 98, line 9.

⁵⁸ Tertullian used an ablative absolute, *solutio medio pariete inimicitiae*, to translate Paul’s aorist participial clause τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν dropping τοῦ φραγμοῦ as the genitive of quality and replacing it with *inimicitiae* as a substitute for Paul’s apposition τὴν ἔχθραν; Tertullian then added the prepositional phrase *in carne sua* to match Paul’s Greek ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ.

⁵⁹ The Latin text was taken from Tertullian’s work recorded in *Tertullian Adversus Marcionem: Books 4 and 5*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 620.

⁶⁰ The Latin translations shown in this dissertation are the author’s unless noted otherwise.

Hieronymus Jerome was asked by Pope Damasus to review the many versions of the Bible in Latin and compile a uniform version that could become the standard; it has become known as the Vulgate, “Common,” Latin Bible.⁶¹ In Jerome’s final Latin version, Eph 2:14 reads *ipse est enim pax nostra qui fecit utraque unum et medium parietem maceriae solvens inimicitiam in carne sua*, “Namely, He Himself is our peace who has made out of both one entity—indeed breaking down the solid middle-wall, the hostility, through His own flesh.”⁶² In both cases stated above, Tertullian and Jerome chose to use the words, *medius paries*, a direct equivalent, to express either the Greek word μεσότοιχον or its compound equivalent, μέσος τοῖχος. Because *medius* can mean either “middle” or “common” in Latin, it is best to search Latin texts from this era for both *medius* and *communis* paired with various noun cases of *paries*. In reality, both terms, “middle-wall” and “common-wall” often denoted the same object, a modern day “party-wall.” Although Henrico Stephano defined a μεσότοιχον using both the words *paries medius* and *paries intergerinus*,⁶³ there was no first or second-century evidence of the use of the phrase *intergeries paries*. Following are some Latin sources, which are listed primarily in chronological order, that clearly show that the general population was familiar with the idea of “middle-walls” as specifically being those walls that were used

⁶¹ *ODCC: The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, 3d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 867, 1710.

⁶² The Vulgate Latin text was taken from the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969).

⁶³ *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, comp. Henrico Stephano, ed. Carolus B. Hase, 2d ed. (Paris: Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Human Literature, 1829; reprint, Graz: Druck, 1954), 829.

by contractors to subdivide multi-space buildings into individual residences and businesses.

Titus Maccius Plautus: Late Second-Century B.C. Comic Playwright

From the introduction of Titus Maccius Plautus' play, *Miles Gloriosus*, "The Boastful Soldier or Captain,"⁶⁴ which was written around the turn of the second century B.C.,⁶⁵ one is placed in the middle of the lives of two Athenian youths whose lives are disrupted when a captain steals the young man's companion and whisks her off to Ephesus. In the play the young man's servant follows the young lady and writes to his master telling him where they are. It just so happens that the captain was living beside a friend of the Athenian youth's family in houses separated only by a "middle-wall." The servant had made a hole through their common *medium parietem*, which in turn allowed the two Athenian youths to communicate and figure out a plan to convince the captain that he needed to send the young Athenian lady away. This particular "middle-wall" was a solid wall isolating the two houses. Plautus' usage of the words *medius paries* matches well the Greek usages of the word μεσότοιχον as discussed above.

⁶⁴ Titus Maccius Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus*, "Argumentum II," in *PHI: Latin and Christian Texts*, CD-ROM, ver. 5.3 (Los Altos, CA: Packard Humanities Institute, 1991). The words *medium parietem* were used as described above by T. Maccius Plautus in his work *Miles Gloriosus* in the second recorded introduction titled "Argumentum II" to denote the "dividing-wall" between two houses.

⁶⁵ Peter G. Brown, "Titus Maccius Pautus," in *OCD*, 1194–96. Plautus wrote his comic plays during the years 205–184 B.C.

L. Annaeus Seneca Senior: Late First-Century B.C. Early First-Century Roman Reciter

In his work titled *Controversiae*, Seneca wrote about one case where a five-year old had witnessed the killing of his father by his mother's lover. Part of the circumstances surrounding the killing included the murderer digging through a *communis paries* that had been separating this family's house from the house of their eldest son who was living next door.⁶⁶ Seneca wrote this work around the turn of the century having been born around 50 B.C.⁶⁷

Plinius Caecilius Secundus: Late First-Century Roman Senator

In his letter to Clusinius Gallus, Pliny the Younger wrote about one of his houses that was located approximately seventeen miles from Rome on the seafront.⁶⁸ In his letter, Pliny used the words *parietem medium*⁶⁹ and *communi pariete*⁷⁰ to denote walls that were in his house and on his property respectively: (1) it appears from context that Pliny used the term *communis paries*, "common wall," to express the idea of a "shared or dividing

⁶⁶ Seneca, *Controversiae*, 7.5.0.9, in *PHI*; an additional source is Seneca, *The Elder Seneca*, vol. 2, trans. M. Winterbottom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 100f.

⁶⁷ Christian J. Fordyce and Michael Winterbottom, "Lucius Annaeus Seneca," in *OCD*, 95–96.

⁶⁸ Roger A. Mynors, "Pliny the Younger," in *OCD*, 1198. Pliny lived from A.D. 61–112, studied in Rome, and later became a senator with duties to include governing Bithynia from A.D. 112 where he apparently died.

⁶⁹ Plinius Caecilius Secundus, *Epistulae*, 2.17.21.1, in *PHI*. Pliny only used a form of *medius paries* once in this letter; it was in the accusative case.

⁷⁰ Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, vol. 1. trans. Betty Radice, Loeb Classical Library, no. 55 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 2.17.10.6–7, 136. Pliny only used a form of *communis paries* once in this letter, while the word *paries*, "wall," was used many times in various cases.

wall” within the house. It is hard from context of the letter to know whether Pliny was talking about two rooms that were sharing a common wall as might be the case of two adjoining rooms one leading into the other with one long wall or whether he was stating that this particular *communis paries* was used to separate two adjoining rooms from one another. Betty Radice understood Pliny to be indicating a common wall that was used to divide two adjacent rooms,⁷¹ and (2) Pliny used the term *paries medius* to denote a wall at the end of a garden, which had been built to separate the garden from some additional living quarters. Therefore, although the context is not totally clear, it appears that Pliny used a form of the phrase *communis paries* to denote an interior dividing-wall and a form of the phrase *medius paries* to denote an exterior boundary-wall.

Digesta Iustiniani Augusti: First to Third-Century Digest of Roman Law

It was noted above at the beginning of this Latin section that the direct Latin equivalent to the Greek word μέσος τοῖχος was *medius paries*, “middle-wall,” and that another equivalent for μέσος τοῖχος or its contracted equivalent μεσότοιχον was *communis paries*, “common-wall.” Some of the strongest evidence giving clear meaning to both sets of words, *medius paries* and *communis paries*, comes from a digest of Roman law, the *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, which was written by jurists during the first three centuries of the Christian Era and later compiled, condensed, and edited by a group commissioned by Emperor Justinian. This group started their work in A.D. 530 and

⁷¹ Ibid., 137.

completed and published it in 533.⁷² In section 33.3.4 of the Roman law code, *Digesta Iustiniani*,⁷³ it becomes clear that *medii parietes*, “middle-walls,” were used as “dividing-walls” between adjoining houses and were considered as common property to the adjoining neighbors. In this particular case, the commissioned group cited the jurist Jauolen, who had ruled on a case where an individual had bequeathed two adjoining houses to different individuals. Jauolen stated that they would own the *medius paries* together as common property. *Digesta Iustiniani* 33.3.4 reads,

Si is qui duas aedes habebat unas mihi, alteras tibi legauit et medius paries, qui utrasque aedes distinguat, interuenit, eo iure eum communem nobis esse existimo, quo, si paries tantum duobus nobis communiter esset legatus, ideoque neque me neque te agere posse ius non esse alteri ita immixtas habere: nam quod communiter socius habet, et in iure eum habere constitit: itaque de ea re arbiter communi diuidendo sumendus est.⁷⁴

In this particular case, Jauolen’s ruling meant that neither owner could restrict the other from using the dividing-wall to support the necessary support beams that they each might need for their individual contiguous homes. The support beams under discussion were

⁷² A. Arthur Schiller, *Roman Law: Mechanisms of Development* (New York: Moulton, 1978), 33–35, states that the *Digesta Iustiniani* consisted of extracts from the writings of jurists of the first to third centuries of our era, which was compiled by a commission appointed by Emperor Justinian. This work was started in A.D. 530 and completed and published in 533.

⁷³ *Digesta Iustiniani*, 33.3.4, in *PHI*; and a couple of additional sources are: *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, vol. 2, edited by Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger (Berlin: Weidmannos, 1963), 114–15, and *The Digest of Justinian*, vol. 3, Latin text edited by Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger, English translation by Alan Watson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 114–15.

⁷⁴ The author’s translation follows: If he who has two houses has legated/bequeathed one to me and the other to you and (there is) a middle-wall that divides each of the households; having come between us, I consider it by law to be common to us, that it is as if the wall had been bequeathed as such to the two of us in common; therefore neither I nor you are able to urge/force the right of the other to not allow insertions (through the middle-wall; probably referring to support beams as discussed by Papinian in section 8.2.36); on the other hand, that which has a common association, and by rights it (the association) might become inflexible, and therefore, regarding that issue, an arbitrator will have to be summoned for the dividing of the common property.

normally inserted through or rested on the middle-wall of adjoining houses or shops in order to support either a roof system or additional rooms above each of the main levels. In an earlier section of the *Digesta*, 8.2.36, the jurist Papinian had given insight into the rights of an adjacent property owner to insert support beams into another person's property. He described a case where two houses were under a common roof, which meant that the two residences were separated by a common wall. In this particular case, Papinian ruled that either owner of contiguous residences had the right to insert *foretigna*, "wooden timbers, beams," into the other's *regio*, "space." These timbers would have normally been inserted through a shared "middle-wall." Each owner was responsible for maintaining the roof structure that was located directly above their respective dwellings.⁷⁵ Regarding the cost of repairing a "common-wall," Ulpian states that the repair cost of restoring a "common-wall" was normally divided evenly between the co-owners,

Si aedes communes sint aut paries communis et eum reficere uel demolire uel in eum im(m)ittere quid opus sit, communi diuidundo iudicio erit agendum, aut interdicto uti possidetis experimur.⁷⁶

In section 8.2.19.0–2 of the *Digesta*, the jurist Paul covers three different scenarios: (1) one may have a bath house, a bathing room, next to a *parietem communem*

⁷⁵ In section 8.2.13.0–1 of the *Digesta Iustiniani*, the jurist Procul covers two cases that show that owners could not do activities on their side of a *paries communis* that might hurt the integrity of their shared wall, and in the event that a common wall was damaged, neither owner could expect the adjoining owner to reimburse them for any overly expensive ornamentation that they may have added to their side of the wall. This is comparable to the jurist Pomponi's ruling as stated in section 39.2.39. Similarly, in sections 39.2.37, the jurist Ulpian discusses who was responsible for rebuilding a *communis paries* and said that the responsibility was to be shared equally unless one of the owners had demolished and rebuilt the wall without a legitimate reason to do so.

⁷⁶ *Digesta Iustiniani* 10.1.12; the author's translation follows: If common houses exist or rather a common-wall, and it (the common-wall) is to be repaired or demolished or some work is to be completed on it, a common dividing (of expenses) will be urged as a judgment, or else by an official verdict, we will experience you (pl.) taking possession (of it).

as long as the water from the bath does not hurt the common-wall, (2) one may have a tiled vault against their side of a *parietis communis* as long as it can stand alone if the common-wall needs to be repaired, and (3) steps can be placed against a *parietem communem* as long as they can be removed; they must not be permanently attached to the wall. In section 8.2.40, Paul gives additional information regarding “common-walls,” when he ruled that the law did not allow individuals to cutout an opening in a *pariete communi*, “common-wall,” so that they would not emit light into the other side; they may not by law insert *fenestras*, “openings,” into the *pariete communi*. According to the law, it appears that “common-walls,” which was also called a “middle-walls,” were to remain solid.

Regarding walls built along property lines in this era, those writing in Latin similarly to those using Greek also used words such as “middle-wall” or “common-wall” to denote the walls that were built to separate adjoining properties. In law section 8.2.25, Pomponi had ruled regarding an apparent boundary wall, which he called a *paries communis*. He stated that if there were two houses built side by side on sloping ground, the owner of the lower house had the right to raise the height of the *parietis communis*, “common-wall,” which was between their houses, to a level higher than the owner of the upper house might have wanted presumably not wanting his view obscured of what laid below him. In law section 8.5.14, Pomponi addresses a different situation involving damage to an external *paries communis*. In this ruling, Pomponi states that if one of the owners of the common-wall between their properties does something to cause the wall to sag toward the house of the other, he was responsible to fix the wall at his own expense.

Ovid: Late First-Century B.C. Early First-Century Poet

Ovid, a popular and leading Roman poet who wrote at the end of first century B.C. and in the early part of the first century of the Christian Era,⁷⁷ wrote about two young lovers, Pyramius and Thisbe, who lived in adjoining houses that were separated by a “middle-wall” in a foreign land. This poem is ideal to complete this picture of the dividing nature of “common/middle-walls” as perceived by the general public. His poem titled “Minyeides: Pyramius and Thisbe” is contained in one of his larger works called *Metamorphoses*. In this poem Ovid stated that the young lovers lived in *contiguas domos*, “contiguous homes,”⁷⁸ of which both sets of parents forbid them to date or ever consider marriage. Ovid wrote of their ability to communicate from within their respective homes,

Fissus erat tenui rima, quam duxerat olim,
cum fieret paries domui communis utrique.
Id vitium nulli per saecula longa notatum
(quid non sentit amor?) primi vidistis amantes,
et vocis fecistis iter; tutaeque per illud
murmure blanditiae minimo transire solebant.⁷⁹

The lovers had found a safe way to communicate through a crack in their dividing “common-wall,” but when they set up a secret meeting so that they could meet in person,

⁷⁷ Stephen E. Hinds, “Publius Ovidius Naso,” in *OCD*, 1084–87.

⁷⁸ Ovid, *Die Metamorphosendes P. Ovidius*, ed. Hugo Maguns (Gotha, Germany: F. A. Perthes, 1892), 4.65–71, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=ov.+met.+1.1>> (Accessed January 25, 2004). The publisher of this site is Tufts University, Somerville, MA.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.57; the author’s translation follows: A little crack had been developed, which had been considered previously, as a common-wall for each side was made for a house. That defect has been observed by no one for a long time (what does love not sense?) Being first (of this age), you lovers have seen (it), and by voice you (pl.) make a path, which has been protected through it by the faintest whispering of flatteries, they were accustomed to cross over (to each other).

Pyramus was deceived into thinking that a lioness had killed Thisbe; therefore, he killed himself and when Thisbe found him dead, she killed herself. The lovers ended up tragically dying because of the parents' unwillingness to allow them to associate. What becomes clear from this poem, which was written around the turn of the first century by a poet who was well known and liked by the public, is that many people around the turn of the first century were familiar with the dividing function of what some called "common-walls," which were also commonly called "middle-walls."

Summary

It becomes clear when looking at the Greek sources containing the various noun cases of the words μεσότοιχον and μέσος τοῖχος and the Latin sources containing the various noun cases of the words *medius paries* and *communis paries* shown above that "middle-walls" and "common-walls" were synonymous words denoting walls that were used to separate residences, shops, factories, and even properties. These architectural terms were *commonly* used to denote the solid divisional walls used to subdivide multi-residential and multi-use buildings. Today this type of wall is typically called a "party-wall." These "dividing-walls" were similar to outer walls in the sense that they were load-bearing walls and thereby helped support either a common roof-structure or additional levels above the ground level. It is interesting to note from the Roman law of the first three centuries of the Christian era that these "middle-walls" were not to have openings in them so that light from one side could not bother those living on the other side. These walls were considered to be the common property of the two adjoining households. Any

repair or total rebuilding costs were normally divided evenly between the two co-owners of their “common-walls” as long as the replacement cost was reasonable. It was not reasonable to expect one of the co-owners to pay one-half of the cost of replacing their adjoining co-owner’s frescoes or other ornamentation if that individual had purchased overly expensive ornamentation.

Supporting Archeological Evidence

General Background

From the literary evidence given above, it becomes apparent that “middle-walls,” which were also called “common-walls,” were used to isolate contiguous residences, shops, factories, and even properties from one another. Archeological evidence even from earlier times in the Near Ancient East supports this literary evidence showing continuity over time. From Claire Epstein’s excavations of a village, Rasm Harbush, in the Golen Heights, which exhibits features similar to numerous other Chalcolithic villages of fourth millennium B.C., it is apparent that it was not uncommon for houses to be built adjacent to one another sharing a “common cross-wall.”⁸⁰ In his article, “Did the Patriarchs Live at Givat Sharett,” Dan Bahat develops a theory showing that Abraham probably lived during the eighteenth century B.C. in small villages such as Givat Sharett; these smaller unwalled villages were normally located close to more heavily populated towns.⁸¹ From his

⁸⁰ Claire Epstein, “Before History: The Golen’s Chalcolithic Heritage,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21, no. 6 (1995): 54, 58–59. Epstein is setting the date of this Stone-Copper Age village between 4500–3500 B.C.

⁸¹ Dan Bahat, “Did the Patriarchs Live at Givat Sharett?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4, no. 3 (1978): 8–11.

previous excavations and his excavation work at Givat Sharett, Bahal states many of the houses in this village were constructed side-by-side and that sharing “‘party’ walls” was the custom for this era.⁸² As William Dever searches for supporting evidence to the Bible among the archeological ruins of the early Iron Age, 1200–1000 B.C., he notes that the heartland of ancient Israel had approximately 300 small unwalled agricultural villages that had sprung-up during this period.⁸³ Dever states that many of these villages that have been excavated were characterized by four-room courtyard houses clustered in groups of two to four; these houses often shared “common walls.”⁸⁴ Lawrence Stager’s work confirms Dever’s findings. Stager states that the early Israelite villages were rarely, if ever, fortified, and they normally consisted of contiguous houses using the outer houses’ back walls for the perimeter of the village; these same houses used “common walls” to preserve privacy for adjacent home owners.⁸⁵ When evaluating the excavation work completed at Tel Megiddo, Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin visited an old argument over how the long contiguous buildings had been used. They debated whether these buildings were used originally to house troops, horses, and/or supplies.⁸⁶ They note that the majority of contemporary archeological scholars date the origin of these buildings

⁸² Ibid., 10.

⁸³ William G. Dever, “The Search for History in the Bible: Save Us from Postmodern Malarkey,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26, no. 2 (2000): 32.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁵ Lawrence E. Stager, “The Song of Deborah: Why Some Tribes Answered the Call and Others Did Not,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15, no. 1 (1989): 55, 58.

⁸⁶ Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin, “Back to Megiddo: A New Expedition Will Explore the Jewel in the Crown of Canaan/Israel,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20, no. 1 (1994): 26–33, 36–43.

to the ninth century B.C. These contiguous buildings each contained three long subdivided rooms with “common walls” connecting each building with identical adjacent buildings unless a particular building was an end building.⁸⁷ In this particular case, archeological evidence indicates that even large contiguous buildings were constructed with “middle-walls” and were possibly used for housing troops, livestock, and/or supplies. John Thompson states that these buildings were probably storehouses similar to those found at Hazor and Sheba.⁸⁸ From just a few examples taken from earlier eras of the Middle East, it becomes clear that it was a fairly early practice to use “common/middle-walls” when building contiguous houses and buildings. Presumably, this was to minimize the use of building materials and land needed for living areas.

