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Reading 2 Corinthians 3:4-18: An Exercise in Exegesis

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READING 2 CORINTHIANS 3:4-18:

AN EXERCISE IN EXEGESIS

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letters have a reading history of almost two millennia. It is a history of readings and misreadings, of grasping the general drift of the texts and of being puzzled when it comes down to the details. Readers have felt this ever since the New Testament era. Already in the first century Saint Peter writes that some things in Paul's letters are "hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:16).

Of the whole Pauline corpus, the Second Letter to the Corinthians has proved to be one of the most impenetrable. Paul and Timothy assured their first readers that they were writing to them only what they, the Christians at Corinth, could read and understand (2 Cor. 1:13). Yet, this does not mean that all readers, particularly late-comers, have read it with ease and complete understanding. One contemporary reader of 2 Corinthians, for instance, feels that

> its argumentation is frequently obscure . . . . , its contents unfamiliar, its construction apparently haphazard, and its <u>Sitz im Leben</u> foggy."[1]

In Second Corinthians, one of the most baffling

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[1] Carol Kern Stockhausen, <u>Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3,1-4,6</u> (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989), 2.

portions is chapter three.[2] It is one of the most intensely

studied portions of the Pauline corpus, as the flood of

publications indicates.[3] Many readers have come to one

basic conclusion: it is a text that is not easily read.

Here are some of the reactions:

> It [2 Cor. 3:1-4:6] is indeed one of the most
> fruitful and challenging parts of Paul's
> literary legacy.[4]

> While there is here no lack of clarity, there are
> many obscure passages in 3:7-18.[5]

> Many who try to grasp the nuances of Paul's
> argument may feel at times that they have a veil over
> their minds. It [2 Corinthians 3] is a passage fraught
> with exegetical perplexities.[6]

> We now approach what could be called the Mount
> Everest of Pauline texts as far as difficulty is
> concerned - or should we rather call it the sphinx
> among texts, since its difficulty lies in its
> enigmatic quality rather than in its complexity?[7]

How should the reader approach a text as complex as 2

Corinthians 3? What method should he apply? In trying to

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[2]"2 Corinthians 3" will be used throughout this paper as
a convenient shorthand for "2 Cor. 3:4-18."

[3]In the last two decades, more than 25 essays on 2
Corinthians 3 or parts thereof were published in scholarly
journals. See Bibliography.

[4]Stockhausen, 177.

[5]Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind,
trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), 58.

[6]David E. Garland, "The Sufficiency of Paul, Minister of
the New Covenant," Criswell Theological Review 4 (1989): 21.

[7]A. T. Hanson, "The Midrash is 2 Cor 3: A
Reconsideration," Journal for the Study of the New Testament
9 (1980): 19.

find an answer to these questions, it is necessary to consider both the options that are available and some of the pitfalls that may be encountered along the way.

No matter what method the interpreter of 2 Corinthians 3 is going to select, it will stress either one or a combination of four elements: the text itself, the author of the text, the referent of the text, or the reader of the text.[8] In any case, the text is presupposed, so that it may be described as the center around which the other elements, namely, the author, the reader, and the referent revolve. This can be diagrammed as follows:

REFERENTS

TEXT

AUTHOR(S)   READER
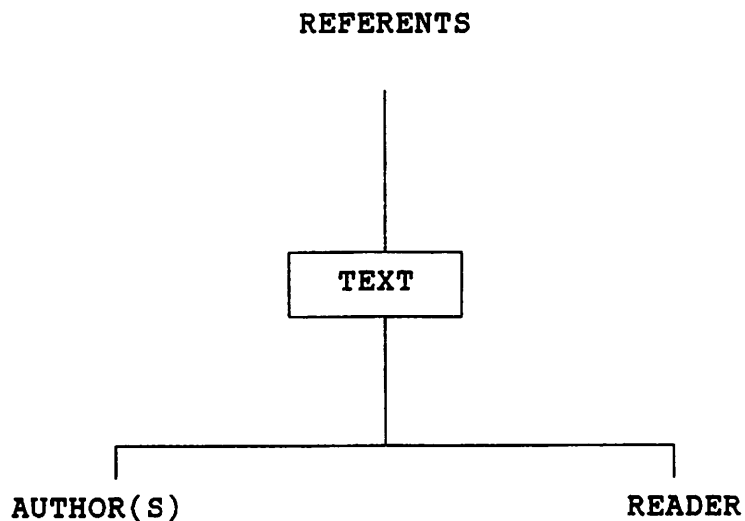
Based on this diagram, the interpreter of 2

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[8]John Barton, "Classifying Biblical Criticism," Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 29 (1984): 23. Barton takes his clue from Abrams [The Mirror and the Lamp, 1953], who proposes that there are four basic coordinates which must be allowed for in any comprehensive critical theory: the work, the artist, the universe, and the audience. Ibid., 20.