What archaeological evidence exists for the rest of the ancient Mediterranean world to support a widespread use of “middle-walls” to divide a multi-residence and multi-use buildings into individual residences and shops? The survey below will start in the West and work eastward to Asia.

Rome

In an excavation at Ostia, which is located directly southwest of Rome at the mouth of the Tiber River, a large *insula*, “large multi-story building with apartments,” called “the House of Diana” was uncovered. John Stambaugh states that the “House of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁸ John A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 110–11, states that the feed boxes and so-called hitching posts found in the center aisle of each building at Megiddo were probably for the animals who were tied up and fed while they were being either loaded or unloaded.

Diana” is a good representative of typical *insula* located in Ostia and Rome during this era under investigation.⁸⁹ This building originally housed both shops and residences and is depicted below with one main entrance corridor (E) for several rooms including some in the north-west corner of the first floor. A large portion of its lower level was divided using “middle-walls” into *tabernae*, “shops,” depicted as “A” with entrances opening to the street. The second level was reached by three different sets of stairs (N, O, Q, and P) and divided using “middle-walls” into apartments.⁹⁰

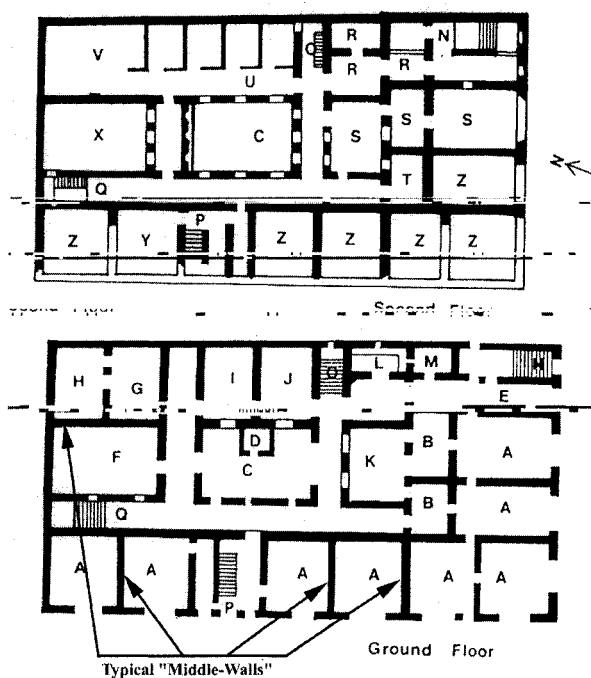


Figure 1: First and Second Levels of the “House of Diana” Located in Ostia⁹¹

⁸⁹ John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, 175; and Nicholas Purcell, “Ostia,” in *OCD*, 1081, states that Ostia was abandoned in the fifth century of the Christian era, and the area was only sparsely populated until the twentieth century due to malaria.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 176. Reprint of Figure 17, “Ostia: House of Diana” with notation and arrows added pointing to probable “middle-walls.” Reprint permission granted April, 2004 by the copyright holder: John

Greece

Farther east in Greece, the dwellings may have changed shape somewhat, but those who lived in cities or urban areas such as Athens, Delos, Olynthus, Ephesus, and Sardis normally lived in multi-family dwellings. Michael Jameson states that the Greek houses were contiguous in nature sharing “party-walls”; in this close proximity environment, Jameson states privacy was an important concern.⁹²

The excavation work on the island of Delos provides a good Greek example of a residential layout. Delos was sacked in 88 B.C. by Archelaus, Mithradates VI’s general, and again in 66 B.C. by pirates.⁹³ A.W. Lawrence shows how two contiguous houses—that were located on the island of Delos—looked after they had been remodeled after their partial destruction in 88 B.C. Lawrence states that this type of configuration was common in other Greek communities including Olynthus as far back as the fifth century B.C.⁹⁴ Lawrence stated that although there were only a few houses that had been excavated dating back to the first century, the older Greek houses provided an idea of the houses built during the early Christian era because most of them adhered to the older type.⁹⁵ The houses are labeled “E” and “F” as shown in Figure 2 below. Note that house “E,” which was not an end house, had two “middle-walls” that separated it from its adjacent

E. Stambaugh © 1988 through John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland.

⁹² Michael H. Jameson, “Greek Houses,” in *OCD*, 731.

⁹³ Richard W. Catling, “Delos,” in *OCD*, 443.

⁹⁴ Arnold W. Lawrence, *Greek Architecture*, 3d ed. (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973), 247.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 249.

neighbors. Lawrence's work led him to believe that the remodeling of 88 B.C. did not alter the original "middle-walls," which were constructed during the fifth century B.C.⁹⁶ The floor-plan of "E" and "F" after their remodeling is shown below.

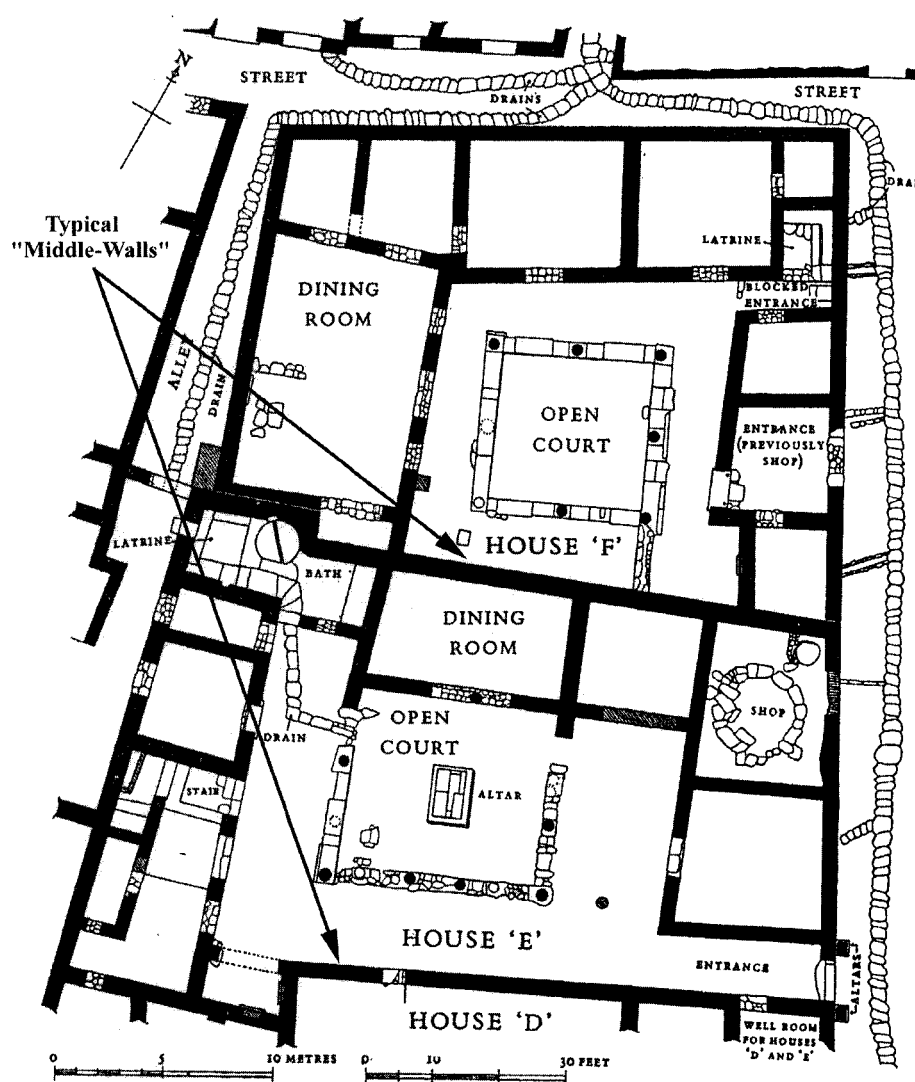


Figure 2: First-Century Floor Plan of Contiguous Houses in Delos⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Ibid., 247.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 248. Reprint of Figure 140, "Plan of Two Houses as Reconstructed after 88, Delos" with notation and arrows added to point out probable "middle-walls." Reprint permission granted April, 2004 by the copyright holder: A. W. Lawrence © 1973 through Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

Eastern Europe

Olynthus, formally Bottiaean, located on the mainland of the Chalcidic peninsula,⁹⁸ was constructed around 430 and destroyed around 348 B.C.⁹⁹ The Chalcidic peninsula is located in Eastern Europe. Due to Olynthus' initial construction date and its destruction in 348 B.C. by Philip of Macedonia, it provides a window in time from which to examine additional building sites. The houses in Olynthus were laid out in an orthogonal pattern. Figure 3 below shows that each block consisted of ten houses, five on each side of a shared *stenopos*, "drainage alley," which they shared.¹⁰⁰ Lawrence says that each block was approximately 100 yards long by 40 yards wide allowing each house to occupy approximately four hundred square yards.¹⁰¹ Each row is subdivided into individual residences by means of "middle-walls." It is also known that at least some of the houses had upper stories because of the existing stone bases found that had been set to support wooden staircases.¹⁰² In her research, Nevett has found that although most of the houses were fairly consistent in overall size, there was a large degree of diversity regarding the design of the internal arrangement for each dwelling.¹⁰³ Shown below in

⁹⁸ Nicholas G. Hammond, "Olynthus," in *OCD*, 1067.

⁹⁹ Lisa G. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 53, discusses briefly the destruction and cites *Demosthenes* 9.26 as a source of information.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰¹ Lawrence, *Greek Architecture*, 241.

¹⁰² Nevett, *Ancient Greek World*, 56.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 64.

Figure 3 is the foundation layout of one of Olynthus' *insulae*; a few of the "middle-walls" are pointed out.

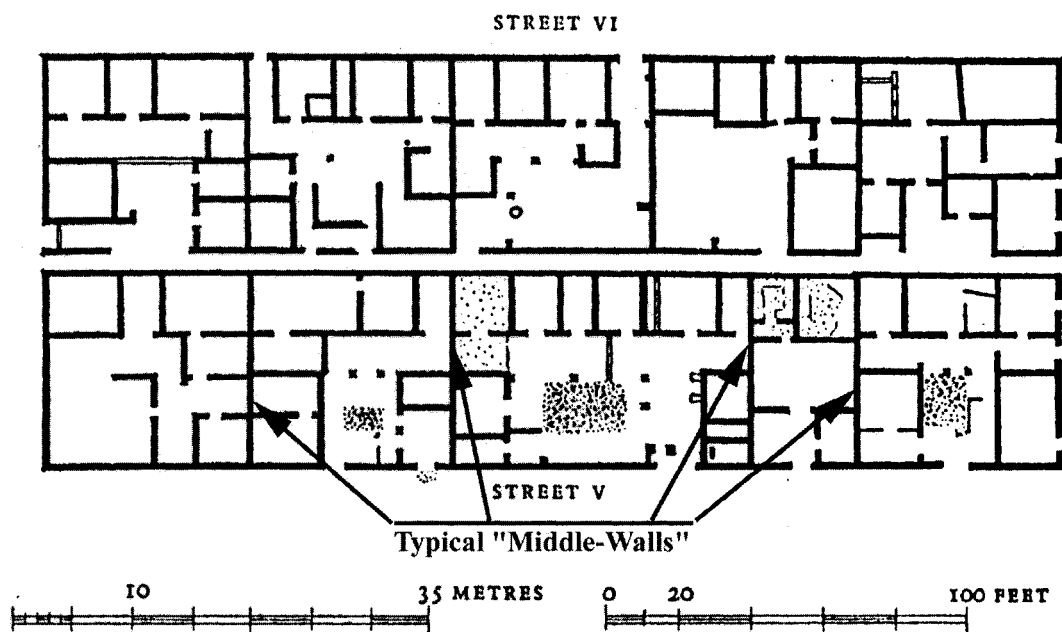


Figure 3: Foundations of Houses Laid Out in an Orthogonal Pattern in Olynthus
The Houses for Any One *Insula* Are Separated by "Middle-Walls"¹⁰⁴

Asia Minor

Priene

In the city of Priene, which is located at the mouth of the Meander, Lawrence discusses an excavation that reveals that some older homes were combined in a remodeling process in order to increase their size. Lawrence discussed part of this second century C.E. remodeling process as an expansion process that was made possible by

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence, *Greek Architecture*, 242. This is a partial reprint from Figure 136, "Plan of Blocks of Houses, Olynthus" with notation and arrows added pointing to probable "middle-walls." Reprint permission granted April, 2004 by the copyright holder: A. W. Lawrence © 1973 through Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

cutting a series of doorways through the existing “party-wall.”¹⁰⁵ In Figure 3 above, it can be seen that the third house from the left on Street V was either enlarged at a later time by restructuring two houses or was originally built using one and a half housing spaces.

Ephesus

McKay discusses how excavations at Ephesus have uncovered extensive remains of two large *insulae* that were constructed during the first century of the Christian Era.¹⁰⁶ The *insulae* were located on a three-level terraced hillside across from the Temple of Hadrian. These large building complexes confirm the use of multi-story buildings in Asia for residential, business, and some type of public forum. Their construction and use is similar to *insulae* in Rome and other areas of the Roman Empire. In fact, McKay states that these large multi-story building complexes with their residence and business spaces, which Figure 4 below shows were separated by “middle-walls,” originated in the east and moved with architects and immigrants to the west.¹⁰⁷ In Figure 4 below, note that this eastern *insula* in Ephesus has many residences and twelve shops opening up into the Street called Kuretes. Although this illustration does not depict an orthogonally symmetrical *insula*, it does depict a conglomeration of spaces used in a variety of ways, which may have developed over time into one large complex.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 246; and Nevett, *Ancient Greek World*, 171, says that the alterations to one of the Priene houses in the late Hellenistic or early Roman period suggests that the Greek cities of Asia Minor witnessed similar developments to those outlined in Greece and the West.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander G. McKay, *Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 212–13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 214–17.

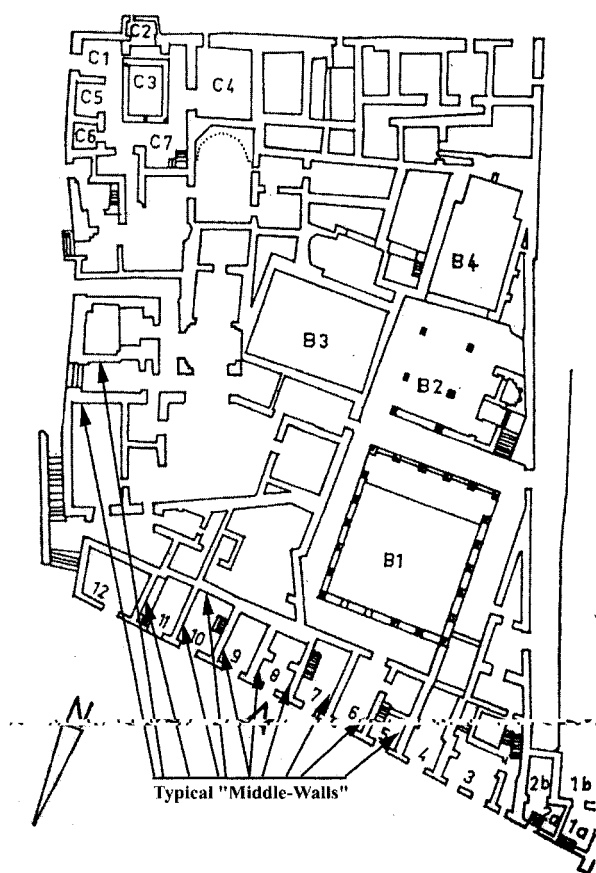


Figure 4: Floor Plan of a First-Century Ephesian *Insula* with Shops and Apartments—Typical “Middle-Walls” Noted¹⁰⁸

Sardis

Sardis is the last archeological example; this excavation covers buildings at a slightly later time, around A.D. 400, which allows one to see a continuation in the trend to build many shops and residences in larger buildings and separate them using “middle-walls.” This excavated area in Sardis contains a large Christian church, the largest known excavated Jewish synagogue, bath houses, courts, with many business shops and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 213. Reprint of Figure 68, “Ephesus, Slopes of Bülbüldäg, Eastern *Insula* Plan” with notation and arrows added pointing to probable “middle-walls.” Reprint permission affirmed April, 2004 by the copyright holder: Thames and Hudson © 1975 through Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.

residences around the colonnaded perimeter.¹⁰⁹ It shows contiguous businesses and residences still using “middle-walls” right up to the time that Sardis was destroyed by a fire around A.D. 640, which may have been caused by either invaders or an earthquake.¹¹⁰ In the construction along the street shown in Figure 5, there is a large straight colonaded structure divided into individual shops and residences by “middle-walls”; these individual areas are labeled E1–E19 and W1–W15. These shops and residences were sixteen feet high providing its occupants with a ground floor for business and an upper floor for their residence.¹¹¹ An illustration is shown below.

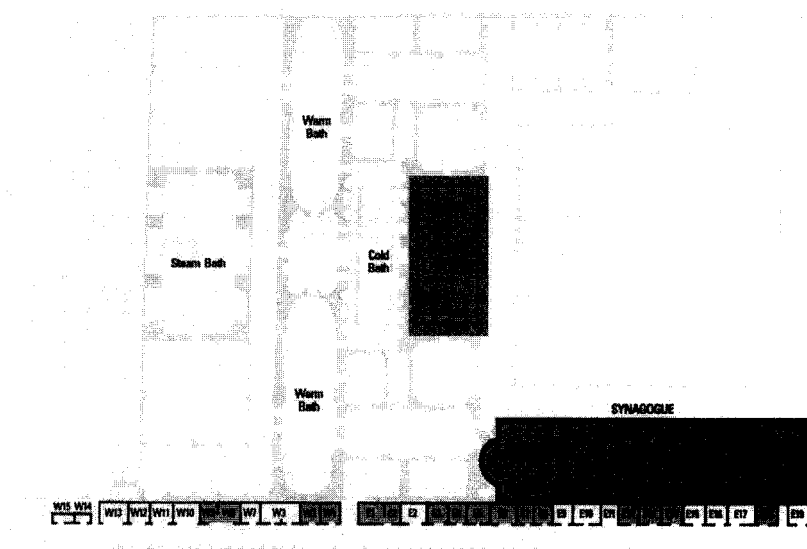


Figure 5: Arrangement of a Seventh-Century Sardis Section of Shops, Residences, Synagogue, and More¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ John S. Crawford, “Multiculturalism at Sardis,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22, no.5 (1996): 39–40.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹¹² *Ibid.* Reprint of a drawing that did not have a figure number nor a title. Reprint permission granted April, 2004 by the copyright holder: © 1996 by Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, DC.

The Meaning of Τὸ Μεσότοιχον Τοῦ Φραγμοῦ

Out of the many contemporary proposals giving meaning to the word μεσότοιχον, four of the possibilities that were discussed above are listed below for convenience in order of their increasing probability. This probability is based on the theory that these individuals were fairly familiar with the term μεσότοιχον and therefore knew how to apply its destruction to the destruction of Christ's desired destruction of their traditional mutual hostility. The four leading theories listed in order of increasing probability theorize that the word μεσότοιχον denotes: (1) another metaphorical image, a wall separating the natural from the supernatural,¹¹³ (2) the actual wall in the Temple in Jerusalem that separated the Gentiles from Jews assuming that a Gentile audience in Asia Minor would have an understanding of the physical Temple and its courtyard construction, (3) the sense of a wall in general knowing that the function of a wall is normally to isolate one side from the other, and (4) an ordinary architectural term that was known in Asia Minor to denote some type of dividing wall(s) used in temple constructions.

From the research outlined above, a fifth scenario emerges. When Paul used the thought of destroying a μεσότοιχον compared to destroying the ongoing hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile, he was transferring attributes from a well known Greek architectural term to a difficult concept in order to help his addressees understand immediately what he was saying. In the context of Ephesians, it becomes clear that Paul

¹¹³ This theory probably derived its initial impulse from the long version of Ignatius' "Letter to the Trallians," 2.9.4, in which the author used the words τὸ μεσότοιχον to represent metaphorically a wall separating heaven from earth. Jesus destroyed this dividing wall for all Saints when He died on the cross.

used the word *μεσότοιχον* to denote a type of wall that was used commonly in all types of construction throughout the Greco-Roman world to partition-off individual dwellings and business that were under a common roof as part of multiple occupancy buildings. “Middle-walls,” which were also called “common-walls,” were used to divide entire buildings into individual residences, businesses, and storehouses. Some of the time, this term was even used to denote the type of wall used to isolate one area of a temple from another. At other times, this term’s sense of meaning, which pointed to the *dividing* nature of this type wall, was used to denote fences setup between adjoining properties to isolate one from another. When Paul’s total metaphorical clause is considered, it is noted that Paul added the genitive *τοῦ φραγμοῦ* to the words *τὸ μεσότοιχον*. Why did he do so?

Archibald Robertson translates *τοῦ φραγμοῦ* as “of partition” noting that *φραγμός* normally denoted some type of fence originating from the word *φράσσω*; therefore he translated *τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ* as “the middle wall of partition,” which is a good literal rendering.¹¹⁴ The form of the word *φραγμός* has been used in only three other texts of the New Testament: (1) Matt 21:33, (2) Mark 12:1, and (3) Luke 14:23. In each of these occurrences, *φραγμός* denotes a wall that provides protection: (1) in Matt 21:33 and Mark 12:1 the writers are telling a parable in which this “wall,” was used to keep animals out of a vineyard, and (2) in Luke 14:23, the author used the word

¹¹⁴ Archibald T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Epistles of Paul*, vol. 4 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), 526–27.

φραγμούς to denote “hedges,” “walls made of bushes,” that were normally located for privacy around houses in the country.¹¹⁵ Because φραγμός relates closely to a fence, some have understood Paul to be picturing the μεσότοιχον as a fence, which then allows them to associate the “middle-wall” with the destruction of the Law. Hoehner notes that this same Law that has been described in some later rabbinic writings as a fence surrounding and protecting Israel has also made Israel at times appear antisocial to the Gentiles.¹¹⁶ This is true, and when the idea of God’s people appearing as antisocial due to the requirements of the Law is combined with later rabbinic teachings that the Law itself could be understood as a fence that surrounded and protected Israel, one might think that Paul added τοῦ φραγμοῦ to τὸ μεσότοιχον to refer to “the Law that divides.” There are two main problems with this theory. Firstly, there is no literary evidence that equates the Law to a fence that protects Israel prior to later rabbinic writings, which in turn makes it an anachronism to impose those thoughts and writings onto first-century writers. Secondly, if τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ actually means “the Law that divides,” then Paul has equated either literally or metaphorically “the Law that divides” with ἔχθρα, “hatred,” which theologically goes against everything that Paul teaches regarding the Law in his other writings, which can be summarized from Rom 7:12: the Law is holy, righteous, and good.

¹¹⁵ Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, 675, state that φραγμός normally denoted a “fencing in,” a “fence” in the New Testament; and cf. BDAG, 1064.

¹¹⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 370–71.

When Paul attached τοῦ φραγμοῦ as a genitive of description, which is sometimes called the genitive of quality, τοῦ μεσότοιχον, he was doing so to bring clarity and emphasis to the word μεσότοιχον.¹¹⁷ Therefore, when Paul penned the phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, it was to emphasize the *dividing nature* of the “middle-wall,” which ought to be literally translated as the “*dividing* middle-wall.” In order that twenty-first century English readers may understand this phrase accurately, one may wish to translate τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ as “the *dividing* party-wall.”

Therefore, in Eph 2:14–16, when Paul used the imagery of the destruction of a μεσότοιχον, “middle-wall,” with its attached genitive of quality, τοῦ φραγμοῦ, he was emphasizing the divisive nature of this “middle-wall.” Using this phrase, Paul helped his predominately Gentile audience understand more fully the impact of Christ’s death for His followers. His addressees could understand more fully how Christ’s death and His proclamation, which removed the necessity to do all of the ordinances of the Law, should change their attitudes toward Jewish believers and visa-versa. Paul was placing an image in their heads of the destruction of a residential “*dividing* middle-wall” between two distinct families *that were no longer distinct*; they were *both* part of the same family, the Body of Christ; they were collectively “one new man.”

¹¹⁷ See Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3d ed. (New York: Hodder & Staughton, 1919; reprint, Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 496–97, for a discussion on “genitives of quality,” “descriptive genitive,” “attributive genitive,” which all denote the same thing: the genitive used in the attributive position acts like an adjective, but it produces more sharpness and distinctiveness than a regular adjective; and cf. BDF, § 165, 91–92.

When he attached the definite article to μεσότοιχον, Paul was pointing to a particular “middle-wall,” the present ongoing inherited mutual hostility that Christ’s followers brought with them from their pre-Christian days.¹¹⁸ Paul was placing a picture in his addressees’ heads of Christ’s destruction of the ongoing mutual hostility between Jew and Gentile being similar in some respects to a contractor of their day destroying a solid dividing wall that had been separating two individual residences turning the larger space into one large residence. Now, with the use of this familiar architectural term used as a metaphor, Paul wants his audience, the Gentile believers, to envision themselves living next door to their Jewish brothers and sisters in a common multi-dwelling building as one family living next to the other being separated by a “*dividing* middle-wall.” When Paul tells them that Christ through His redeeming death has destroyed the ongoing mutual hostility between the Jews and Gentiles who are following Him just as metaphorically Christ might have acted as a general contractor and destroyed the “*dividing* middle-wall” that presently would have existed if they were living side-by-side, he was saying that Christ’s family was not divided for any reason, traditional or otherwise; for those who are in Christ, there is only one family, one new man. With the destruction of τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, “the *dividing* middle-wall,” Jewish and Gentile believers were to live together in the larger space that God provides as one big family at peace with one another. In the next breath, he states that *both* have become “one new man” being reconciled *together* to God and now are *collectively* being built into God’s holy ναός, “temple,”

¹¹⁸ For a brief discussion regarding the ongoing mutual hostility between Jew and Gentile, see subsection “The Meaning of Ἐχθρα between Jew and Gentile” located in chapter 3.

“house” (Eph 2:20–22). The first-century addressees would have been more inclined to think of the *ναός* of Eph 2:21 in terms of the many temples scattered throughout their cities and lands where their many gods lived rather than the Temple located in Jerusalem. In the mind of a Gentile who did not know the one true living God, a *ναός* was a term that simply denoted a home where one or more of the gods resided whenever staying on earth.

The transition from the architectural metaphorical imagery of Eph 2:14 to the architectural metaphorical imagery of Eph 2:20–22 would have been seamless in their minds. Each Gentile believer who heard this passage would have considered metaphorically the idea of tearing down the “middle-wall” that stood between them and their neighbor, who was also a family member—maybe elderly parents, a brother or sister’s family, or others, producing a larger space that this one newly combined family could live in; for *both* Jewish and Gentile believer, they knew that they were now part of God’s one new man, His *single* family. The destruction of the “middle-wall” would only be effective in this scenario if the two neighbors were truly close to one another as family members in good standing with one another. After all, are not “party-walls” desirable in society due to the fact that they serve a needed function of giving one family a little privacy from their adjoining neighbors? Paul was telling them in a very direct way that Christ had removed all walls that might divide His followers, and in this case he was pointing clearly at a specific “dividing-wall” that had been created by a residual mutual hostility that traditionally existed between the Jew and the Gentile. Therefore, when Christ brought about peace it should have destroyed their “*dividing* middle-wall” from the past, but it appears that it was still partially standing. Paul was teaching his addressees

that when one becomes one of Christ's followers, they were part of His family first and foremost over any other relations that they may have had in the past. They were no longer primarily Jew or Gentile, they were in reality "one new man" who were collectively *one* family belonging to God. The two additional metaphorical images used by Paul in Eph 2:16 and 2:20–22 will be discussed in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

THE MEANING OF ΤΟΝ ΝΟΜΟΝ ΤΩΝ ἘΝΤΟΛΩΝ ἘΝ ΔΟΓΜΑΣΙΝ ΚΑΤΑΡΓΗΣΑΣ

Laying the Foundation: An Overview of Modern Thought Regarding Paul's Teachings on the Salvific Efficacy of "Works of the Law"

In this chapter, Paul's use of the word νόμος and a corresponding phrase, ἔργα νόμου, will be examined in order to illuminate more fully the meaning of Paul's statement in Eph 2:15a that the Messiah either made ineffective or abolished τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν in order to remove the mutual hostility that had been ongoing for a long time between the Jew and Gentile for those *who were now trusting Him*. This clause, τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, and its proposed meaning will be discussed in the last major subsection below, "A Proposed Meaning for τὸν Νόμον τῶν Ἐντολῶν ἐν Δόγμασιν Καταργήσας," but it is important to note in advance that this clause can be understood grammatically and linguistically in several different ways. Because this clause can be understood grammatically to mean that either the *whole* or *part* of the Mosaic Law is either "abolished" or "made ineffective," resulting in several combinations of meaning, one must look to this text's literary and historical context to determine its actual meaning. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to doing just that.

Paul had been raised in both diaspora and Judean milieus. Born in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia, he later moved to Jerusalem and studied under Rabbi Gamaliel, a well known religious leader of his day. Paul remained in Jerusalem and served the Jewish community as a Pharisee, an individual professionally trained in the Mosaic Law. After Jesus' death on the Cross, Paul actively persecuted Christ's followers in Judea and Syria. After a revelatory experience with God, Paul changed his thinking regarding the identity and mission of Jesus Christ and taught that through one's close association with Christ, being ἐν Χριστῷ, one became justified before God.¹ From his personal experience as a devout Pharisee coupled with the fact that he decided to follow Christ, Paul's writings *more than anyone else's* provide a solid literary, historical, and theological framework giving contemporary readers a view into mainstream first-century Judaic thought regarding "works of the Law" in the newly inaugurated Messianic Age. Paul's letters are the best primary sources available today.

Nevertheless, Paul's teachings have become controversial today due in part to contemporary scholars putting too much weight on their different perceived historical frameworks, and due to the fact that they do not have a written theological treatise from Paul to clarify his letters. Paul's letters were normally written to address specific concerns of local congregations living in specific cities or regions. Klyne Snodgrass states that

¹ Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 76, 152, states that after Paul encountered the risen Christ, he was forced to reassess the nature, reason, and efficacy of doing "works of the Law," and realized that the demands of the Law were valid for *all* people placing all under condemnation through sin. He goes on to say that for Paul, he came to realize that the atoning death of Christ shows that there is a major dilemma for all people, and at the same time, it demonstrates the righteousness of God (p. 80).

New Testament scholars are not wholly to blame for disagreeing over Paul's view of the Law, because Paul's views are often enigmatic and at times appear contradictory.²

Similarly, Douglas Moo points out that there is no real consensus among contemporary scholars regarding Paul's teaching in respect to the place and efficacy of "works of the Law" in the Messianic Age. He continues by saying that there is still a need to find an integrating model that will handle accurately Paul's diverse material on the subject.³ This dissertation will attempt to move toward such an integrating model.

From the time of the Reformation to the present there have been many scholars such as Gerhard von Rad who see a first-century Judaism struggling within a theological milieu that was placing too much emphasis on doing "works of the Law."⁴ There are others such as Krister Stendahl, E. P. Sanders, and James Dunn, who think that mainline first-century Jews did not overemphasize the actual doing of "works of the Law." They think that the Reformers anachronistically transferred their own milieu back onto first-

² Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," in *The Best in Theology*, vol. 3, ed. James I. Packer and Harold Smith (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989), 81.

³ Douglas J. Moo, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40, no. 2 (1987), 305–07.

⁴ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 90–92, 201, states that initially in Israel's history there was flexibility in interpreting Jahweh's revelation, which included the Mosaic Law. This flexibility was eventually lost. Up to a certain point in time, the commandments had served the people of Israel, but later Israel ended up serving the commandments instead of the One who gave them the commandments. Von Rad goes on to say that when Israel started serving the letter of the Law instead of the intent, she became hated by the people groups that she encountered and became known by the reproach ἀμύξια, which refers to those who refuse to have fellowship with other people.

century Judaism.⁵ For this group, one has to decide how Paul and his teachings fit into their own perceived socio-historical contextual setting that theorizes that Jews were focusing on their “faith” in God and not on doing the “works” that He commanded. Some such as Sanders have decided that Paul was not really part of mainstream Judaism, and therefore, his teaching against those who place too much emphasis on doing “works of the Law” must arise out of a minority-sect mindset. Others such as Dunn state that Paul was definitely part of mainstream Judaism and acting accordingly. He understands Paul not to be teaching against “works of the Law” nor against “works righteousness” *per se*, but instead, he sees Paul as using a literary technique to exhort his fellow Jews to agree on an existing common understanding of grace and works. According to Dunn, this common understanding matches Sanders’ theory called “covenantal nomism.” Others such as Heikki Räisänen look at Paul’s writings, which were difficult even for some of those who were part of the early Church,⁶ and have decided that Paul does not write with consistency and is in reality contradicting himself at various places within his letters.⁷ In

⁵ Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), 86f. For Stendahl, the main reason for Paul not wanting the Gentiles to be under the Law was to allow them an acceptable access into a mutual relationship with God. Stendahl does not understand Paul to be applying self-evaluation to his own sinfulness even in Romans 7. Stendahl states that the Reformers went too far when they applied Paul’s teachings regarding the Law to the Western World’s introspective evaluation of self. He continues by saying that although it is true that Paul was aware of a struggle between the flesh and spiritual desires of his own body (Rom 7:19; 8:3), that did not mean that his conscience was plagued by such struggles. Stendahl goes on to argue that in reality Paul seemed to be fairly confident before and after his conversion that he was in an acceptable relationship with God (pp. 90–92). Therefore, in this particular setting, Romans 7 appears to Stendahl as a defense for the holiness and goodness of the Law because it is a good gift from God (pp. 92–93).

⁶ 2 Pet 3:14–16.

⁷ Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1983; reprint, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 268.

his book *Paul and the Law*, Räisänen states that Paul just concocted an *ad hoc* argument to explain a view that he had come to believe after his Damascus Road experience.

According to Räisänen, this view understood “faith” and the “Spirit” belonging together while the “Law” and the “Spirit” did not.⁸ Earlier, Räisänen had developed an evolutionary picture of the early Church, within which the Church over time developed their idea of how “Law” and “Grace” worked together. Räisänen concluded that Paul was not able to join the more conservative Christians such as Peter and Barnabas, and therefore, he developed his own more radical position.⁹

Paul and “Works of the Law,” in Its Historical Context

“The Mosaic Law” and “Works of the Law” in the Maccabean Era

Earlier in Israel’s history, God’s people had centered their lives around their faith in Him, which manifested itself in their obedience to the Law, as they waited for the coming Messianic King, who was to appear in the “last days.”¹⁰ Over time, it appears that Israel’s desire to follow the commandments contained in the Mosaic Law waned up to their capture and deportation by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Following the return of some

⁸ Ibid., 189. Later, Räisänen states that Paul is portraying a distorted view of the Judaism of his day because O. T. Scripture did not agree with what Paul was saying (pp. 268–69).

⁹ Heikki Räisänen, “Legalism and Salvation by the Law: Paul’s Portrayal of the Jewish Religion as a Historical and Theological Problem,” in *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie*, Teologiske Studier, no. 7 (Århus: Forlaget Aros, 1980), 81; and cf. E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1992), 519, who states that as he understands first-century Judaism, there would not have been a problem in declaring that one is saved by grace, it was Paul who made the original contribution of developing the antithetical formulation of “by faith and not works of the Law.”

¹⁰ John H. Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 1 (2001): 20.

of the exiles in the fifth century, there is Intertestamental evidence showing a renewed interest in Torah obedience. Frank Thielman notes that after some of the exiles returned to Jerusalem, they looked back on their calamity and considered it to be a direct response of God due to their disobedience to His commandments, therefore, they started placing more emphasis on obedience to ensure against future punishment.¹¹ It appears that the letter of the Law started taking precedence over the intent of the Law. During this period, obeying the Mosaic Laws became such an important part of their daily life that God's grace appears to have been minimized. There are a few such as David Mapes who see their emphasis on obedience as stemming from a lack of direct communication with God compared to their ancestors who heard from the prophets on a regular basis. In earlier generations, the prophets had repeatedly reminded the people of God's desire for a genuine personal and national covenantal relationship with them.¹²

A few centuries later during the reign of some of Alexander the Great's successors, written works such as Tobit and Sirach show a trend that elevated the importance of doing "good works" including "works of the Law" that address moral and social concerns. Simon Gathercole's study of Tobit and Sirach brought him to the conclusion that almsgiving was an important part of doing righteous works, which had by

¹¹ Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 57, states that when some of Israel returned from its exile in Babylon, their leaders made following the Law a high priority to ensure against future punishment; those who returned had to divorce their wives and children if they had married foreigners (Neh 13:23–29; cf. 10:30; Ezra 9:1–10:44). They also banned foreigners from the Temple (Neh 13:4–9), enforced the laws of tithe (Neh 10:37–39; 13:10–14), and mandated Sabbath observance (Neh 10:31; 13:15–22).

¹² David L. Mapes, "A Covenantal Basis for Paul's Paradigm of Law in Galatians and Romans" (Ph.D. diss., Mid-American Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 93–94.

then become part of the atonement process.¹³ Gathercole notes that Baruch was concerned with offerings that took place at the Temple (1.5–14) and pushed for harsh exclusivity (4.3–4).¹⁴ Thielman notes through a study of some of the literature of this era that there had been a major political movement by Antiochus IV to Hellenize the people living in Judea so that by removing their peculiar Judaic religious beliefs, they might become better subjects.¹⁵ This polarized the Jews into two main groups: one who wanted to accept

¹³ Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 37–40. Gathercole states that Sirach and Tobit were both written at a similar time and have very similar theological concerns. On a national level, these writings are focused around the temple, but there is also considerable emphasis on personal piety, with almsgiving, endogamy, and honoring parents. Both texts could be described as being expressions of a similar symbolic universe: one sapiential and one narrative (p. 37). Gathercole states that Sirach in particular has a prominent conception of recompense according to deeds, and uses variations of the phrase frequently (11.26; 17.23; 35.193, 22). He notes that these writers are not concerned with a future life and, therefore, focus on rewarding actions in varying degrees of immediacy: sickness or health or disaster (e.g., 28.1; 30.14–20), a good wife (25.8), a long life (3.1,6), or one's reward can even be delayed right up to the day of death (11.26). Honoring one's mother is like collecting treasure, and almsgiving remains for eternity (40.17). Therefore, even though there is no personal afterlife (14.16), actions still have everlasting consequences effecting the life of their children (16.1–4; 44.12–13; 51. 30). Reward even comes sevenfold (35.13) following the same pattern that God used dealing with the patriarchs (44.19ff.) (p. 38). Regarding both works, Gathercole states that obedience to Torah is *defined not primarily in terms of ritual identity markers* but as almsgiving. Sayings about alms come mostly in the testamentary passages in Tobit such as in 4.7–9, and similarly in Sirach storing up almsgiving in one's personal treasury can rescue that one in a time of disaster (29.12). Almsgiving is better than spear and shield against the enemy and profits more than gold (29.13; 29.11). Gathercole notes that in Tobit, alms are likened to sacrificial offerings because they can deliver from death (4.10–11); similarly the author of Sirach writes that the one who returns a kindness offers choice flour, and one who gives alms sacrifices a thank offering (35.2–3; cf. 35.1). This can be taken a stage further where alms deliver from death and shall purge away all sin; yes, those who give alms and do righteousness will be filled with life (Tob 12.9), which is similar to Sirach 3.30. According to Tobit, being merciful mean that it will go well with you (14.8–11), and according to Sirach, good cannot come to those who do not give alms (Sir 12.1–3) (pp. 39–40).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 40–41.