Corinthians 3 could set out to discover what Paul really intended to say. Many interpreters would argue that this is the only viable option, namely, that the author's intention determines the meaning of the text and that the interpreter's task is to attempt to retrieve this intention.[9] Yet, though it is fair to say that Paul's intention stands behind the text of Second Corinthians 3, otherwise the text would not have been written, it is also true that nobody can claim access to the apostle's mind apart from the text.[10] No modern interpreter of Paul's

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[9]M. Davies, in a review on Brevard S. Childs [The Journal of Theological Studies 37 (1986), 161-62], refers to "the old Cartesian notion" that the author, as an individual who thinks without words, intends a meaning expressed through the medium of words, and that the author's intention therefore determines the meaning of the text. He indicates that this notion has been abandoned by most literary critics and philosophers because of its obvious difficulties, although many New Testament critics, and Childs, too, assume it unselfconsciously.

In the field of Biblical hermeneutics, as Patrick R. Keifert explains in "Mind Reader and Maestro: Models for Understanding Biblical Interpreters" [In A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics: Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 224, note 16], the search for the author's intention
  springs from the Romantic hermeneutical tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and its insistence that genuine understanding of a text involves and aims at what Paul Ricoeur refers to as "a 'congenial' coincidence with the 'genius' of the author."

[10]James W. Voelz explains that "it is of no use appealing to the 'intention' of the author, for apart from a special interview with him, the author's intention is detectable only in the text." James W. Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going?" in Light for Our World: Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, ed. John W. Klotz (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1989), 246.

letters has access either to the sender or to the original receivers. All that is left is the text. The interpreter may well argue that his 'metatext,' either a commentary or a translation, is most certainly what Paul meant. Yet, this does not change the fact that it is just his interpretation of Paul's text. As Peter Cotterell and Max Turner have it, it is "actually only a hypothesis -- our hypothesis -- about the discourse meaning."[11]

Another option is to focus on the reference of the text, on its depiction of events or ideas. The interpreter could attempt to look through 2 Corinthians 3 at the circumstances behind the text, that is, at the empirical situation at Corinth that prompted the apostle to write the text. Many interpreters of the historical school insist that this is how a text should be read. The text in this case is taken as a window into reality or history, and the interpreter is "mainly interested in the relationship between the text and the external factors surrounding its origin."[12] The interpreter ends up being an historian, and

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[11]Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 70.

Bernard Lonergan has a similar viewpoint, for he says that "anything over and above a re-issue of the same signs in the same order will be mediated by the experience, intelligence, and judgment of the interpreter." Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology (London: Longman and Todd, 1972), 157.

[12]Bernard C. Lategan, "Some Unresolved Methodological Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics," in Text and Reality: Aspects of Reference in Biblical Texts, ed. Bernard C.

is not always able to avoid the so-called 'referential fallacy,' that is, the attempt to explain the text in terms of extratextual reality.[13] Interpreters that focus solely on Paul's opponents at Corinth, or insist that the identity of the assumed opponents is crucial for the reading of the text, are not far from committing this 'referential fallacy.'

A third possibility is to focus on the text. Although almost every interpreter would agree that the text is the basis and starting point for any reading, structuralists argue that the text is beginning, middle and end, that meaning is internal to language itself, given neither by the intending ego nor by reference to objects in the world outside the text but by relations within the structure of the language.[14]

Such an emphasis on the text is certainly to be welcomed, although it is not without its dangers, especially if it is carried to extremes. By emphasizing the text as a self-contained, autonomous reality, the interpreter may easily succumb to the so-called "poetic or structuralist

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Lategan and Willem S. Vorster (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 18.

[13]Bernard C. Lategan, "Current Issues in the Hermeneutical Debate," Neotestamentica 18 (1984): 3.