¹⁵ Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 59, states that when Antiochus IV decided to weaken Jewish control within their occupied land, he attacked their religious beliefs by forbidding worship of Israel's God in the Jerusalem Temple (2 Macc 6.1–5), made the observance of the Sabbath and Jewish festivals illegal (2 Macc 6.6, 11), forbade circumcision (2 Macc 6.10), and embarked on a cruel campaign to force Jews to violate the Jewish dietary regulations of the Law (2 Macc 6.18–7.41). Thielman goes on to say that during the same approximate time of Antiochus IV's decrees, *Jubilees* was probably written, which is a piece of popular literature urging Jews to be especially careful about the observance of the Sabbath (2.17–33; 50.1–13), Jewish festivals (6.17–31; 17.28–31), circumcision (16.25–34), and eating meat whose blood has not been properly drained (6.4–16; 7.28–33; 21.18). Violating these laws is tantamount to apostasy (2.27; 6.12;

the Hellenistic way of life and the other who wanted to continue faithfully following YHWH through obedience to His written Torah.

First and Second Maccabees, Judith, and *Jubilees* among others are excellent sources that were written anywhere from the mid-second century B.C. up to the time that Pompey gained control of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. These writings provide a view from different perspectives of individual groups who were striving to remain faithful to the Mosaic Covenant and corresponding Law, and therefore, in their own way were opposing the push for a more Hellenistic culture in Judea. It is clear from these writings that obedience to the precepts of the Mosaic Law during this period was of great importance.¹⁶ Some such as Dunn see the Jews striving to save their *identity* more than worrying about God's wrath for disobedience.¹⁷ Frank Thielman sees enough agreement among these writings to indicate that there was a common mindset warning Jews that a curse of the

7.28; 16.26, 34; 50.8, 13).

¹⁶ Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 49–54, notes that although 1 & 2 Maccabees were written at different times representing different groups and 2 Maccabees marks a significant development from 1 Maccabees in its stricter Sabbatarianism and its doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which the first was lacking, 2 Maccabees was scarcely less focused on matters regarding the Temple and Torah obedience. Gathercole notes that *Jubilees* explicitly states that those who do righteousness are friends of God and those who do not will have their names deleted from the Book of Life (30.17–23).

¹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Law," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 302–03, who does not believe that "works of the Law" had been turned into "works righteousness" in this era, states that a trend initiated with the return of the exiles from under Persian rule, which promoted national and cultic separation from the rest of the world, was massively reinforced by the Maccabean crisis; he states that it was precisely Israel's identity as the covenant people, the people of the law that was at stake (1 Macc 1.57; 2.27, 50; 2 Macc 1.2–4; 2.21–22; 5.15; 13.14) and at which time when "zeal for the law" became the watchword of national resistance (1 Macc 2.26–27, 50, 58; 2 Macc 4.2; 7.2, 9, 11, 37; 8.21; 13.14). Dunn continues by saying that in the period following the Maccabean crisis the tie-in between election, covenant, and law remains a fundamental and persistent theme of Jewish self-understanding, as illustrated by ben Sira (Sir 17.11–17; 24.23; 28.7; 39.8; 42.2; 44.19–20; 45.5, 7, 15, 17, 24–25), (*Jub.* 1.4–5, 9–10, 12, 14, 29; 2.21; 6.4–16; 14.17–20; 15.4–16, 19–21, 25–29, 34; 16.14; 19.29; 20.3, etc.), the Damascus document (CD 1.4–5, 15–18, 20: 3.2–4, 10–16; 4.7–10; 6.2–5; etc.) and Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 4.5, 11; 7.4; 8.3; 9.3–4, 7–8, 13, 15; 10.2; 11.1–5; etc.).

Law would come upon them if they were disobedient to it.¹⁸ There are some writings from this era including the early first century B.C. that already show that for some, “works of the Law” had become a form of “works righteousness.”¹⁹

“The Mosaic Law” and “Works of the Law” in the Roman Era Up to A.D. 70

In his work, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or in the Age to Come*, W. D. Davies states that there was no clear indication that the Old Testament nor Intertestamental writings spoke of an abrogation of the Law during the Messianic Age nor the Age to Come. Even in Jer 31:31–34, there is no mention of a new Torah being instituted with the New Covenant; on the contrary it appears that the existing Law will be written on the hearts of God’s people.²⁰ From his research on Israel’s covenants, Mapes concludes that

¹⁸ Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 50–51, notes that 2 Maccabees was written some time after the death of John Hyrcanus and represents a voice of protest against the Hasmoneans. Even so, Thielman notes that the thesis that God punishes his people when they sin against him is as strong in this book as it was in Judith. The author believes that the sack of Jerusalem in 169 B.C. by Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria was a direct result of the high priest’s encouragement of Greek customs within Jerusalem several years earlier (4.16–17; cf. 6.12–17; 7.18, 32; 10.4). Thielman also notes that God fights for the Jews when they are obedient to His Laws; Judas Maccabeus punctiliously observes the law and goes from victory to victory over the impious generals and kings of the Syrians despite the small numbers who fight with him (8.27; 12.31, 38; cf. 12.39–45; 13.7). The Syrian general Nicanor ends up with a scattered army, which exemplifies what will happen to all who repeat his mistake. His mistake was that he refused to recognize that the Jews had a Champion, which made them invincible as long as they followed the laws laid down by Him (8:36).

¹⁹ Richard Bauckham, “Apocalypses,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 153, states that *1 En.* 41.1; 68.8 and *Apoc. Zeph.* 8:5 already show a motif in Jewish apocalypses of weighing people or their deeds in the scales of justice with reference to the coming eschatological judgment.

²⁰ W. D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, *Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph*, no. 7 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), 13. Continuing this line of thought, Davies states that during this era, there was not so much an expected change in Torah as an expected increase in understanding it (29f, 42). After evaluating a first-century B.C. document, the *Psalms of Solomon*, Davies notes that there is nothing in its context suggesting that the Messiah will bring a new Law, but merely that he will establish a condition where righteousness according to the Torah will prevail (p. 43). In 1 Macc 4.46 and 14.41, Davies finds that difficult passages of Torah were expected to be made clear

although the Sinaitic and the New Covenant were independent agreements between God and Israel affecting all humanity, they were in reality further expressions of the Abrahamic Covenant.²¹ God's nature was not changing over time, and therefore, when God gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, Paul taught in Romans that the principles contained in the Law are valid for *both* Jew and Gentile; both are condemned for not doing the requirements of the Law.²²

Starting with the era in which Rome took control of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. under Pompey's direction and working up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 under Titus' leadership, the literature of this period shows a greater diversity of religious views

through a prophet of God at some future date (p. 44). In *Damascus, the Zadokite Fragment*, 8.6–10, there is a future teacher, the Teacher of Righteousness, who is expected to arise and impart additional insight for the existing Torah (pp. 45–46). The Old Testament, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha all point to a common belief that in the coming Messianic Age the Law would not only remain in force, but it would be better studied and understood than previously (p. 48). In addition, obedience to the Torah would be a dominating mark of the Messianic Age (p. 84); cf. Walter Gutbrod, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967; reprint 1995), 1041–42, states that in Jeremiah, God will create the whole man anew by “putting the Law in his heart”; and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 126. This book was originally published as *Der Brief an die Römer* by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in 1989. Stuhlmacher states that according to Matt 5:17, Jesus counters the suspicion that He wants to nullify the Law with the claim that He did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it and through His teaching to complete it. Stuhlmacher states that Paul's point in Rom 3:31 is similar; Jesus appeared as the messianic perfecter of the Torah, which is expressed by Paul when he proclaimed “the Law/Torah of Christ” in Gal 6:2. Stuhlmacher states that in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:21–48), Jesus is contrasting His own messianic interpretation of the will of God to the preaching of the Law as it was given to Moses, and in so doing, Jesus both deepened the meaning of the Law (5:2f., 43f.), and Stuhlmacher states, in some parts contradicted it (5:33f., 38f).

²¹ Mapes, “A Covenantal Basis for Paul's Paradigm of Law in Galatians and Romans,” 186–87, states that although the covenants of God with Israel are independent agreements, they are all part of a single desired relationship between God and man based on God's corresponding promise to Abraham that his seed *and* the seed of the Gentiles would be blessed through his faithfulness. Mapes goes on to say that the Abrahamic Covenant finds further expression in the Sinaitic and the New Covenants.

²² *Ibid.*, 158–61, 190–91. In his conclusion, Mapes takes note of the fact that Paul teaches in Rom 1–3 that the Law given at Mt. Sinai contains law principles that apply to Gentiles as well as Jews; *both* are condemned due to violation of the principles taught by the Law given to Moses.

compared to previous eras regarding the practical ways that one should live and carry out the ordinances of the Law. There is a general consensus among scholars that although this was a time of increasing diversity, which was minimized after the messianic revolts that took place between A.D. 66–135, it can be demonstrated through this era’s literature that a solid commonality existed among mainstream Jews worldwide. Jacob Neusner states that first-century Jews found structure and meaning in the covenant between God and Israel as revealed by God to Moses at Mount Sinai.²³ The Chosen People of God showed their commonality through their common maintenance of the Temple, their obedience to the Law including resting on the Sabbath, and their desire to go to Jerusalem during some of God’s constituted festivals to celebrate God’s interaction in their lives. Individuals such as Emil Schürer, George F. Moore, E. P. Sanders, and Shaye Cohen have noted that despite some differences in thinking most Jews living in the Diaspora and in Judea believed that they were bound together through their common desire to obey the God of their forefathers.²⁴ After researching Philo’s works, David Hay concluded that although

²³ Jacob Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P. Sanders*, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, no. 84 (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1993), 74–76, says that to state matters simply, the life of Israel in its land in the first century found structure and meaning in the covenant between God and Israel as contained in the Torah revealed by God to Moses at Mount Sinai (p. 74). Neusner goes on to say that the third aspect of the piety of Israel in its land entailed pilgrimages to the Temple on festivals in celebration of nature and in commemoration of historical events. Specifically, the encounter with God and the yearning for salvation at the end of time came to a climax in the coincidence of those turning in the natural year, spring and fall, identified as the natural year’s beginning and end, which were explained in all forms of Judaism as celebrations of great events in the life of historical Israel (p. 75). In his conclusion to this section, Neusner states that all of the radical claims of the various holiness sects, such as Pharisees and Essenes, of professions such as the scribes, and of followers of various Messiahs, each in its particular manner, gave expression to an aspect or emphasis of the common piety of the nation (p. 76).

²⁴ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Library of Early Christianity, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 25–26, states that the Judaism of the land of Israel was striated not only by numerous sects but also by numerous teachers and holy men, each with his band of

Philo lived in Alexandria, he wrote with the understanding that he belonged to a worldwide Jewish community.²⁵ Hay states that for Philo following the Mosaic Law was not optional; the Law was intended to be followed without additions or subtractions.²⁶ It

supporters. Cohen goes on to say that the most potent force unifying the Jews was their self-perception or self-definition. The Jews saw themselves as the heirs and continuators of the people of pre-exilic Israel; the Jews also felt an affinity for their fellow Jews throughout the world, in spite of differences in language, practice, ideology, and political loyalty. Cohen stated that Israel was like a bumblebee which continues to fly, unaware that the laws of aerodynamics declare its flight to be impossible; the Jews of antiquity saw themselves as citizens of one nation and one religion, unaware of, or oblivious to, the fact that they were separated from each other by their diverse languages, practices, ideologies, and political loyalties; cf. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE*, 236–38, who states that in many large areas of life, Jews all over the world did much the same things: (1) worshiped God daily and weekly, (2) kept the Sabbath, (3) males were circumcised, (4) observed purity laws, and (5) supported the Temple, and even when they disagreed on the meaning of the Law, they were all zealous in keeping it; cf. George F. Moore, *Judaism: In the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of Tannaim*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 224–25, 232–33, who states that even after generations of being disbursed and seeing the collapse of the national state, the diaspora Jews still saw themselves as the one nation of Israel belonging to One God. Under the rule of Herod, the Jews secured extraordinary privileges and exemptions allowing them to maintain their religious and national beliefs. If individuals wanted to take part in the covenants of God, they must also follow all of Israel’s obligations to God (p. 232). The Jewish synagogues were the centers from which the Jews could teach their ways and bring in converts from those living around them (p. 233); and cf. Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, 1885, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1979; reprint, 1995), 419, 421, 425–32, 464–68, who states that all Jews were disciples of the LORD. They were expected to know the precepts and commandments of the Torah and to do them. There were all priests of a holy nation even if dispersed among other nations (p. 464). The Jew knew that he would be recompensed for obedience and punished for disobedience during his life and that full retribution would be delayed until הַבְּאֵר הַחַיִּים, “the Age to Come” (pp. 465–68). The Sabbath Day provided one day of each week that Jews from all around the world could put aside their occupational work and come together in their local synagogues to study the Torah (pp. 425–27, 467–68). Children started learning the Torah as early as six and by the time they reached thirteen, they were to fully fulfill its obligations (p. 421). The Jews’ strong belief in being a disciple of God produced a world-wide religious community, which in many areas was self ruling unless someone within their community violated the civil laws of the land in which they were sojourning (pp. 427–32).

²⁵ David Hay, “Philo of Alexandria,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, 378. A point of interest is that Hay discovered that Philo does not use the terms “Israel” and “the Jews” as identical terms. Normally, “Israel” seems to denote the community of all who “see God,” and Philo does not claim that all Jews are inside that circle or that all Gentiles are outside. That closeness is based on their possession of and devotion to the Mosaic revelation. Hay also notes through his research that Philo uses the language of διαθήκη, “covenant” only occasionally, but he regularly implies that “the Jews” have a unique relation to God established through Moses at Sinai. They serve as priestly intercessors on behalf of all humanity (*Abr.* 98; *Mos.* 1.149; *Spec.* 1.97; 2.162–67) (p. 369).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 375. Hay states that for Philo all the laws of Moses are intended to be obeyed, with no additions or subtractions (*Spec.* 4.143). Hay goes on to say that Philo often uses allegory to explain Jewish religious rationale; but he regularly interprets the laws on a literal level indicating that they are to be obeyed

is important to note that even with evidence that shows that “works of the Law” had been elevated above the grace of God, there are many such as Sanders who state that the first-century Jews remembered well how God had demonstrated His grace to Israel prior to delivering them from the Egyptians, and therefore, they were performing “works of the Law” only to maintain their covenantal position with God, not as part of the salvation process.²⁷

Many scholars have noted that this basic consensus among first-century Jews meant that a faithful Jew was obligated to obey God’s commandments, ordinances, and decrees. Davies states that it was not until after the return of the exiles from Babylon that the term Torah started more and more to represent the “law” aspect.²⁸ By the first century, the movement which had received its greatest impulse from Ezra to make the Jews a people of Torah had come to full fruition, with the result that the Torah had become the cornerstone of Jewish life.²⁹ In later research, Davies came to the conclusion that although

in the realm of the external world. In a famous passage (*Migr.* 89–93), Philo criticizes a group of allegorists who understand ritual laws such as circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, and other holy days symbolically but disregard their literal meaning. Although Philo agrees with their symbolic interpretations, allegory is not a substitute for literal observance.

²⁷ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 277–78.

²⁸ Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, 37; and cf. Gutbrod, *TDNT*, vol. 4, 1043–44, states that after the exile, Israel in general had an increasingly more independent view toward the Law: obedience to the Law became the primary way to establish a relationship with God for the whole community.

²⁹ Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, 50. Davies’ research led him to the conclusion that both the Apocalyptic and Pharisaic circles promoted a strict adherence to the Law (p. 40); and cf. Gutbrod, *TDNT*, vol. 4, 1047–50, states that although the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings do not form a material or linguistic unity, they all show the importance of the Law (p. 1047). There is a general consensus that there is a divine validity of the Law. The Pharisaic group stressed the everyone should know and adhere to the Law (p. 1048). Much of the literature of this era shows an increasing stress on the importance of observance of the Law for the well-being of the individual as well as for the people as a whole (p. 1049). The Law is a timeless expression of God’s will (p. 1050).

“doing the commandments of the Law” had moved to such a prominence that Israel’s covenantal grounding in the grace of God had been muted, God’s grace was not totally forgotten.³⁰

Joseph Klausner, a Jewish scholar, states that during this era, the chief idea bound up with the coming messiah was that knowledge of God would spread throughout the world and the people of Israel and its Torah would become eternal; all nations would come to the Temple in Jerusalem.³¹ Hay noted from his research that Philo considered the Mosaic Law as eternally valid.³² Sanders’ research of this literature prior to and including the Roman era looked forward to a full restoration of Israel that included the reassembling of the Twelve Tribes. Israel would become pure and righteous in her worship and morals, which points to obedience to Torah with *Sib. Or.* 3.756–81 stating that throughout the whole earth people will worship God and follow a common law.³³ Writing to summarize the sentiment at the Third Durham-Tübingen Symposium of 1994 regarding continuity between the Law of the Old and New Testaments, Dunn states that many present-day scholars have come to recognize a stronger line of continuity between

³⁰ W. D. Davies, “Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation,” in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. Morna D. Hooker and Stephen G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 5.

³¹ Joseph Klausner, “The Messianic Idea in the Apocryphal Literature,” in *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 8, *Society and Religion in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah and Zvi Baras (Jerusalem: Massada, 1977), 154.

³² Hay, “Philo of Alexandria,” 373, states that Philo was persuaded that all of the specific commandments of Moses had permanent validity although through his treatise *On the Special Laws*, he shows that he was aware of problems in applying all of them in his own time.

³³ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66CE*, 289–95.

the role of the law in the Old Testament and the Second Temple Judaism and its continuing role in the newly inaugurated age of the Messiah. He states that this is evident through the Law's ongoing role in making people conscious of sin through condemnation of transgression and pointing to a final judgment, in providing continuing guidance for conduct, and in expressing requirements [and the will] of God, which need to be fulfilled.³⁴ Peter Stuhlmacher's study of Paul's letters has led him to the basic conclusion that Paul and the Early Church never spoke of an actual separation between the Law and the Gospel; it was not until the mid-second century that the heretic Marcion attempted to radically pervert earlier teachings.³⁵

Some of the literature of this period lacks any real promotion of ideas related to covenant, yet other literature promotes God's grace. Richard Bauckham has noted that some literature of this period such as *2 Enoch* and the *Testament of Abraham* does not bring out ideas of "election" and "covenant," but instead emphasizes rewards for proper "works" and punishment for a lack of them.³⁶ Phil Spilsbury's research of Josephus' work

³⁴ James D. G. Dunn, "In Search of Common Ground," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 334.

³⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 123. See Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.19. Stuhlmacher goes on to say that Paul's understanding of the Law stands in dialectical continuity to the Old Testament and early Pharisaism as it stands within the movement of God's will within salvation history unfolding from Sinai to Zion. The Law is decisively influenced by Jesus' teachings, death on the cross, resurrection, and through the Gospel proclamation, which shows the righteousness of God working through Christ (Rom 1:16f.). The grace and law/instruction of God are in perfect unity (p. 128).

³⁶ Bauckham, "Apocalypses," 152–56, states that there are no covenantal features in *2 Enoch*, no election or covenantal promises, only God's commandments and rewards and punishments for observance or neglect of them. He goes on to say that *2 Enoch* couples the image of "weighing" with the idea of "requiting each according to his or her deeds," which became a standard way of describing the justice of the eschatological judgement in early Jewish literature. Bauckham notes that in verse 44.5, each person will be weighed in the balance, and each will stand in the market, and each will find out his own measurement and in accordance with that measurement each will receive his reward. He notes further that there is an overall

shows evidence that first-century Jews still considered their disobedience to the Mosaic Laws as detrimental to their nation, and saw themselves as having privileged access to God over Gentiles as long as they faithfully obeyed the Law.³⁷ Spilsbury writes that Josephus, a Jew living in Judea, understood Moses to have received the Law because of his great piety. This is a critical reversal of the order of grace and obedience when one considers that Israel's early teachers taught that God *first* delivered Israel from its slavery in Egypt *and then* gave them the gift of the Law to help them stay in a right relationship with Him.³⁸ As he brings his study to a conclusion, Spilsbury states that it is clear throughout Josephus' work that a beneficial divine-human is predicated upon obedience to the Law of Moses.³⁹ Yet there is other literature of this period such as the *Psalms of Solomon*, which was probably written mid-first century B.C., that shows evidence of the writer being aware of God's mercy for those who call upon Him, and mixes that thought with the elevation of "works of the Law" to the point that the righteousness of individuals depends on their obedience to the demands of Torah.⁴⁰ In his evaluation of Philo, Hay

division into two categories, one destined for paradise and the other for hell. In a second writing that is probably from this era, the *Testament of Abraham*, it is clear that people are assigned their destinies according to whether or not their sins outnumber their righteous deeds (A12–14; B9).

³⁷ Spilsbury, "Josephus," 253–55, 259.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 258–59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁴⁰ Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 63–66, states that although it is not the dominant feature of the eschatology of the *Psalms of Solomon*, there is nevertheless a fairly consistent picture of a definite period or day of judgment at which the righteous will be vindicated with resurrection to eternal life, and the wicked will be consigned to eternal death. In 2.34–36, when the righteous and the sinners are separated out, God will repay sinners with an everlasting punishment according to their deeds. Gathercole goes on to say that the righteous are equated with "those who walk in the righteousness of his commandments, in the Torah (14:2)." Regarding the idea of eternal life, Gathercole notes that in a later writing contemporaneous with

discovered a lack of emphasis on Israel's covenantal status with God but instead a proclamation that Jews were the θεοφιλής, "beloved of God," which indicates that Israel's covenantal status was being proclaimed.⁴¹ In addition, Philo states that people should be thankful for what God is doing and dependent on God's grace.⁴² In the writings of this era, there is a clear division between a soteriology based on "grace" and "works of the Law." Stuhlmacher's research has led him to take note of the fact that some written documents from this era reflect the opposing soteriological principles of "election" and "retribution" within themselves.⁴³

Paul, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, the author promotes a clear theology of reward and punishment, which will be administered to every individual after death (p. 67).

⁴¹ Hay, "Philo of Alexandria," 369–70, states that Sanders admits that Philo does not emphasize 'nomism' or offer clear ideas about the nation's future redemption or life after death. Sanders also recognizes Philo's great concern with the individual's search for God. Hay adds two additional qualifications to Philo's work: (1) Philo says very little about God's covenant(s) with Israel, and (2) his framework of religious thought is not soteriological despite his frequent references to God as 'savior.' When he looks at the total picture, Hays states that it is not very useful to speak of Philo as a representative of "covenantal nomism." Philo often writes as though every Jew in the world were dedicated to studying and living by the law of Moses (*Mos.* 2.216; *Somn.* 2.123–27; *Deus.* 148–51; *Legat.* 210–11). In speaking of "the Jews," Philo does not directly mention the covenant but says that the people are θεοφιλής, beloved by God, or God-loving," and a special object of God's providential protection; Paul Spilsbury, "Josephus," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, 235, found in his research of Josephus' work that Josephus has used this same terminology to represent the Jewish people; they are θεοφιλής (*J.W.* 5.381).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 378.

⁴³ Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 16, 41–42, shows that within writings such as: (1) *4 Ezra* (*2 Esdras*) 7.33–38, 70–74, 127–31 (judgment by works) and 8.35–36 (salvation by grace) (p. 16), (2) *2 Bar.* 14:12–13; 51:7–14, (3) 1QS 3.9–11; 4.2–8; 8.1–10; 9.3–5 (juxtapositioning between claims for perfect and blameless obedience to the law a penitential doxology expressed in 11.2–15, (4) 1QpHab 8.1–2 (*Habakkuk* 2:4 is related to the observance of the law *and* faithfulness to the teachings of the teacher of righteousness, and (5) 4Q398 (4QMMT) frg. 14, col. 11.2–7 clearly testified that obedience to (priestly) works of the law will be reckoned as righteousness to the obedient in the end times (pp. 41–42).

Regarding the isolated community of Qumran, Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise state that the Qumran community was not against Temple operation or the nation, but against a perceived impiety in the way that Temple worship was carried out and in the way Jews lived.⁴⁴ When Roland Deines evaluated 4QMMT, one of his observations shows that the Qumran community was as concerned about violating God's commandments as Ezra and Nehemiah were when they reestablished Jerusalem after their Babylonian and Persian exile. Deines states that in this document Israel represented the ideal entity while the term עַם , "the people," represented those who: (1) were offering sacrifices in the Temple in an improper manner (B_{13,27}), (2) had entered into illegitimate marriages (B_{46,75}), and/or (3) were bringing self-condemnation due to defiling actions and temple sacrilege (C₂₇).⁴⁵ Johann Maier's research of the Dead Sea Scrolls led him to believe that those at Qumran had a heightened desire to do everything as perfectly as possible with the understanding that everything done affects both the cosmic and the human realm.⁴⁶ Markus Bockmuehl, studying the sectarian Qumran literature has come to

⁴⁴ Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Great Britain: Element Books, 1992), 185, state that the idea that the literature at Qumran was anti-Temple, which developed in the early days of Qumran research from considering the Community Rule only and misunderstanding its splendid imagery, is just not accurate. They go on to say that the "zeal" shown for the Temple in these letters and other works is pivotal throughout. The emphasis is on *purifying* all polluted works.

⁴⁵ Roland Deines, "The Pharisees between 'Judaisms' and 'Common Judaism,'" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 463–65. Deines goes on to say that it seems clear to him that the priests (B 11–13, 16–17, 25–27, 46, 82), or possibly the individually addressed recipient (C 27), are made responsible, at least partially, for this culpable behavior although there is explicit criticism only of the people. But, Deines goes on to say that this culpable behavior also applies implicitly to the priests who permit or facilitate the people's involvement in proscribed practices.

⁴⁶ Johann Maier, "The Judaic System of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Historical Synthesis* (New York: Brill, 1995), 99.

the personal conclusion that the community at Qumran balanced their belief in God's grace within an uneasy tension based on a belief in the efficacy of individual works that resulted in an exclusivistic preoccupation with "works of the Law." This appears to be the same problem that Paul reacts to in his letters to Gentile Christians.⁴⁷ Alongside this preoccupation with doing "works of the Law, Bockmuehl notes a tension in the Qumran texts—similar to Stuhlmacher's observations noted above about other writings of this era—that individuals needed God's help due to their inadequacy to establish their own righteousness.⁴⁸ Regarding actual atonement, Timo Eskola notes that the Qumran community replaced the Old Testament sacrifices with the righteous actions and suffering

⁴⁷ Markus Bockmuehl, "1QS and Salvation at Qumran," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, 413–14, states that membership in the covenant of God was characterized both by a sustained individual voluntarism and by an all-embracing doctrine of divine predestination. With the community's combined strong sense of the sinfulness of all humanity and their belief in divine grace for those trusting God, the texts manifest an uneasy co-existence of belief in atonement for sins depended solely on an act of God and the belief that somehow their priestly leaders were instrumental in that atonement. Bockmuehl's redactional analysis led him to see the community of Qumran as one who was exclusivistic and preoccupied with "works of the Law." This situation matches that of Paul's, which his letters demonstrate.

⁴⁸ Bockmuehl, "1QS and Salvation at Qumran," 397–99, discussing God's righteousness as perceived by the Qumran community, states that the righteous deeds of God (צדקות) are His saving actions in Israel's past (1QS 1.21; 10.23; cf. 1QH 4.17), but the manifestation of His righteousness also characterizes the eschaton. Bockmuehl states that God's eschatological victory brought about by His "righteous acts" past and future is the key to the sect's understanding of salvation. Man cannot establish his own steps, for judgement and perfection of way belong to God (1QS 9.10; cf. 1QH 7[=15].16), and no one is righteous in your judgement, or innocent at your trial (1QH 17[=9].14f.). Bockmuehl states that this appeal to the human condition is not employed in order to excuse the believer's sin but rather to underscore the exclusively divine constitution of righteousness and forgiveness. In fact, it is specifically through God's righteous character and righteous acts that sins can be forgiven. One writer states, ". . . if I stumble, the mercies of God are my salvation for ever (חסדי אל ישוצתי לצד), and if I fall in guilt of the flesh, my judgement is by the righteousness of God (בצדקת אל) which endures eternally (1QS 11.12; cf. 11.2–5)." Therefore, Bockmuehl concludes that God's righteousness and His righteous acts constitute the salvation and justification of the individual. This is a notion which finds an explicit parallel in the apocryphal psalms appended to the biblical Psalter of Cave 11 (11QPs³ 19.5, 7, 11; 11QPs^b frag. a 6) and which recurs in a variety of different forms elsewhere.

of its leaders, who were perceived to atone on behalf of all of its members (1QS 2.2f; cf. 8.5; 9.6).⁴⁹

When Moo investigated the first-century Synoptic Gospels looking for clues among Jesus' disciples regarding Jesus' teachings on the importance of the Law for the Messianic Age, he came to understand that Matthew, Mark, and Luke similarly taught that Jesus did not abolish the Law but instead upheld its validity and considered Himself to have authority over it.⁵⁰ Continuing past Matt 5:17 in which Jesus declares that He did *not* come to καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας, but instead He came to πληρῶσαι the Law and the prophets, Moo notes that Matthew's grammatical construction ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις . . . ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν allows at least three different interpretations of how Jesus' teachings fits into the teachings of the Law: (1) in contrast, (2) in addition to, and (3) in agreement with.⁵¹ After evaluating Jesus' teachings in light of the Old Testament including Jesus' teaching on loving ones' neighbor (Matt 5:43–44; Lev 19:34),⁵² and comparing Matthew's writing with the other evangelists, Moo came to the conclusion that the evangelists are showing that Jesus'

⁴⁹ Timo Eskola, "Paul, Predestination and 'Covenantal Nomism': Reassessing Paul and Palestinian Judaism," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 28 (1997): 405–06.

⁵⁰ Douglas J. Moo, "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20 (1984), 29; and cf. Gutbrod, *TDNT*, vol. 4, 1061–64, states that Jesus Himself keeps the Law and accepts the Law as the revealed will of God (p. 1062). Gutbrod goes on to say that true obedience to the Law is rendered in discipleship (p. 1063) to the One who validates the Law through His death to overcome sin, who in turn provides a pardon for those who follow Him (pp. 1061–62).

⁵¹ Moo, "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law," 17–18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 22.

teachings support an ongoing validity of the Law. When Jesus says that nothing will be removed from the Law until πάντα γένηται, Jesus is saying until everything has occurred within God's divine purpose.⁵³ D.A. Carson's research and study regarding Matthew 5 brought him to the conclusion that one must not consider Jesus' fulfilling of the Law too narrowly.⁵⁴ He notes that not a single item of the Law or Prophets shall fail until everything is accomplished and goes on to say, "Thus, the Law and the Prophets, far from being abolished, find their valid continuity in terms of their outworking in Jesus."⁵⁵ When David Wead evaluated the Gospel writings looking at how the Jewish leaders judged Jesus' acts of kindness, he noted that the leadership was more intent on following the letter of the Law than understanding the reasons behind Jesus' actions. Wead noted that John 16:7 clearly states that Jesus ought to die because He was blaspheming God through his declaration that He was the Son of God making Himself equal with God (Lev. 24:16; cf. John 5:18) and that other charges

⁵³ Ibid., 26–27. Moo states that although Jesus upholds the continuing validity of the entire Old Testament, He asserts that this validity must be understood in light of its fulfillment through Him (p. 28). Jesus has authority over the Law and the whole Law came to culmination in Christ. Christ has the ultimate authority over the Messianic community and He determines what is enduring from within its contents. Therefore, it may be inaccurate to speak of a "new law." In addition, one cannot deny that Jesus' commandments go beyond the basic requirements of the love commandment; Jesus uses His unique intuitive knowledge of God's will to interpret and apply the Law (pp. 29–30).

⁵⁴ D. A. Carson, *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (Grand Rapids: Global Christian Publishers, 1999, reprint 2001), 39.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 39–40. Carson continues by saying that the Law that Jesus is talking about is a combination of the Old Testament laws and those that Jesus gave and warns his readers that Christ demands a righteousness from His followers that surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law.

shown in the Gospels against Jesus were in violation of the letter of Mosaic Law as the authorities understood them.⁵⁶

Paul and “Works of the Law” in Its Theological Context

The Place of the “Mosaic Law” in the Messianic Age

Regarding Paul’s credentials, Thomas Schreiner reminds his readers that: (1) Paul was a Jew who viewed his own theology as a fulfillment of the Old Testament (Rom 1:2), (2) Paul’s critique of Judaism and even his own past was in line with that of the prophets (Gal 1:13–14; Phil 3:2–11), (3) Paul was part of an intra-Jewish debate on the meaning of the Scriptures—he was not an outsider, and (4) Paul was not attacking Judaism *per se* but a fundamentally human problem.⁵⁷ In his work, *The Theology of Paul*, Dunn states that when one reflects on what Paul wrote allowing for a diversity of circumstances and a variety of expressions, there seems to be a remarkable continuity and homogeneity binding all Paul’s letters into a coherent whole. He goes on to say that although there may be different emphases, it is doubtful that anyone should speak of any significant development.⁵⁸ Dunn concludes that at most one can probably envisage a number of

⁵⁶ David W. Wead, “We Have a Law,” in *Novum Testament*, ed. W. C. van Unner, vol. 11 (Leiden, Brill, 1969), 185, goes on to say that Jesus was charged with other violations of the Mosaic Law such as: (1) breaking the Sabbath (John 5:18), (2) being a false prophet (Mark 14:65) which could be tied in with the charge of blaspheming as written in Deut 8:1–5 (pp. 186, 188), which states that if a prophet arises among you with wonderful signs, if he is teaching you to follow false gods or leading you in rebellion against the Lord your God, you should not listen to that prophet and he should be put to death (p. 186), and (3) being a false teacher (John 18:19) (p. 188). Wead goes on to say that Jesus was killed for being a false prophet and in Jesus’ day either charge of “blasphemy” or “being a false prophet,” which could potentially lead Israel away from the Mosaic Law, was worthy of death (pp. 188–89).

⁵⁷ Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 120.

⁵⁸ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 730–31.

events and experiences that changed the emphases and prompted certain elaborations, but did not alter the main elements or overall character of his theology in a significant way.⁵⁹

Moo says that modern scholars have divided into four main camps regarding Paul's theology in respect to his apparent opposition to "works righteousness": (1) the dogmatic explanation saying that Paul rejected the Law simply because nothing must compete with Christ, (2) the nationalistic explanation which says that the Law fosters Jewish exclusivity, (3) the quantitative explanation saying human beings are incapable of doing the Law perfectly, and (4) the qualitative explanation saying that doing the Law in and of itself is *not* wrong.⁶⁰ Moo states that most scholars follow one or both of the first two choices.⁶¹

There are individuals who have theories that do not fit into these categories that should be mentioned. As discussed above in the introduction, there are some such as Räsänen who consider Paul's teachings to be contradictory, and therefore, they do not

⁵⁹ Ibid., 731.

⁶⁰ Moo, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years," 297–98; and cf. Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," 81–83, who breaks down the search for understanding Paul's teachings on the Law into nine separate approaches or camps: (1) a distinction between ὁ νόμος as the law of Moses and νόμος as the qualitative idea of law (J. B. Lightfoot, Ernest De Witt Burton, Richard Longenecker, and Edward Grafe), (2) two ways of salvation, the Law or faith in Christ (Heikki Räsänen), (3) that the ritual and civil/cultic elements have been annulled leaving the moral commandments in place, (4) a new law replaces the Mosaic Law in the present Messianic Age (H. J. Schoeps and Albert Schweitzer), (5) the Law of God includes more than the Old Testament Torah because it now includes the instruction of Christ (C. H. Dodd), (6) Paul only argued against a misunderstanding of the Law, not against the Law itself (C. E. B. Cranfield and James Dunn), (7) Paul's view of the Law changed from one that was less negative as depicted in Galatians to a more moderate one depicted in Romans (Hans Hübner and John Drane), (8) Paul preached a law-free Gospel to the Gentiles but did not encourage Jews to abandon the Torah (Lloyd Gaston and Alan Davies), and (9) Paul is inconsistent and illogical (Heikki Räsänen and E. P. Sanders).

⁶¹ Moo, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years," 298.

think that there is a valid underlying theology in them regarding the place of “works of the Law” in the Messianic Age.⁶² Other individuals, who theorize somewhat differently, accept Sander’s “covenantal nomism” theory, but they do not accept his theory that Paul has totally rejected the Law in order to participate with Christ nor Dunn’s theory that Paul is simply arguing against national exclusivity. Some of these individuals such as Lloyd Gaston propose a theory that Paul is teaching of two ongoing efficacious covenants, the Old and New; the former for the Jew and the latter for the Gentile.⁶³ In order to sustain the two ongoing covenants, Gaston claims that Paul is teaching that Jesus is *not* the long awaited Messiah of Israel; He is a substitute for the sinful Adam sent to make a way *solely* for the Gentiles so that they too may be part of the people of God.⁶⁴ There are others such as N. T. Wright who accept Sanders’ “covenantal nomism” theory, but take a different route than “identity badges” and “two covenants.” Looking on a national level versus an individual level, Wright understands Paul’s message about Christ’s atoning work as *the renewing* of a failed covenant. He states that the Messiah has come to take on

⁶² Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 268–69.

⁶³ Lloyd Gaston, “Israel’s Misstep in the Eyes of Paul,” in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 310f., states that there are two ways for one to be righteous before God: (1) through Torah observance, or (2) through faithfulness in Christ; and see Donald A. Hagner, “Paul & Judaism: Testing the New Perspective,” in *A Challenge to the New Perspective: Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 80–83, who makes note of the fact that in addition to Lloyd Gaston, there are three additional writers, Krister Stendahl, Markus Barth, and John Gager, who are strong advocates of some type of “two-covenant” theory.