[14]M. Davies, 162.

fallacy."[15] As a result, the author of the text, the

historical context, not to mention the role of the reader,

are left out of consideration. As Bernard C. Lategan

explains, this isolation of the text cannot be maintained

indefinitely either on the theoretical level or in the

empirical realm.[16] The text has a distinctive setting as

part of a wider process of communication. In other words,

> communication is impossible without a historical frame
> of reference (i.e. socio-cultural competence) and an
> extratextual dialectic between a text and its
> readers.[17]

This brings us to the role of the reader, which can by

no means be underestimated. After all, "there is no

understanding without someone who understands."[18] However,

it should not be overemphasized either, lest one become

guilty of what is sometimes called the "receptor's fallacy."

As Bernard C. Lategan explains,

> to concentrate all attention on the act of reception,
> thereby making the reader the almost exclusive arbiter
> over, or creator of, the meaning of the text, not only
> overextends the contribution reception has to make but

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[15]This locution is taken from Jacques Rousseau, "The
Bible, Communication and Reality: Paradigms and our Struggle
for a Cosmologic Perspective," in Paradigms and Progress in
Theology, ed. J. Mouton, A. G. van Aarde, and W. S. Vorster
(Human Sciences Research Council, 1988), 417. Rousseau
asserts that this fallacy "overexposes the intratextual
structure and poetics of a text in a positivistic way."

[16]Lategan, Current Issues, 4.

[17]Rousseau, "The Bible, Communication and Reality," 417.

[18]Birger Olsson, "A Decade of Text-Linguistic Analyses
of Biblical Texts at Uppsala," Studia Theologica 39 (1985):
114.

also foreshortens the process of understanding in a dangerous way.[19]

In other words, the reader makes sense out of the text, yet it is not the case that any meaning can be derived from it. The text contains explicit formal constraints and definite signals which must be taken into account. The text has its own "laws," and it points out the direction the interpretation is intended to follow. The text is open to a certain number of meanings, but resists other meanings.[20] Furthermore,

> The text with its constraints . . . . serves as the Gegenueber or foil, which is not only interpreted by the reader but which, in its turn, interprets and shapes the reader.[21]

This points out the direction in which I intend to go. Given the fact that nobody has access to the mind of the author apart from the text, it is not my purpose to try to discover what Paul had in mind when he wrote 2 Corinthians 3. Consequently, expressions like "what Paul really had in mind" or "what Paul is really saying" will be deliberately avoided. It is not my purpose, either, to come up with a detailed reconstruction of the situation at Corinth at the time when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians. Neither am I going to

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[19]Bernard C. Lategan, "Some Unresolved Methodological Issues," 15.

[20]Walter Vogels, Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1986), 28.

[21]Lategan, "Some Unresolved Methodological Issues," 16.

focus solely on the structure of the text. My approach can, perhaps, be best described as an interaction with the text from the viewpoint of the reader. It is my purpose to approach the text with the awareness that I am a reader.

Two observations, however, are in place. First, even though it is true that any reading is individual, it must also be said that no reader is an island. Readers are taught to read.[22] They are taught in and by the interpretive community. As Richard B. Hays explains,

> the hermeneutical event occurs in my reading of the text, but my reading always proceeds within a community of interpretation, whose hermeneutical conventions inform my reading.[23]

Thus, my reading of 2 Corinthians 3 is informed by the scholarly community, by many of those who read the text before me and left a record of their reading. Many of my conclusions are derived from other readers in the scholarly community, yet I would probably be unable to agree with any one of them all the way through. In this sense, this is my reading of the text. It is also informed by the community of faith. The reader of this dissertation should not be surprised if some of the conclusions are thoroughly Lutheran.

On the other hand, this reading exercise in not done by a naive or uninformed reader. The simple observation

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[22]Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics," 248.

[23]Richard B. Hays, <u>Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul</u> (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 28.

that previous readings of the text are taken into
consideration, not to mention that the Greek text is being
read, already indicates that this is not going to be an
unsophisticated reading. It may be called a critical
reading done by a critical reader.

Since this notion of a "critical reader" is open to
misunderstanding, it is necessary to explain in which sense
it is being used here. "Critical reader" is a reader, yes,
but he is at the same time a critic. What, then, does
"critic" mean? Robert M. Fowler says that "being a critic
means being part of a guild, or an 'interpretive
community.'"[24] Taking his cue from George Steiner, Fowler
distinguishes between the critic and the reader. He points
out that

> the critic steps back from the text to strike a
> magisterial pose of critical, objectifying distance,
> whereas the reader tries to eliminate the distance
> between himself and the text to allow the merging of his
> being with that of the text.[25]

A second major way of characterizing the distinction
between critic and reader is to say that

> a critic makes judgments about the text and declares
> them, whereas a reader does neither. Because the reader
> does not objectify and judge the text, the reader tends
> not to talk about reading.[26]

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[24]Robert M. Fowler, _Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark_ (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 27.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., 28.