⁶⁴ Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987; reprint, 1990), 7, 33–34, states that for Paul, Jesus is not the Messiah. He goes on to say that for Paul, Jesus is the new act of the righteousness of God for the Gentiles (p. 7). In one of his early articles, “Paul and the Torah,” Gaston states that for Paul, Jesus is neither a new Moses nor the Messiah but instead the fulfillment of God’s promise concerning the Gentiles (p. 33). In this context, Gaston claims that Israel should and could remain Israel without following Jesus and remain righteous before God (p. 34).

the curse of the Law as Israel's representative due to the fact that the nation as a whole failed to keep the Torah of the Covenant; Christ's redeeming work is the *climax of the Covenant*.⁶⁵

Currently Sanders is one of the leading advocates of those who see Paul as teaching that he had to give up his Judaic roots in order to follow Christ. Sanders' writings reflects the idea that Paul has redefined what it meant to be righteous before God. Sanders evaluates how Paul's teachings compared to others in the first century based on his socio-historical contextual theory called "covenantal nomism,"⁶⁶ and he has come to the conclusion that Paul could not have been addressing an actual problem of "works righteousness" among main-stream Jews. Sanders' research led him to believe that first-century Jews understood God's grace to be working hand-in-hand with doing

⁶⁵ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991; reprint, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 146, 151–53, 243, looks at sin and Israel staying in the covenant at the national level versus the individual level. He states that the whole nation of Israel has failed to keep the Torah (Rom 3:1f.), and as a result, that Torah cannot therefore be the means through which she either retains her membership in the covenant of blessings or becomes the means of blessing the world in accordance with the promises of God to Abraham (Rom 3:10–14). Therefore, Wright concludes that the King of the Jews took the brunt of the exile on Himself (p. 146). Wright states that the crucifixion of the Messiah is the *quintessence* of the curse of exile and its climactic act. The Messiah came when Israel was under the curse of the Law in order to be Israel's *redeeming* representative (pp. 151, 243). Wright goes on to say that the death of Jesus is therefore to be understood in terms of *covenant-renewing*: the death of the King, who was hanged on a tree in the midst of His own land was not an arbitrary piece of theology for Paul. For Paul, Christ dying on the Cross as Israel's redeeming representative by becoming the curse of the Law for them (Gal 3:13) represented the climax of the covenant through God's righteousness (p. 153).

⁶⁶ Regarding "covenantal nomism," E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 422, says that the pattern of religion for Judaism is about covenantal nomism, which are actions regarding the law based on God's covenants with Israel, and can be summarized thus: (1) God has chosen Israel, (2) God has given the Law, (3) God promises to maintain the election and (4) the requirements are to be obeyed, (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression, (6) the Law provides a means of atonement, (7) atonement results in maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship, and 8) all those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement, and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved.

“works of the Law.” With this understanding, Sanders concluded that Paul must have abandoned his “covenant agreement” with God in exchange for a radically different relationship,⁶⁷ a “participatory union” with Christ.⁶⁸ There are others who understand the Early Church’s close association with the Messiah as a continuation of Judaism as it entered the Messianic Age,⁶⁹ but in his book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, Sanders sees

⁶⁷ Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 114–15, notes that even if “covenantal nomism” was the declared practice of Paul’s day, that would not stop the possibility that many would attempt to be justified before God through their own efforts. Schreiner states that throughout the history of the Christian Church, it can be amply demonstrated that Christians’ overall knowledge of God’s grace has not stopped “legalism” from becoming common practice at various times.

⁶⁸ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 514, 517–18, states that at the heart of Paul’s thought it is not that one ratifies and agrees to a covenant offered by God, becoming a member of a group with a covenantal relation with God and remaining in it on the condition of proper behavior, but instead, one forms an association with Christ, which gives them a new life that leads to the resurrection and ultimate transformation of that individual; that individual is a member of the body of Christ and in one Spirit with Him and remains so unless he or she breaks *the participatory union* (p. 514). In *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE*, 191, Sanders states that Judaism *requires* obedience to the Law; obedience is a hallmark of Judaism. Sanders goes on to say that the Law was a gift to Israel and God expected obedience to it (p. 267); a personal excursus: what is important to remember at this point is that Paul never said that all “works of the Law” were abolished with the coming of the Messiah; in fact he said that through Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit, Christ’s followers would obey the commandments and fulfill the Law (Rom 2:13, 26; 3:28–31; 8:4; 10:4 (fulfill); 1 Cor 7:19; etc.). Paul did not actually move away from Judaism, but in actuality entered the Messianic Age with Christ. Sanders states that first-century Jews did not perceive “works of the Law” as righteousness that gains salvation, but instead, they saw “works of the Law” as righteousness that is required to stay in the covenant, a proper life-style before God. That is not exactly what Paul taught but it is similar in the sense that righteousness derived from “works of the Law” would not justify anyone regarding salvation. Salvation is solely dependent on faith in God through what He had done through Christ’s atoning death on the Cross. Yet, God expects Christ’s followers to obey the commandments of the Law (1 Cor 7:19; Rom 2:13). Christ’s followers will fulfill the Law through His atoning work and ongoing leadership through the Holy Spirit (Rom 3:31; 8:1–4; 13:8; Gal 5:14); in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 517–18, Sanders states that those who are in close association with Christ are punished and rewarded just as those who are in the Mosaic covenant and that those in either group can lose their salvation by being wilfully and/or heinously disobedient; and in *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE*, 272–73, Sanders goes on to say that a typical Christian scholarly error is thinking of reward and punishment in the Judaic world in “soteriological” terms; normally punishment and reward were considered as consequences that affected the living.

⁶⁹ Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, 48, not only sees Paul and Christianity as a movement into the Messianic Age, he understands the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha to all point to a common belief that the Mosaic Law would still be in full force during this new age; Stuhlmacher, *A Challenge to the New Perspective*, 49–50, sees Paul working in this Messianic Age, which he defines as the first *τάγμα* (ordering) of a three stage process in establishing God’s final

this close association with Christ as a new religion.⁷⁰ In a later work, Sanders' statements shift slightly allowing for some continuity as he readjusts his thinking to see this close association with Christ as a simultaneous appropriation and rejection of Judaism.⁷¹

It is important to note that Sanders did not think that there was adequate literature from Paul's own era to substantiate his "covenantal nomism" theory and therefore based most of his conclusions on documents that were separated in time by approximately four hundred years, which he personally calls his "gap theory."⁷² Because Sanders went well

kingdom. Stuhlmacher continues by saying that the apostle preached the same gospel as the Jerusalem apostles (cf. 1 Cor 15:1–11) and kept the agreement made at the apostolic council. He pursued his mission among the Gentiles "from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum" (cf. Rom 15:19) and personally brought the agreed-upon collection to Jerusalem before his planned departure for his mission in the West. In addition, He shared the apostolic hope for the end-time establishment of "the kingdom (of God) for Israel" (Acts 1:6). Paul understood Jesus Christ to be the "Son of God in power" (Rom 1:4; cf. Phil 2:9), whose task was to establish the βασιλεία of God (Psalm 8:6 (8:7 HB); 110:1); and in an earlier work, "Eschatology and Hope in Paul," trans. Douglas Mohrman, *The Evangelical Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2000), 316–17, Stuhlmacher states that after his calling to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul did not surrender his hope of the Messiah and the kingdom of Zion, rather he learned to see it anew, under the impression of his encounter with the living Christ Jesus. In the risen Jesus, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul recognized the promised messianic Son of God (Gal 1:16; 2 Cor 4:6; 5:16), and he found himself elected by Jesus to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15–16; Rom 1:1–4) and had thus become an apostle as those who had been called before him.

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 550, states that Paul is teaching in Rom 10:2–4 that Christ has put an end to the Law and provides a different righteousness from that provided by Torah obedience (p. 550). Sanders goes on to say that when Paul denies "works of the Law" as a form of being righteous, he is in fact denying the Jewish covenant as a means for salvation, which effectively denies the basis of Judaism (p. 551). At this point, Sanders understands Paul to be saying that righteousness derived from "works of the Law" cannot provide salvation negating the Jews understanding that doing "works of the Law" kept one in good standing with God; for Paul salvation came only derived through faith in Christ, and therefore, Paul was breaking with Judaism. Paul's problem with Judaism was that it was not Christianity (pp. 551–52); and in a later publication, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), Sanders states that it appears to be a Christian innovation to claim that the people of God are, in effect, a third party that must be entered into by Jew and Christian alike on the same ground (trust in Jesus Christ) (pp. 29f). He goes on to say that there are two ways in which the Messianic Age had changed from earlier perceptions: (1) Jews were not automatically in, they had to trust in Jesus Christ, and (2) Gentiles were not subservient to Jews, Jews and Gentiles were on equal footing with each other (pp. 172f.)

⁷¹ Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 208f.

⁷² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 330–31, 426, states that because of the consistency with which covenantal nomism is maintained from early in the second century B.C. to late in the second century

beyond the first-century of the Christian Era looking at early third-century rabbinic writings for clues to the first century, his work should be suspect due to the fact that this later work could easily have been written in such a way as to promote the ideas of the surviving group at the expense of those who did not survive. In addition to defending its own ongoing principals, the surviving rabbinic Judaism had to react against the growing Christian movement. After having done extensive research into the early rabbinic writings of the third century, Jacob Neusner, a Jewish scholar, has concluded that these rabbinic writings are not accurate sources for reflecting first-century thought due to the fact that the authors of works such as the Mishnah were writing for audiences that had undergone major socio-religious changes after the failure of several messianic revolts against Rome.⁷³ Neusner's research has lead him to conclude that these later rabbinic

C.E., it must be hypothesized that covenantal nomism was *pervasive* in Palestine before 70. Sanders continues by saying that "covenantal nomism" must have been the basic *type* of religion known by Jesus and presumably by Paul (p. 426). Earlier, Sanders had developed an argument to show that Ben Sirach's work [which was originally written around 180 B.C.] had recognized that the Law was given especially to Israel and that those who obeyed the Law were worthy of honor and those who did not were unworthy of honor. Sanders goes on to say that we may conclude that Ben Sirach, like the Rabbis after him, presupposed the biblical view of the election of Israel and wrote within the context of the doctrine of the covenant (pp. 330-31).

⁷³ Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 263, 82-83, a contemporary Jewish scholar, states that he is a devout Jew, and after critically examining the Mishnah states that he has found very little material in the Mishnah that refers to individuals and their teachings prior to A.D. 70. Neusner goes on to say that even the little material that is incorporated into the Mishnah is not historically or theologically accurate; and cf. Neusner, "Judaism and Christianity: Different People Talking about Different Things to Different People," in *Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 14, who in an earlier publication had made a point to tell his readers that he has come to the conclusion that these early third century and later documents do not accurately reproduce the earlier sayings of Jews prior to the destruction Jerusalem.

writers left out important information and reshaped other information to promote their own agenda.⁷⁴

James Dunn is one of the leading advocates of the theory that Paul is rejecting the Law because it has led to national exclusivity. Dunn like Wright along with a group of scholars who met in 1994 for the Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium accept Sander's "covenantal nomism" theory.⁷⁵ Therefore, Dunn like Wright looks for a theory of Paul's understanding of the Law that makes sense through the filter of "covenantal nomism." Dunn states that although Paul may look as if he is condemning "works righteousness" in his letters, the "new perspective," which is "covenantal nomism," teaches otherwise.⁷⁶ He decided from his own research that Paul was not teaching against

⁷⁴ Neusner, "Judaism and Christianity," 14, had voiced this opinion in a similar article published a year earlier: "The Jewish-Christian Argument in the First Century: Different People Talking about Different Things to Different People," in *The Law in the Bible and in Its Environment*, ed. Timo Veijola, The Finnish Exegetical Society in Helsinki, ed. Anne-Marit Enroth-Voitila (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 185–86.

⁷⁵ Dunn, "In Search of Common Ground," 309–12. When reading Dunn's summary of the group, one can see that Dunn assumes that Sanders' theory of "covenantal nomism" is the norm for the group as he uses Sanders' thoughts of "getting in" and "staying in" the covenant as a basis to express his and the groups' thinking about Paul and the Law. This group of scholars met to discuss Paul and the Law at the Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism in September of 1994; and cf. Brendan Byrne, "Interpreting Romans Theologically in a Post-'New Perspective' Perspective," *Harvard Theological Review* 94, no. 3 (2001), 227, who states that it is now a truism that the publication in 1977 of Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* marked a watershed in Pauline interpretation. Sanders outlawed once and forever from Christian scholarship the old legalistic caricature of Judaism that generations of Christians had derived from Paul. Byrne goes on to say that this caricature stemmed largely from Martin Luther's identification of the battle in which he saw himself engaged in the sixteenth century with what he believed to be Paul's struggle in the mid-first century: namely, that both were confronting a religion of works-righteousness, exemplified in the one case by certain tendencies of late-medieval Catholicism and in the other by Judaism.

⁷⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 354, states that Paul has set some key texts, which affirm justification through faith, against justification "from works of the law." The traditional understanding of the phrase within Protestant theology is that "from works of the law" denoted "good works" done as an attempt to gain or achieve righteousness. The interpretation is wholly understandable, particularly in the light of Rom 4:4–5, where the "works" in view (4:2) seem to be explained as "working for reward" and set in antithesis to "not working but [simply] believing." Dunn goes on to say that the post-

doing “works of the Law” *per se* but instead was addressing a problem of national exclusivism.⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that even as he interprets Paul’s letters through the filter of “covenantal nomism,” and argues for Paul to be solely dealing with Jewish exclusivism, there are times that Dunn understands Paul to be addressing a general problem of “works righteousness.” For example, after evaluating Rom 9:30–10:8; 4:18–21; and 3:31, Dunn states, “To require more than that trust, to insist on a particular outworking of that faith, *would repeat the old failure with regard to the law, to transpose the law of faith into the law of works* [italics added].”⁷⁸ Dunn and those following in his

Pauline Eph 2:8–9 looks very much like a confirmation of this when the author stated that “by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not from works, lest anyone should boast” (cf. 2 Tim 1:9 and Tit 3:5). Then Dunn expresses the problem with this traditional interpretation by saying that the problem with the traditional view emerges from its conflict with “the new perspective.” Dunn explains by saying that those following “the new perspective” understand the idea that first-century Judaism typically taught that righteousness had to be *achieved* by law-keeping is a fundamental misunderstanding. Dunn states that their investigation of Paul’s perspective on his own pre-Christian attitudes and practice has only strengthened the view that Paul the Pharisee enjoyed a sense of participating in Israel’s covenant righteousness as attested and maintained (not earned) by his devoutness and faithfulness. Presumably, the resolution to the debate between the old perspective and the new lies in clarification of the distinction between *achieving* righteousness and *maintaining* righteousness, but that resolution is still some distance away; there are individuals such as Hans Hübner, “Was heißt bei Paulus ‘Werke des Gesetzes?’” in *Glaube und Eschatologie: W.G. Kümmel FS*, ed. E. Grasser (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985, 131–32, who understand Paul to be clearly saying that no one can be justified by *any* works of the Law, and therefore, he strongly opposes those such as Stendahl, Sanders, and Dunn who think that Paul did not see an antithesis between “justification by works of the Law” and “justification by faith.”

⁷⁷ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 361–65, argues that in Galatians and Romans, Paul is equating “works of the Law” with works that set Jews apart from the rest of the world, not “good works.” He notes that the Law had provided for atonement for the sins of those faithful to God, which meant for Dunn that the Law was not understood to have required perfect obedience. After evaluating some of the passages in Galatians and Romans, Dunn concludes that it is clear that the removal of “works of the Law” was in effect a removal of that which could prevent the Gospel from extending beyond the ethnic boundaries of the Jews.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 641–42. Prior to the quotation above, Dunn states that Romans 4 is obviously set up to illustrate faith-establishing law, “the law of faith” (3:31). Dunn sees that faith for Paul meant complete trust in God, like Abraham’s, total reliance on God’s enabling. He states that for Paul faith was the root of obedience. Unless obedience sprang from faith, it was misdirected. The “obedience of faith” is that obedience which lives out of the sort of trust and reliance on God which Abraham demonstrated.

footsteps do not follow Sanders in thinking that Paul has given up Judaism for a different religious system;⁷⁹ Christianity is Judaism moving into the Messianic Age.⁸⁰

Deviating slightly from Moo's four primary divisions for modern scholars studying Paul and the Law, it is better to combine his third and fourth classifications together due to the fact that many of the same scholars who understand Paul to be teaching that no one can do the righteous works of the Law perfectly also understand Paul to be saying that there is nothing wrong with the Law *per se*, because in reality, *the commandments* of the Law are holy, righteous, and good.⁸¹ Many of these scholars understand Paul to be teaching that due to imperfect obedience to the commandments of the Law all people need to acknowledge God's grace, which He is working through His redemptive work in Christ (Rom 1:14–17). These scholars are following a general thought that has been prevalent since the Reformation. Those following this line of

⁷⁹ Dunn, "In Search of Common Ground," 310, states that the scholars who came together for the Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism in September of 1994 were in general in consensus that Paul understood his gospel to be thoroughly consistent with and continuous from his heritage as a Jew as he taught [the fulfillment of] Scripture; Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Law," 300, states that although Sanders did an excellent job showing that God's chosen people were to be observing the law, which was given by God, to maintain their status as His people, he did not portray Paul correctly when teaching that Paul had exchanged one system for another after his Damascus Road experience; and in an earlier work, Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 65, no. 2 (1983), 119–21, stated that the normal exegesis of taking "works of the law" as equivalent to "doing law" in general has led to the false conclusion that in disparaging "works of the law" Paul was disparaging the law as such and had broken off with Judaism as a whole. He went on to say that Paul never disparages the "works of the Law," but emphatically states that no one other than Christ Jesus has done "works of the Law" flawlessly.

⁸⁰ Martin Hengel, "Early Christianity as a Jewish-Messianic Universalistic Movement," in *Conflicts and Challenges in Early Christianity*, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999), 6, states that it was a long and complicated process for the enthusiastic-messianic movement known as *Christianismos* to separate from their roots within Judaism. He goes on to say that it was not until A.D. 114 that the Gentile martyr Ignatius used the word with frequency and distinguished for the first time between *Christianismos*, "Christianity," and *Ioudaismos*, "Judaism."

⁸¹ Rom 7:12.

thought understand Paul to be addressing a real problem, a problem where doing “works of the Law” had been elevated to such an excessive level of importance that it produced an atmosphere of “works righteousness” among many of his contemporaries.⁸² Scholars in this group are divided over whether Paul is saying that the Mosaic Law had been totally abrogated through Christ’s atoning work or whether he was saying something different. There are some such as Thielman and Donald Hagner who consider the Mosaic Law’s time to have totally expired: the Law was abrogated through Christ.⁸³ Even with this being considered as reality, Thielman notes that Paul has not discarded the ethical

⁸² Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 177, states that many scholars have come to realize that Paul has not rejected Jewish Torah-piety but in fact is directly attacking a contemporary problem of seeing Torah obedience as “the Jewish gateway to righteousness.” It is interesting to note that Räisänen endorses Sanders’ “covenantal nomism” socio-historical contextual setting (pp. 179–80), and at the same time understands Paul to be actually attacking, “the Jewish gateway to righteousness.”

⁸³ Frank Thielman, *The Law and the New Testament: The Question of Continuity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 169, states that for Paul, believers are not obligated to the Mosaic law for two basic reasons: (1) because the Mosaic law is a specifically Jewish law, a requirement that Christians live by the Mosaic law is equivalent to the exclusion of Gentiles from the people of God (Gal 2:15–16; 5:2–4; Rom 3:27–30; 4:13–17)—God has shown that He welcomes Gentiles among his people apart from their acceptance of the Jewish law by sending his Spirit to them after they have responded in faith to the preaching of the Gospel (Gal 3:2–5), and (2) the Law’s term of service within God’s redemptive purposes has expired—God’s people were not faithful to the law’s requirements because, like all people, they are indelibly tainted with sin (Gal 2:15–16; 3:10–11; Rom 1:18–3:20; 5:12–21). This elaborates what Thielman states in his introduction (p. xi) and in his conclusion in which he compares some of Paul’s statements with the author of Hebrews and states that it is impossible to claim that the two authors describe the obsolescence of only certain parts of the Mosaic Law (2 Cor 3:13; Rom 10:4; Heb 7:12) (p. 177); in an earlier work, *Paul and the Law*, 16–17, Thielman had referred back to Thomas Aquinas’ work looking for support of his theory; he states that Aquinas made a clean break between the Old Law and the New Law because the Old Law was both good and necessary, but imperfect (*ST* 1a2ae.98.1–2) stating that this was the reason that this law was given through angels rather than directly from the hand of God (*ST* 1a2ae.98.3; cf. Gal 3:19). Because the Old Law was imperfect, God directly gave the New Law through the Holy Spirit, which rescues people from sin and transfers them into an incorruptible state (*ST* 1a2ae.98.3); and Hagner, “Paul & Judaism: Testing the New Perspective,” 78–90, 96–98, 100, 104, personally thinks that Paul was dealing with a real problem of “works righteousness” and therefore had abandoned the Law in favor of God’s grace; he does not consider the possibility of Grace and the Law as two entities that might work together.

teachings of the Law in the Messianic Age.⁸⁴ There are others such as Moo who are placing more emphasis on discontinuity and yet understand that there is still a certain level of continuity.⁸⁵ When Moo considered the meaning of Paul's statement in Rom 10:4

⁸⁴ Ibid., 169. Thielman states that within Paul's churches some began claiming that all things were permissible (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23), which led Paul's opponents to spread rumors that he encouraged people to sin (Rom 3:8; cf. 6:1, 15). Therefore, Paul considered it important to fill the ethical void left by the absence of the Mosaic Law. Thielman states that Paul refers to these teachings variously as "ways in Christ Jesus," "the law of Christ," the "tradition," "the fruit of the Spirit," and the received "pattern of teaching" (2 Thess 2:15; 3:6; 1 Cor 4:17; 9:21; 11:2; Gal 5:22–23; 6:2; Rom 6:17). These commands intersect the Mosaic Law at several places, most notably at the Decalogue and the love commandment (1 Cor 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Rom 14:5–6, 14). Thielman also notes the abrogation of the cultic and civic elements of the Law through Paul's spiritualizing of the Temple and sacrificial cult (1 Cor 3:9–17; 6:19; Phil 2:17; 4:18; 2 Cor 6:14–7:1; Rom 12:1), his belief that Jesus' death atoned for all past human sin (Rom 3:25–26), and his admonitions to submit to the Roman government (Rom 13:1–7). These thoughts are consistent with what Thielman had stated earlier (cf. 28–35) and restates later (p. 181). In an earlier work, *Paul and the Law*, 20–21, Thielman had referred back to John Calvin's work noting that Calvin had divided the role of the Mosaic Law into three groups: (1) moral, (2) ceremonial, and (3) judicial. The ceremonial law foreshadowed Christ and was fulfilled by Christ's death and resurrection, the judicial law provided for justice and equity in the civil government of Israel and was not normative for other peoples, and the moral law was still active as it reflected God's unchanging will (*Inst.* 4.20.15; cf. 2.7.1) (p. 20). Thielman understood Calvin to have vigorously opposed anyone who claimed that believers were not obligated in any sense to its commandments (*Inst.* 2.7.12–17) (p. 21). Later, after Thielman notes that some of the old boundary markers such as circumcision and dietary observance have been replaced by new markers such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, he states that holiness is still required of those who are willing to participate in the New Covenant (p. 106). After reviewing what Paul has written regarding the Law and the Gospel in his letters, Thielman states that the function [outcome] of obedience to the Law in the Old Testament and in Paul is identical. The Israelites' obedience to the Mosaic law marked them off from the other nations as God's 'treasured possession' (Ex 19:5; Lev 18:1–5; 19:24–26) and made them an appropriate dwelling place for God's presence (Lev 15:31). Similarly, in Paul's letters the conduct of believers separates them from the rest of the world (1 Cor 5:1; 2 Cor 6:17; Eph 4:1; 5:3; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 4:5) and purifies their bodies and their congregations because they are God's dwelling place through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). Thielman states that this similarity between the pattern of Christianity in Paul's letters and the pattern revealed in the Mosaic Law *goes deeper than simply the concept of obedience as a social boundary and act of purification* [italics added]. Thielman notes that the specific commands from both eras are often similar: (1) proper sexual conduct separates Israel from the surrounding nations (Lev 18:1–30) just as it separates the Thessalonians and the Corinthians from their unbelieving neighbors (1 Thess 4:3–8; 1 Cor 5:1–2), (2) the love command is a prominent feature of Pauline ethics (Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14), and (3) Paul takes over several of the Ten Commandments wholesale (Rom 13:9; Eph 6:2–3)—on one occasion Paul recalls a rule from the Mosaic Law to help him settle a dispute over the rights of those who preach the Gospel (1 Cor 9:9). Thielman concludes that for Paul the Gospel does not alter the Law in some critical ways such as stressing that God's gracious Act of Redemption came prior to His demand for obedience and that the people of God must separate themselves from those who are not trying to live out their lives according to God's will (pp. 240–41).

⁸⁵ Douglas J. Moo, "The Law of Moses or the Law of Christ?" in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis*

that Christ is the τέλος of the Law, he came to the conclusion that Christ was both an “end” and “goal” of the Law, which for him means that only some of what is written in the Law is no longer applicable for those living in the Messianic Age.⁸⁶ Snodgrass places more emphasis on the continuity of the Law in Messianic Age. He states that not only did Scriptures function authoritatively for Paul even when he was making a negative statement about the Law, but that he never was advocating antinomianism nor undermining obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Law (Rom 3:8; 6:15). Paul expected Christians to obey the Law (1 Cor 7:19; Rom 8:4).⁸⁷

Some such as Davies and Stephen Davis see Paul’s teachings and others’ from the Early Church such as Matthew’s as showing how the living Christ is in fact the “Eternal Torah.”⁸⁸ In his book *Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, Thomas Schreiner discusses

Johnson, Jr, ed. S. Lewis Johnson and John S. Feinberg (Westchester: Crossway, 1988), 203–04, goes on to say that it is likely that the fulfillment referred to in Matt 5:17 means that Jesus’ new, eschatological demands do not constitute an abandonment of the Law but express that which the Law was all along intended to anticipate. At this point, Moo states that Jesus’ teaching clearly stresses an “anticipation-realization” continuity within the scheme of salvation-history. Within this context, the Law as stated in Matt 5:18–19 is understood to possess enduring validity (p. 205). But, Moo sees a change in the place of the Law expressed in Paul’s statement in Rom 10:4 that Christ is the τέλος of the Law, and in Gal 3:10–14 where Christians are told that they are not under the Law but under the Law of Christ, under Christ, (Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21) fulfilling the Law through obedience to the Spirit (p. 213).

⁸⁶ Moo, “Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years,” 302–04.

⁸⁷ Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence,” 83.

⁸⁸ W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 2d ed. (London: SPCK, 1955; reprint, 1958), 149–50, states that it has been amply recognized by scholars that for Paul Jesus has replaced the Torah as the center of his life. Davies states that the importance of this fact is often overlooked and results in not expecting that Paul’s understanding of Jesus would be directly related to his understanding of Torah and the Law. Davies goes on to state that understanding Jesus in light of the Law was not unique to Paul and uses the Gospel of Matthew as an example. He states that Matthew showed that Jesus was the new Law-giver who is greater than Moses with the Sermon on the Mount being the counterpart of the Sermon on Sinai; cf. Stephen K. Davis, *The Antithesis of the Ages: Paul’s Reconfiguration of Torah*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series, no. 33, ed. Mark S. Smith (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002), 3–4, who states that many have failed

the fact that although there is a putting aside of what Dunn calls the “ethnic boundary markers” from the Mosaic Law, there is a strong sense in Paul’s letters that Christ’s followers “fulfill” the Law.⁸⁹ Schreiner states that this same Paul, who celebrates life in the Spirit, freedom in Christ and the centrality of love, also fills his letters with commands and exhortations apparently not believing that exhorting believers contradicts the reality of the Spirit leading their lives so that they may fulfill requirements of the Law

to understand Paul’s teachings on the Law for the Messianic Age because they have followed theories that expect changes made between the Old Testament and Paul’s day, which would have added a new idea of a Messianic Torah substantially different than earlier teachings. Davis states that that type of thinking is erroneous, because Paul’s thinking was derived from logical thinking rather than evolutionary (p. 25). In his conclusion, Davis understands Paul to be teaching that Christ is the eternal Torah. He says that Paul’s depreciation of Torah was addressed to the reconfiguration of the Torah image set so that Christ would fill the same theological space as the eternal Torah; Christ, not Torah, was Wisdom, the agent of creation (p. 216). Davis goes on to say that Rom 9:33 is an example of Pauline countertextuality with its language mimicking assertions about Torah in Sirach 24 and 32. Now it is Christ who rescues his believers from eschatological shame. This counterpoint to Sirach’s identification of Wisdom with Torah is reinforced in Rom 10:6–9 when Paul restates Deut 30:14 and Bar 3:29 as an affirmation of Christ rather than Torah (p. 216); and cf. Moo, “The Law of Moses or the Law of Christ?,” 217, who in his conclusion of this article, states that Christian are not bound to the Mosaic Law, but instead, to Christ Himself, the fulfiller of the Law.

⁸⁹ Thomas Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 308–10, goes on to say that if one describes Paul’s view of the Law merely in terms of abolition, this is unsatisfying because there is a motif of fulfillment in Paul’s letters. Schreiner notes that Paul’s teachings show: (1) the whole Mosaic law is fulfilled in terms of love (Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14), which includes the prohibitions against adultery, murder, stealing and coveting as part of the law of love (Rom 13:8–10). Schreiner notes that all of these commands are part of the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:13–17; Deut 5:17–21), (2) one must love one’s neighbor as oneself (Lev 19:18), and (3) elsewhere there are commandments against murder (Rom 1:29), adultery (1 Cor 6:9), stealing (1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:10; Eph 4:28), with coveting receiving extended treatment in Rom 7:7–25, which can be compared to 1 Cor 10:6; 2 Cor 9:5; Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5) (p. 325). Schreiner goes on to say that when Paul teaches that the Law is fulfilled in those “who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom 8:4),” the plain sense of this statement is that those walking in the Spirit will fulfill concrete workings of the Law. Schreiner looks at Rom 8:7 as strengthening such a view when Paul states that those who are in the flesh do not and cannot submit to God’s law. This view of Rom 8:4 also fits with Romans 7, in which Paul proclaims human beings’ inability to keep God’s law in the flesh, which is in contradistinction to those who are being empowered to fulfill God’s Law through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (p. 327); and cf. Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 124, who states that Christians are to fulfill the will of God, which finds paradigmatic expression in the Decalogue (Rom 13:8f.) and can be summarized most concisely in the love command (Gal 5:14; Rom 13:8). The will of God will be the criterion of the final judgment, which God has given over to His Christ (2 Cor 5:10; Rom 2:12–16).

(Gal 5:13–15; Rom 8:4; 13:8–10; cf. Rom 2:26–29).⁹⁰ Snodgrass promotes a possible solution to the diversity of views by asking everyone to consider how the Law functions under the “sphere of influence of sin and the flesh” versus how it functions for those under the “sphere of influence of faith and participation with Christ, the sphere of the Spirit” (Rom 8:1; Gal 2:17).⁹¹ Under the first sphere of influence, the Law brings about death due to the tyranny of sin, and yet it does not belong under this sphere of influence because it is good, just, holy, and spiritual (Rom 7:12–14).⁹² When one lives out his or her life under the influence of the sphere created by being *in* Christ, the Law is placed within the Sphere of the Spirit (Rom 8:4) where it ultimately belongs (Rom 7:14); the Law in the correct sphere frees Christ’s followers from the tyranny of sin.⁹³

The Place of “Works of the Law” in the Messianic Age

Although many such as Martin Hengel and Seyoon Kim understand the Early Church and Paul to be teaching that God had just completed a work through Jesus Christ that provided justification and resulting salvation for all who would trust Him,⁹⁴ they are

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence,” 85.

⁹² Ibid., 85–86.

⁹³ Ibid., 92.

⁹⁴ Martin Hengel, “[Paul,] the Persecutor,” in *The Pre-Christian Paul*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991), 80–83, states that in Paul’s theology of the cross, the question of how justification and salvation and their relationship to the Law was not something later worked out in response to early Christian conflicts among various communities, but was from the beginning directed by the teachings of Jesus and then spread through the Early Church. Hengel notes that after Paul’s conversion, he still would have remembered his own error as a Pharisee in not originally recognizing the crucified Messiah; and Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 5–6, 10–13, 19, 34, states that Paul received both his missionary

divided over the place of doing “works of the Law” in the newly inaugurated Messianic Age. Naturally, those who think that Paul is teaching that all of the Mosaic Law has been abrogated will most likely understand Paul to be abrogating all “works of the Law.” There are others who understand Paul to be teaching something different than total abrogation. Ajit Das understands Paul to be addressing a real problem of “works righteousness,” and even with Paul teaching against justification based on doing “works of the Law,” he states that Paul would not have considered Moses’ teaching as wrong; there is still a need to do the “works of the Law.” Justification, which is acquired through faith, does not rule out the need to do the righteous works commanded by the Law.⁹⁵ Schreiner notes that the first-century Judaic soteriology that Paul was immersed in included the *synergism* of God’s grace and human works.⁹⁶ Davies’ research led him to conclude that Torah was not

commission to the Gentiles and his basic understanding of God’s grace bestowed through Jesus during his Damascus Road Conversion. Kim goes on to say that Paul informed the Galatians that the gospel that he had received through the revelation of Jesus Christ was the same gospel that he preached to them (1:11–17) (p. 46).

⁹⁵ Ajit Andrew Das, “Beyond Covenantal Nomism: A ‘Newer Perspective’ on Paul and the Law,” (Ph.D. diss., Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 1999), 383, 392–94. Similar to Sanders, Das differentiates between the righteousness originating from faith and the righteousness that stems from doing “works of the Law.” But, *contra* Sanders, Das’ main thesis is that when Paul realized the truth of the Gospel message, he realized that he had to move beyond “covenantal nomism” and accept God’s gift of grace because God actually required perfect obedience, which no one was able to do on his or her own. Das’ “newer perspective” understands Paul to have accepted God’s grace and thereby to have moved beyond “covenantal nomism” and into a close association with Christ, who provides justification for his transgressions against God as revealed through the Law (pp. 389–90).

⁹⁶ Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 93–96, states that his thesis is that Paul detected legalism in Judaism because its soteriology was synergistic: salvation was by God’s grace and human works. Jews believed that through their free will they could cooperate with God.

expected to change in the Messianic Age; instead God would send a prophet who would make the Law clearer.⁹⁷

Today, scholars such as Ulrich Wilckens understand Paul to be saying that God requires a synergistic approach for Christ's followers. Although believers are saved by God's grace through faith, Wilckens understands there to be a real demand made by the Mosaic Law requiring Christians to be actively obedient to His commandments in order *to maintain* salvation.⁹⁸ Wilckens states that Paul in no way is against "works" and goes on to say, "Das Evangelium fordert keinen Verzicht auf eigenes Handeln; es provoziert zu keinerlei Resignation, die sich als Passivität gegenüber Gott, dem Handeln allein zustehe, auslegt: the Evangelist is not requiring the abandonment of one's actions; it is not a provocation in any way to a resignation, which in itself is being interpreted as passivity before God to whom alone action belongs." After balancing Paul's statement in Rom 3:20, 28, in which Paul states that no one will be justified by "Gesetzeswerken: works of the Law,"⁹⁹ with Rom 2:13, in which Paul states that only the doers of the Law will be justified, Wilkins challenges interpreters to understand how these scriptures fit together contextually, "Man überspielt das Problem exegetisch, wenn man die Argumentation in Röm 2 als jüdisches Relikt beurteilt oder den Gedanken des Paulus als rein hypothetisch

⁹⁷ Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, 44–46. A couple references for Davies conclusions came from 1 Macc 4.46; 14.41 and CD 8.6–10, which proclaimed a Teacher of Righteousness who would arise in the future and impart additional insight for the existing Torah. For additional information, see n. 27 of this chapter.

⁹⁸ Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an Die Römer: Röm 1–5*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, no. 6, pt. 1 (Zürich: Benziger-Neukirchener, 1978), 143–45.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 142–43.

auffaßt: One overplays the problem exegetically if that one judges the argument in Romans 2 as a Jewish relic, or if that one concludes that Paul's thinking is purely hypothetical."¹⁰⁰ Wilckens correctly points out that if one understands what Paul is saying with both thoughts being valid, they will truly understand how doing the "works of the Law" fits into Paul's teachings on justification. He states, "An der Antwort auf diese Frage hängt entscheidend das Verständnis der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre im ganzen: Deciding the answer to this question is directly related to understanding the Pauline doctrine of justification in its totality."¹⁰¹ Wright agrees with individuals such as Wilckens who claim that Paul is not in any way opposing "works of the Law" in and of themselves and states that it makes no sense in the proper historical and covenantal context of Paul's theology for Paul to be attacking "works of the Law" *per se*. What Paul is proclaiming is that the Renewed Covenant's membership badge is faith.¹⁰² Considering Rom 2:13 as the highpoint of 2:12–16, Stuhlmacher states that it is a known Jewish teaching that God will in fact judge the world according to the criterion set by the Law (cf. Ezra 7:37; 70–73; 2 Bar. 48.27, 38–40, 46f.).¹⁰³ When considering Rom 3:31, Stuhlmacher states that Paul has taken an emphatic stance regarding the Law and its commandments stating that Christ's work did *not* nullify the Law (2:12–16), but fulfilled

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰² Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 155–56.