Since I am going to do all of this, namely, to step back from the text, to make judgments about the text, and to talk about my reading, I can certainly be described as a critic. Yet, I am not simply being a critic, who judges the text; I am also a reader. Thus, the label "critical reader," which is a combination of reader and critic, seems to be more appropriate, and wherever I use the word "reader" I mean "critical reader." For, as Fowler indicates, "when critics talk about reading, they usually mean reading critically, as their guild defines criticism."[27]

Thus, in the first major chapter, I am going to present the results of my reading of 2 Corinthians 3 for its basic sense. The major focus will be on the Greek text as such, and the outcome may be described as an extended translation. Since this is the reading of a Christian theologian living almost two thousand years after the text was written, whose language is not Greek, and whose culture is not that of first-century Achaia, he has to avail himself of every tool available. Particularly helpful in this connection is the contribution of modern linguistics or, more properly, of modern semantics. With Moises Silva, I share the assumption that "acquaintance with up-to-date systematic work on the nature of language seems an

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[27]Ibid., 27.

indispensable foundation for proper exegesis."[28]

In the next chapter, the text will be reread with a view to further describe and define some topics or clusters of ideas. This will be done intratextually, that is, in the light of 2 Corinthians 3, as well as intertextually, that is, in the light of the canonical context of Paul's epistles. Since not every major topic can be considered, the following pairs or oppositions have been selected: διακονία τοῦ θανάτου // διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος; καινὴ διαθήκη // παλαιὰ διαθήκη; γράμμα // πνεῦμα; and κάλυμμα μένει // κάλυμμα περιαιρεῖται.

In the last major chapter, the text will be reread with an eye on its rhetorical dimension. After all, besides having a semantic dimension, a text has also a rhetorical or pragmatic dimension. 2 Corinthians 3 was written to accomplish something, and not merely to transmit some information. It is this so-called "impact" of the text that I am going to explore in chapter four. What will be scrutinized is how the text is set up, what kind of

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[28]Moises Silva, Biblical Words & Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 10. Wolfgang Schenk points out that one of the purposes of his Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus (Stuttgart: W. Hohlhammer, 1984) is to further the notion that there can be no going back to an exegesis that is not informed by modern linguistic theory. In his words, "Ich waere nur froh, wenn meine Analysen mit dazu beitragen koennten, deutlich zu machen, dass es hinter eine sich linguistisch praezisierende Exegese kein Zurueck mehr gibt." Schenk, 14.

arguments are being employed, and how the text fits into the rhetorical categories of the classical world. Since the impact of the text is tied up with the situation that is being addressed by it, one has to give some consideration to the communicative setting of 2 Corinthians 3. One major question is whether the text is polemical or not.

I am well aware that this is not the full spectrum of reading possibilities. These are only three among many others. A text like 2 Corinthians 3 can and in fact has been read intertextually in its relation to the Old Testament, particularly in the light of the Exodus 34 passage.[29] In this paper, however, no such reading will be attempted, although there will be sporadic reference to Exodus 34. 2 Corinthians 3 could also be read theologically from the perspective of Law and Gospel. One burning question, for instance, is the relation between the Pauline letter-Spirit opposition and the Lutheran law-gospel polarity. Yet, a thorough investigation of this aspect goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Before engaging in reading, the critical reader has to decide which Greek text he is going to read. He could either read a modern edition (almost by default) or take one of the ancient Greek manuscripts such as Papyrus 46, <u>Codex Vaticanus</u>, <u>Codex Sinaiticus</u>, or any other.

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[29]A good example of this is the monograph by Carol Kern Stockhausen referred to above (see note 1).

Should he decide for Papyrus 46, which is the oldest extant copy of the Pauline corpus, having been written around A. D. 200, he would run into trouble right at the beginning of the pericope, for verse four is entirely missing from Papyrus 46.[30] Later on, he would miss the second half of verse 13.