¹⁰³ Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 41–42.

it (5:18). It is the Law that witnesses to the righteousness of God (3:21; 4:3) and continues to teach righteousness for those who are led by the Spirit (8:3f).¹⁰⁴

When evaluating Rom 3:20, Gathercole states that Paul's teaching that no flesh can be justified by simply doing "works of the Law" only makes sense if he is speaking about obedience to the Law in general without limiting that obedience to the "works of the Law" that deal only with Israel's identity markers and purity ordinances as Dunn has suggested.¹⁰⁵ He goes on to say that in Rom 8:3–4 Paul is teaching that individuals have the ability to fulfill the Law, the Torah, through the power of the indwelling Spirit.¹⁰⁶ After evaluating Paul's writings regarding Rom 3:27–4:8, Schreiner concludes that Paul is affirming that when Torah is understood as a law that teaches faith rather than works and that boasting is not an option for those who follow God, the best solution is to recognize both the individual and national implications of his teaching, which clearly show that Jews practiced exclusivism in general and that some Jews were attempting to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰⁵ Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 222–23.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 223. Continuing, Gathercole states in Rom 9:30–10:4, Paul is saying that many of Israel have failed to understand God because they are pursuing the goal of the Torah through works instead of through faith; he states, "This Torah as it should have been pursued (by faith) is the Law *of faith*. One implication for this is that there is no need for a metaphorical meaning for Law (νόμος), though this is not a key issue in the New Perspective debate. What was Israel's mistake? Many were approaching Torah as if it centered around works, and Israel, ignorant of the righteousness of God, pursued her own righteousness (p. 227). Gathercole goes on to say that for Paul, the Law is not to be understood as *centered* around works to the exclusion of faith. If righteousness is pursued through "works of the Law," then the result is to slip on the stumbling-stone (pp. 227–28)." Gathercole concludes by saying that the problem is not with Israel's goal, but instead with the way that they pursued it (p. 228), and considering 9:30ff. in relationship with 3:27, Gathercole states that this parallel makes it extremely difficult to limit the scope of "works of Torah" primarily to Sabbath, circumcision, and food laws (p. 229). Therefore, Gathercole concludes that Paul is not speaking about works that identify Israel as Israel *per se* in Rom 3:28 but is speaking about works that includes Jews and Gentiles (p. 230).

be right before God on the basis of works.¹⁰⁷ Schreiner sees Paul's statement in Rom 9:30–10:8 as leaving little doubt that there is a real on-going problem among many Jews. Many are pursuing a perceived righteousness that is derived solely from "works" leaving faith out of the picture and thereby rejecting God's plan of salvation.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, believers are not to fall into the same mind-set as some of Paul's contemporaries who misunderstand Torah. Justification is possible through God's grace and only through God's grace, and in that light believers are *still* to be fulfilling the requirements of the Law through the leading of the Spirit (Gal 5:13–15; Rom 8:4; 13:8–10; cf. Rom 2:26–29).¹⁰⁹

Paul and "Works of the Law" in Key Literary Contexts

The first issue to address in understanding the literary-grammatical context of Paul's teaching regarding "works of the Law" is to understand how "works of the Law" fit into Paul's understanding of the "righteousness of God" and the means by which God justified sinners. Stuhlmacher states that the expression ἡ δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, "the righteousness of God," occurs repeatedly in Paul's letters (2 Cor 5:21; Rom 1:17; 3:21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3). Stuhlmacher goes on to say that in Phil 3:9 Paul speaks moreover of ἡ ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, "the righteousness from God," stating that these constructions go

¹⁰⁷ Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 121; and in an earlier work, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 106, Schreiner had stated that the Jews felt superior to Gentiles, not only because of their birth, but also because of their obedience to the Torah.

¹⁰⁸ Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 104.

¹⁰⁹ Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 308–10.

back to the Old Testament and early Judaism. According to Judg 5:11; 1 Sam 12:7; Ps 103:6; Dan 9:16, and Mic 6:56, the history of Israel is filled with צְדִיקוֹת יְהוָה, “the righteous acts of YHWH.” Stuhlmacher states that Community at Qumran held these same ideas as they considered God’s righteousness as being the key activity in creating salvation and well being for His children. This thought is demonstrated in texts such as 1QS 10.23; cf. Isa 45:8, 23–24; 51:6, 8 Ps 71:19; 89:17; 96:13; 98:9; and 111:3.

Stuhlmacher continues by saying that the righteousness of God is also active in judgment, giving security and hope to those without legal rights (Isa 1:26–27) and denouncing the wicked (Ps 50:6–7). In the penitential prayers of the Old Testament, God’s righteousness is appealed to as his saving mercy (1QS 11.10–15; Dan 9:16, 18; 4 Ezra 8.31–36).¹¹⁰ In judgment, Paul teaches that it is God who provides the possibility of making sinners righteous before Him. Stuhlmacher states that by evaluating Romans, it is clear that Paul’s discourse about justification arises from the Old Testament and early Jewish sources and has a forensic ring to it. When the verb δικαιοῦν, “to justify,” is used in the active voice, it designates God’s act of justification (Gal 3:8; Rom 3:26, 30; 4:5; 8:30, 33). For Paul, the passive δικαιοῦσθαι, “to be justified,” usually means the acceptance that is extended to or withheld from humans in the judgment (Gal 2:16–17; 3:11, 24; Rom 2:13; 3:20, 24, 28). Stuhlmacher continues by saying that Paul, in a typical Jewish manner, speaks about the righteousness of God “synthetically” as he uses it to designate God’s own creative and saving activity (Rom 3:5, 25–26) as well as the gracious gift of

¹¹⁰ Stuhlmacher, *A Challenge to the New Perspective*, 18–19.

righteousness that believers share (Rom 3:22; 2 Cor 5:21).¹¹¹ Later, Stuhlmacher ties Paul's teachings regarding God's righteousness and justification to atonement and reconciliation by saying that as 2 Cor 5:16–21 and Rom 3:24–26; 4:25; 5:1–11 show, justification, atonement, reconciliation, and the new creation have the most intimate connection for Paul. Through the Old Testament, it can be seen that these motifs are beginning to overlap in Isa 43:3–4, 18–19; 50:8; 53:10–12; and 65:17, and the same thing occurs in the Qumran texts such as 1QS 11.11–15. These texts function like a prelude to Rom 5:1–11, which says that God demonstrates His righteousness and mercy by delivering sinners from their sins and by granting them access to Himself through His own grace.¹¹²

When Snodgrass evaluated an Early Christian writing, Matthew, from a literary critical perspective looking for the place of the νόμου in early Christian thought, he noted that Jesus came to fulfill the Law and not set it aside.¹¹³ Snodgrass noted that Matt 5:19 underscores the importance of doing and teaching the Law as it refers to ethical behavior.¹¹⁴

Hagner states that Paul has a strange way of arguing if he is not dealing with “legalism” in some of his statements—a way that is indirect and misleading if he is only

¹¹¹ Ibid., 19–20.

¹¹² Ibid., 57.

¹¹³ Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” *Interpretation* 46 (1992), 372.

¹¹⁴ Snodgrass, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 373, continues by stating that the importance of following the Law in the context of all of God’s Word is emphasized in Jesus’ temptation encounter with the Devil in which Jesus states that one must live by *every* word that proceeds from the *mouth* of God (Matt 4:4).

dealing with national traditions and privileges.¹¹⁵ Schreiner states that through Paul's letters one can see significant evidence that Paul opposes a form of Jewish legalism. He sees the writings themselves showing that Paul was addressing a real problem of legalism through the manner in which he used the phrase ἔργα νόμου in the context of Rom 3:27–4:8; 9:30–10:8, and Phil 3:2–11.¹¹⁶ When Schreiner evaluates Rom. 3:20, 28, and Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10, he notes that Paul is obviously addressing “works of the law” in such a way that opposes some who are considering these works as a pathway to being justified before God. He then states that “legalism” is present by definition when one believes that “good works” play a part in meriting or earning salvation. Schreiner went on to show that when Galatians is read in context, the letter clearly shows that Paul is writing in response to proponents of “works righteousness” who had made significant inroads into the Galatian community. Even in Rom 3:20, 28, Schreiner thinks that it is doubtful that Paul is articulating a theological axiom that is unrelated to a real problem that he has faced.¹¹⁷

Das states that throughout Romans 9–11, ἔργα refers to human activity just as it does in Galatians and Romans 2–4.¹¹⁸ From his investigation, Das states that whenever ἔργα is used in relation with the νόμος, there is nothing to indicate that Paul has only ethnic boundary markers in mind. Paul uses the language of ἔργα νόμου to indicate the

¹¹⁵ Hagner, “Paul & Judaism: Testing the New Perspective,” 104.

¹¹⁶ Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 93.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94–95.

¹¹⁸ Das, “Beyond Covenantal Nomism: A ‘Newer Perspective’ on Paul and the Law,” 339.

general “deeds or works” that the Mosaic Law requires.¹¹⁹ In his conclusion on the subject, Das states that the language and imagery of Rom 9:30–32 within the context of Romans 9–11 require that ἔργα νόμου be understood in general terms as “doing the Law.”¹²⁰

Schreiner states that Rom 3:21–4:12 is full of language about righteousness that indicates that entrance into the new covenant is in view. Through Rom 1:18–3:20, Paul has already shown that people are not made right with God through the Law due to sin. Schreiner then points out that Paul furthers his argument by stating that people become right with God, members of the covenant people, through faith in Jesus Christ. The discussion on circumcision in Rom 4:9–12 strengthens this view. Schreiner points out that Jews typically considered circumcision mandatory for induction into the people of God. When Paul asks whether one must be circumcised in order to be righteous, he is asking if one must be circumcised to be part of the people of God.¹²¹ When Schreiner evaluates Paul’s argument in Rom 9:30–10:8, he concludes that the reason that some of the Gentiles had obtained right-standing with God while many of the Jews had fallen short could be explained through verses 31–32, which say that the Jews “pursued the law *for* righteousness,” but they did not attain right-standing with God because “they did not pursue the law from [a perspective of] faith, but as from works.” Schreiner concludes that Paul’s argument shows that he considers pursuing the Law as neither a mistake nor as

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 344.

¹²¹ Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 99.

evil. The Jews only fault was that they were pursuing the Law from a perspective of “works.” If they had pursued the same Law from a perspective of faith, they would have obtained a right-standing with God.¹²²

**Paul, Ἔργα Νόμου, and the Relevance of Ἔργα Νόμου
For Those Who Are ἐν Χριστῷ**

In Eph 2:8–10, Paul tells his addressees that they are not saved by any works that they might do, they are instead saved by grace; salvation is a gift from God on their behalf that is received through faith. Then he proceeds to tell them that we, you Gentiles and us Jews, have been created to do ἔργους ἀγαθοῦς, “good works,” which God has already planned out for us. From this point in his argument, Paul proceeds to say in Eph 2:15a that Christ has either abolished or made ineffective either the whole Law or part of the Law designated as δόγματα, “ordinances.” Although there is a general consensus among scholars that Paul is teaching that no one will be justified by doing ἔργα νόμου, “works of the Law,” there are less that agree that Christ’s followers are to be obeying any specific commandments of the Mosaic Law, moral or otherwise, because they understand the *whole* Law to have been abolished for the Messianic Age. Because “works of the Law” and the Law itself go hand in hand, it is important to understand how the “works of the Law” were understood by Paul and other first-century witnesses. In reality, Paul is either stating that no “works of the Law” need to be performed by Christ’s followers, or he is saying that some portion of the “works of the Law” are now optional for Christ’s

¹²² Ibid., 104.

followers. It was demonstrated above that there is good reason to think that many first-century Jews understood the Law itself to be eternal; they were expecting the Law to be placed in the hearts of those following God through Christ in the Messianic Age.

Therefore, in this section, the author will interact with Scripture and the voices of some of the modern scholars who have done primary-source research in search for a first-century understanding of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου and how these works were looked at in regard to the Law. This information will then be applied in the last major subsection of this chapter to derive Paul's intended meaning of the participial clause τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν.

The Meaning of ἔργα Νόμου

Νόμος

Hay noted that Philo used the term νόμος consistently to denote the commandments of the Mosaic Law and occasionally the entire Pentateuch.¹²³ In a somewhat similar manner, Paul consistently uses νόμος to refer to the Mosaic Law as a whole or its individual parts, its commandments, ordinances, or customs, but he never uses νόμος to refer to the entire Pentateuch except for one time when he uses the word

¹²³ Hay, "Philo of Alexandria," 373, states that the new *Philo Index* lists 536 occurrences of the term νόμος for the Philonic corpus with this term being Philo's standard term for the Mosaic legislation along with his use of it to refer many times to the Pentateuch as a whole (narratives as well as statutes). Philo calls the Ten Commandments the ten λόγοι, "words," and says that they summarize the Special Laws (*Spec.* 1:1).

νόμος to denote “Scripture.”¹²⁴ Paul also uses a form of the word ἀνόμου including the adverb ἀνόμως to refer to those who do not have or do not follow the requirements of the Mosaic Law, which is God’s Law (1 Cor 9:21, 21, 21, 21; 2 Thess 2:8; Rom 2:12, 12). When addressing the daily theological and ethical issues of the newly established churches throughout the eastern Mediterranean World, Paul uses the Mosaic Law in conjunction with Christ’s extended teachings to emphasize the intent of the Law over its literal meaning. In the overall scheme of things, Paul’s teachings line up with Christ’s teachings as recorded in Matt 22:37–40. In Rom 13:8–10, Paul states that the act of loving one’s neighbor is the πλήρωμα νόμου, “the fulfillment of the Law.”¹²⁵ Knowing that no one is made righteous before God through their own actions, Paul states in 1 Cor 9:21 that those who follow Christ are ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, “upright through Christ.”¹²⁶

Paul normally uses the word νόμος with the article to emphasize the entire Law and

¹²⁴ 1 Cor 14:21 is an exception to Paul’s use of νόμος. In this passage, Paul uses νόμος, to refer to “Scripture” as Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah—in other places such as 2 Tim 3:16, Paul used the word γραφή to denote “Scripture.” When looking through Paul’s letters as a whole, the context shows that Paul is normally speaking about a specific law, the Mosaic Law. There are a few places that show more fully what Paul is referring to such as: (1) Gal 3:10 where the Law is referred to as τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ νόμου, (2) 1 Cor 9:8–11 where ὁ νόμος is directly equated with ὁ Μωϋσέως νόμος, and (3) Rom 9:4 where ἡ νομοθεσία, “the giving of the Law” was to Israel; and cf. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, 110–11, 139, who states that according to Paul’s most frequent usage of *nomos*, the term refers to the sum of specific divine requirements given to Israel through Moses. They were intended to be *poiein*, *prassein*, “done,” or *phylassein*, *telein*, “kept,” though concrete demands, which also provided opportunity to commit *parabasis*, “transgression” of the Law (pp. 110–11). Later, Westerholm goes on to say that in the Deuteronomistic literature, the Torah of Moses contained the sum of the commandments imposed upon Israel at Mount Sinai, which were accompanied by sanctions, and therefore, the translation of νόμος as “law” is the most adequate rendering (p. 139).

¹²⁵ Cf. Gal 5:14.

¹²⁶ BDAG, 337–38. The general idea, the sense, that is associated with the word ἔννομος is that of someone or something being lawful, legal, true to the law, and upright.

νόμος without the article to emphasize τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου, “the righteous requirements of the Law.”¹²⁷ There are a few exceptions to the norm: one occurs in Rom 7:23–8:11 where Paul is teaching about two ἕτερον νόμους, “different laws.” They represent two distinct attitudes within every individual: ὁ νόμος τοῦ νοός, “the law of the mind,” and ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου, “the law of sin and death.”¹²⁸ In Gal 3:21; 5:22; Rom 3:27, and 4:15, νόμος refers to the role of any general law, and in 1 Tim 1:9, ἀνομοίς is used to refer to the general unrighteousness of humanity and its need for God’s Law.

For example, in Romans 7–8, Paul consistently uses ὁ νόμος and νόμος in such a way as to show clearly that ὁ νόμος normally refers to the entire Mosaic Law and νόμος to “the righteous requirements of the Mosaic Law.” In this text, Paul uses the concept of the inapplicability of regulations of the Law that pertains to a married women applying to her once her spouse has died to illustrate the inapplicability of the Law’s sentencing of anyone to death for violations after that person has come into a close

¹²⁷ Paul’s contextual style shows that the quality of the word νόμος can best be described by the phrase τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου, which is found in Rom 2:26. It should be noted that this general concept is used by Paul even when he places νόμος into a prepositional phrases.

¹²⁸ Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law,” 91–92, has a different understanding of the “Law of the Mind” and the “Law of Sin and Death.” He states that all occurrences of the use of νόμος are referring to Torah and that there are others such as Moule, Osten-Sacken, and Wilckens who agree with him. Snodgrass states that it is clear that Paul’s usages of the term νόμος in Rom 7:22, 25b; 8:3, 4, 7 are clear references to Old Testament law, but the references to “the law of sin” and “the law of sin and death” in 7:23c, 25; and 8:2 refer to God’s Law which has been commandeered by sin to bring about death. This law refers to the Law after it is in the hands of sin as described by 7:5, 13; it is the Law abducted into the *sphere* of sin. Snodgrass goes on to say that the “law of my mind,” which delights in God’s Law (7:23b), is the Law operating in the *sphere* of the Spirit (pp. 91–92).”

relationship with Christ, because once someone starts following Christ, God uses Christ's substitutionary death to satisfy the requirements for disobedience against His commandments, regulations, and customs (Rom 7:1–6). At the beginning of this letter, Paul had already stated that he was not ashamed to proclaim this Good News because its message had the power to transform lives by allowing God's righteous act through Christ to renew sinful humanity (Rom 1:16–17).¹²⁹ Christ's followers have technically died with Christ upon confession of Christ as lord of their lives and their corresponding trust in God because of *His* loving and longsuffering nature, which has been demonstrated through His raising up of Christ (Rom 10:9–13; cf. Eph 1:13–14). From that point onward they fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law by walking according to God's righteousness through the Spirit's leading (Rom 8:4). Even when Paul makes his teaching personal by framing his thoughts in the first person, this principle holds true. For example, in Rom 7:8–9, Paul states that χωρὶς νόμου, “without (having the righteous requirements of) the Law,” sin was not be known, and therefore, he was still alive. But, when ἡ ἐντολή, “the commandment,” came into his sphere of thinking through ὁ νόμος, “the Law,” declaring that it was wrong to covet, his coveting increased instead of decreasing due to sin dwelling in him, which rebelled openly against God and condemned him as a violator of the Law.

¹²⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 132, states that Israel's rhetorical world has God and His driving power at its center. The righteousness of God can be demonstrated through God's actions on behalf of those whom He has chosen. He says that the Old Testament reveals this God who characteristically acts in powerless Israel's behalf, who dominates Israel's speech, who is the one who acts in life-permitting צדקוֹתַי, “righteous acts,” and therefore, He is the only thinkable subject of Israel's thanks and praise.

In Paul's letters, three thoughts become apparent regarding the character and role of the Mosaic Law with its deeper understanding over personal lives as taught through Christ's teachings in the Messianic Age: (1) there is nothing wrong with the Law nor its commandments; in fact, they are holy, righteous, and good, (2) due to sin no one will be justified by doing the righteous requirements of the Law, but Christ's followers are justified because He has taken on the curse of the Law for everyone who follows Him, and (3) although no one is justified by doing what is expected by God as shown through the righteous commandments of the Law, it has not been abolished. Instead, Christ's followers are continually fulfilling to the best of their ability the righteous moral requirements of the Law and the will of God for their lives as they follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Looking at the three aspects regarding the relationship between the Law and Grace as denoted above: (1) Paul makes it clear through passages such as Rom 7:7, 12, 14; 8:2 that the Law and its commandments are holy, righteous, and good—it is spiritual—and the Law is still the embodiment of knowledge and truth from which Christ's followers continue to learn God's will and essential instruction for daily living (Rom 2:17, 20),¹³⁰ (2) Paul is emphatic that no one will be fully justified ἐξ ἔργων νόμου or ἐκ νόμου, "out of works of the Law," or διὰ νόμου, "through (works of) the

¹³⁰ Earlier in this chapter under the subheading "Laying the Foundation," it was noted that there are those such as O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 199, who understand the whole Law to have been ineffective or abrogated and that in reality Christ's followers are operating under the authority of the Law of Christ. It is interesting that so many of the known commandments of the Lord correspond to existing commandments from the Mosaic Law.