If he decides to take instead Codex Vaticanus, a copy written in the fourth century A. D., he might be making a bad choice. According to Kurt Aland, although the text of Codex Vaticanus is in general superior to Codex Sinaiticus,[31] "in the Pauline letters the textual quality of B shifts, and it no longer commands the authority it possesses in the Gospels."[32]

Codex Sinaiticus, also written in the fourth century A. D., would be a better pick. Here we have a text that comes close to the "standard text." The major differences

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[30]Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus. II. Die paulinischen Briefe. Teil 1: Roem., 1. Kor., 2. Kor., ed. K. Junack, E. Gueting, U. Nimtz, K. Witte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 337. Compared to the so-called "standard text," which is the text common to the third edition of The Greek New Testament and the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland, Papyrus 46 has many lacunae, as the critical apparatus in Nestle-Aland indicates. Besides this, Papyrus 46 lacks 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastorals completely. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 57.

[31]Aland and Aland, 107.

[32]"Introduction," in Novum Testamentum Graece, ed. Nestle-Aland (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 52.

are ἑαυτοῦ instead of αὐτοῦ in verse 13, and the misspelling of μεταμορφούμεθα as μεταφορμορφούμεθα in verse 18.[33]

The reader might as well decide to read the "standard text," either the third edition of <u>The Greek New Testament</u>, or the twenty-sixth edition of the <u>Novum Testamentum Graece</u>. Although this is an eclectic text, corresponding exactly to none of the ancient Greek manuscripts, there is one major reason why I decided to take this particular text: I am reading in community, and the community by and large is reading the "standard text." As Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland explain, "it has rapidly become the commonly accepted text for research and study in universities and churches."[34] It goes without saying that this option does not excuse me from paying attention to the text-critical problems of the text.

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[33]<u>Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus: The New Testament, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas Preserved in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg Now Reproduced in Facsimile from Photographs by Helen and Kirsopp Lake</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), folio 76.

[34]Aland and Aland, 35. In his farewell essay titled "Die Grundurkunde des Glaubens: Ein Bericht ueber 40 Jahre Arbeit an ihrem Text," in <u>Bericht der Hermann Kunst-Stiftung zur Foerderung der neutestamentlichen Textforschung fuer die Jahre 1982 bis 1984</u> (Muenster, 1985), 28, Kurt Aland explains that the "standard text" is being used not only among Protestants and Roman Catholics but also in the Greek Orthodox and other Eastern churches. He boastfully says that "der Text des Neuen Testaments, der hier in Muenster betreut wird, ist der Text der Kirche, direkt in seiner griechischen Form und undirekt in den vielen Hunderten von Uebersetzungen, die auf seiner Basis entstanden sind."

CHAPTER II

READING FOR THE SENSE OF THE TEXT

In reading for the basic sense of the text, we will
try to find out what the Greek text is saying.[1] In order to
do this, we certainly have to pay attention to words and
their meanings, though not in isolation. After all, a text
is "a structure of interrelated units of meaning."[2] Words
and their meanings are part of a larger whole, and "the
meaning of the larger whole is more than the sum of the
meanings conveyed by the individual words as
signs/signifiers."[3]

In paying attention to words and their meanings as
part of a larger whole, we will follow the text where the
text leads us, pointing out at times that this or that comes
as a surprise, and that here and there we have a hard time
trying to make sense out of the text. For most of the time,

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[1]Since the text to be read is the Greek text, no
particular translation will be followed, mentioned, defended
or criticized at this point. Furthermore, no attempt will
be made to furnish a well-rounded translation of the Greek
text, for the whole argumentation is a translation, though
somewhat extended.

[2]Birger Olsson, "A Decade of Text-Linguistic Analyses of
Biblical Texts at Uppsala," Studia Theologica 39 (1985):124.

[3]James W. Voelz, "Basic Introduction to Semantics for
Exegetical Courses at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," p. 2.

reading is no easy task, since all the way through the
reader is faced with ambiguity, due to linguistic phenomena
like vagueness and polysemy.[4]

Since the text of 2 Corinthians 3 is a given, and
assuming that the whole did make sense to its author, we set
out in a search for textual cohesion and textual
cohesiveness,[5] or the lack thereof. We pay attention to
thought progression, watching for consistency or changes of
subject matter. In terms of textual cohesiveness, the so-
called markers of coordinate and subordinate relations, as
well as markers of transition, are helpful in pointing out
how the text hangs together. An important tool in this
connection is the <u>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</u>

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[4]Vagueness is experienced when the reader encounters
superordinate or broad terms. Words like κακία,
διακονία, and a host of others are vague on account of
their broad semantic range. Put another way, they are vague
because of fewer components of meaning. As for polysemy, it
is that phenomenon in which "two or more meanings are
associated with the same word." David Alan Black,
<u>Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek</u> (Grand
Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 125.

[5]Linguists distinguish between textual cohesiveness and
textual cohesion. The former is also called the micro-
structure of the text; the latter, the macro-structure. The
macro-structure or cohesion has to do with overarching
themes or topics that dominate the composition and structure
of the text. The micro-structure or cohesiveness relates to
relationships within the text, as, for example, the use of
connectives, pronominalization, and so on. Stanley E.
Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, "Greek Grammar Since BDF: A
Retrospective and Prospective Analysis," <u>Filologia
Neotestamentaria</u> 4 (1991), 160.

18

Based on Semantic Domains,[6] which helps us to throw some
light on the semantic value and function of many of those
'little words' that are barely or never described in a
standard commentary.

In order to facilitate the presentation of the
material, 2 Cor. 3:4-18 is divided into three sections: 1)
Verses 4-6; 2) Verses 7-11; and 3) Verses 12-18. This
division corresponds to the paragraph division in The Greek
New Testament.[7] Yet, since 2 Cor. 3:4-18 is seen as a
whole, due consideration is given to how these sections
interlock.

Section One: 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

Verse 4

The text starts out with πεποίθησιν δὲ
τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν

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[6]Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, Greek-English
Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, two
volumes, second edition (New York: United Bible Societies,
1989).

[7]The Greek New Testament, ed. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black,
Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, third
edition (corrected) (United Bible Societies, 1983), 627.
The 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text presents two
paragraphs, namely, verses 4-11, and verses 12-18. In the
Nestle-Aland text, there is a major gap between the end of
verse 6 and the beginning of verse 7, but apparently that is
not meant to signal the beginning of a new paragraph. In
fact, the editor provides no explanation as to the meaning
of those gaps in the text. All that the editor explains is
that "the system of paragraph divisions has been developed
much more extensively than before." Novum Testamentum
Graece, ed. Kurt Aland, 26th edition, 7th revised printing
(Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 44. In the
previous edition of the Nestle text, 2 Cor. 3:4-18 was
printed as one paragraph.

Θεόν. Since we decided to read only from this point on,
we are not in a good position to determine what exactly is
being talked about. We know that we are dropping into an
ongoing communication. We are able to gather this from the
little δέ, which indicates that what follows is added on to
the previous paragraph, with the possible implication of
some contrast.[8] A further indication that this is an
ongoing conversation is the phrase πεποίθησιν
τοιαύτην. Πεποίθησις is confidence, trust.
Τοιαύτη indicates that it is a confidence that is of such
a kind as identified in the context.[9] From the standpoint
of the reader, this context is always the preceding
context.[10]

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[8]Δέ is classified by Louw and Nida in Domain 89,
Relations. And yet, even this little δέ is polysemous. To
begin with, it can mark a relation of contrast. Louw and
Nida, Subdomain 89.124 [see Matt. 22:14], p. 794. It can
also be a marker of sequential addition, indicating a
sequence of closely related events. Ibid., Subdomain 89.87
[see Matt. 1:2], p. 789. Finally, it can be a marker of "an
additive relation, but with the possible implication of some
contrast," in which case "and" would be a good translation
equivalent. Ibid., Subdomain 89.94 [see Titus 1:1], p. 790.
The latter seems to be the case in 2 Cor. 3:4.

[9]Τοιαύτη is here taken as a discourse referential of
demonstrative or deictic reference. Louw and Nida,
Subdomain 92.31 [see 2 Cor. 12:3], p. 817.

[10]Wolfgang Schenk makes the important point that, from
the viewpoint of the reader, the text that follows a given
pericope is less important than the preceding text. After
all, the preceding text provides background information on
which the author builds and which he assumes the reader to
be already familiar with as he goes on. Unfortunately, this
distinction is not always made, inasmuch as the label
"context" is applied to both what precedes and what follows.
For the reader, however, context (or cotext) is always
preceding context. Wolfgang Schenk, "Hebraeerbrief 4.14-16:

It is not hard to perceive that the text is phrased in the first person plural (ἔχοντες, "we have"). Under normal circumstances, that "we" is a reference to the writer and those associated with him, either including or excluding the audience.[11] In this case, the audience is probably excluded, although at this point we cannot be absolutely sure that this is actually the case.[12] Granted that the audience is excluded, what or who, then, should be the referent of the "we?"[13] In other words, does the author refer only to himself or does he include other people? This question is not easily answered, for the referent could be either Paul speaking in his own name and using a sort of "regal we" or Paul and his fellow-workers. It could even be a reference to Paul and other apostles. A further possibility, though much less likely, would be Paul,

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Textlinguistik als Kommentierungsprinzip," New Testament Studies 26 (1980): 244.

[11]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 92.4 [Speaker and Those Associated with the Speaker, see Matt. 9:14], p. 814.

[12]Later on, in verse 6, it will become clear that the audience is excluded, for the διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης does not seem to include the audience.

[13]The difficulty here is not that the reader ignores the meaning of "we," but rather that he cannot determine the referent. According to Eugene A. Nida, quoted in Johannes P. Louw, Semantics of New Testament Greek (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 50, the difference between meaning (Bedeutung) and reference (Bezeichnung) is that
> the meaning of a word consists of the set of distinctive features which makes possible certain types of reference, while reference itself is the process of designating some entity, event, etc. by a particular symbol.

Timothy, and some of the Corinthian Christians, but not all of them.

There seems to be no solution to this problem unless one reads on or flips back to the previous pages. Verses 5 and 6 do not seem to be very helpful, unless one could insist that διακόνους hardly refers to only one person. The context, which again is preceding context, may help to elucidate this problem. Moving backwards in the text, we are struck by 2 Cor. 2:12-13, which is written in the first person singular. This seems to indicate that when one of the authors, presumably Paul, has something to say on his own, he writes in the first person singular. Going further back to the prescript of the letter, 2 Cor. 1:1, we become aware that the letter was sent out in the name of Paul and Timothy. This suggests that the "we" includes at least Paul and Timothy, although not necessarily implying co-authorship.[14]

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[14]Michael Prior, in <u>Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy</u> (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), notes that "Paul is the only one of the NT letter writers who names other people with himself in the opening of some of his letters." (37) He adds that, although commentaries virtually never take seriously the possibility that the person named together with Paul had a real share in the authorship of the letters, for one never reads of the Second Letter of Paul and Timothy to the Corinthians, "we should expect that a letter purporting to be written by Paul and someone else was genuinely co-authored." (39) The interesting thing with 2 Corinthians is that the pattern of singular/plural is very mixed. The letter starts out with the plural and stays with this pattern until 1:23. The only exception is the surprising singular (ἐλπίζω) in 1:13. 2 Cor. 1:23-2:13 is written by a single author, most certainly Paul. Beginning at 2:14 and throughout chapter three, not to mention chapter four, the discourse is again couched in

The author asserts, with a bit of emphasis one should add,[15] that he has πεποίθησις. Πεποίθησις is an event word, that is, a word that, although grammatically classified as a noun, is an event from a semantic point of view.[16] Πεποίθησις ("confidence, trust") is the activity or process of πείθειν ("to rely on, to trust in"). The object and the basis for this confidence are not indicated. Presumably it had been explained in the context, as τοιαύτην seems to indicate. Ἔχω is probably best taken in the sense of "to hold a view."[17] The author is saying that he is actively engaged in holding a view of confidence. Confidence in or regarding what? The text does not say. The author assumes that this is understood from

the first person plural. The significance of this switching back and forth has to be investigated in later chapters.

[15] The phrase πεποίθησιν δὲ τοιαύτην is placed first in the sentence, in emphatic position.

[16] In standard discourse analysis all the signs of a language belong to one of the following basic semantic categories: objects, events, abstracts, or relations. Objects are things or entities. Events include all kinds of activities, happenings or processes. Abstracts describe qualities or capacities of objects and/or events. Relations show the meaningful connections between the other three groups. "These represent the most comprehensive categories in which meanings can be distributed." J. P. Louw, Semantics of New Testament Greek (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 65.

[17] Louw and Nida, Subdomain 31.1 [see Matt. 14:5], p. 366. Ἔχω, too, is a polysemous word. It is classified by Louw and Nida in nine different semantic domains. It is commonly used to express ownership or possession of objects [in Louw and Nida, Subdomain 57.1; see Matt. 14:17], but this does not apply in the present context.

the context.[18] He moves on, adding two prepositional

phrases: **διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.** These

phrases or theological formulas, like many others of the

kind, are very dense. Yet, the author does not unpack

them.[19] Read on the semantic plane, they show that Christ

is the agent who works this confidence,[20] and that it is a

confidence before God.[21]

Verses 5-6

Verse five is couched in the first person plural

(**ἐσμέν**), in a clear indication that this verse is still

closely tied up with the context. In other words, the

author and his companions are still the topic of the

conversation. The opening **οὐχ ὅτι**, which is followed by

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[18]This "information" that the author does not supply
because he assumes that it is provided by the context may be
called "external entailment."

[19]Hans Dieter Betz in his commentary on Galatians
[Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in
Galatia, Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,
1979)] claims that these prepositional phrases "are
abbreviations of theological doctrines." (27) Bernard C.
Lategan comments that "an important feature of these
formulas are their cryptic and abbreviated form which
implies previous knowledge and familiarity with the context
in which the formula operates." "Formulas in the Language
of Paul: A Study of Prepositional Phrases in Galatians,"
Neotestamentica 25 (1991), 77.

[20]**Διά** is a marker of intermediate agent. Louw and
Nida, Subdomain 90.4 [see 1 Cor. 1:9], p. 797.

[21]**Πρός** is best taken as a marker of association, with
the implication of interrelationship. Ibid., Subdomain
89.112 [see Rom. 5:1], p. 792. This use of **πρός** is rare.
The usual prepositions after **πεπόιθησις** are **εἰς** (2 Cor.
8:22) and **ἐν** (Phil. 3:4).

the ἀλλά,[22] seems to introduce a parenthetical remark.
This raises the question of the connection between verse 5
and verse 4. There might be no connection at all. Assuming
that there is one, what kind of connection is it? Much
depends on how the reader takes the phrase ἱκανοί ἐσμεν
λογίσασθαί τι. Some readers are surprised by the
occurence of this phrase, especially the latter part,
λογισασθαί τι.[23] Yet, there should be no surprise,
particularly if ἱκανοί ἐσμεν λογίσασθαί τι is seen
as running parallel to πεποίθησιν ἔχειν. Actually,
λογίζεσθαι can be taken in the sense of "to hold a view
or have an opinion with regard to something."[24] What the
author is saying, in this case, is that he and his

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[22]While the οὐ/οὐκ/οὐχ . . . . ἀλλά antithesis is
found all over the New Testament, the combination of οὐχ
ὅτι and ἀλλά is rare. It is found only in Paul (2 Cor.
1:24; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 4:17; 2 Thes. 3:9) and in John (John
7:22; 12:6; 1 John 4:10). Kurt Aland, ed., Vollstaendige
Konkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament unter
Zugrundelegung aller modernen kritischen Textausgaben und
des Textus receptus, two volumes (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter,
1983).

[23]According to Rudolf Bultmann, the reader would have
expected something like "to proclaim the word of God." Yet,
the text has λογίσασθαί τι, which "is more general and
is intended to indicate Paul's radical incapacity for any
independent activity." Rudolf Bultmann, The Second Letter
to the Corinthians, translated by Roy A. Harrisville
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 75.

[24]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 31.1, Have an Opinion, Hold a
View, p. 366. Λογίζομαι occurs some 42 times is the New
Testament, mostly in Romans and 2 Corinthians. Besides "to
hold a view," it can also mean "to reason about" [Subdomain
30.9; see 1 Cor. 13:11], "to keep mental record" [Subdomain
29.4; see 2 Cor. 5:19], and "charge to account" [Subdomain
57.227; see Rom. 4:4].

companions are not in a position to hold such a view of confidence (in their status?) on their own. This "on their own" is brought out by the phrase ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν. This phrase, which seems to be reinforced by the following ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, is the opposite of the preceding διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, which, in turn, is further explained by the following ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ. In other words, the author has such sort of confidence (in his qualification?) before God through Christ. If he is able to hold such a view (λογίσασθαι), this is not the product of his own imagination, it does not have its source in himself. Apostolic confidence in not a native endowment, but a gift from God.[25]

The connection between verse 4 and verse 5 throws light on the scope of πεποίθησις in verse 4. What kind of confidence is that? It is the confidence which can say, ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Going over the text for a second time, which only a reader can do, it becomes apparent that the textual status of λογίσασθαι has not remained unchallenged in the history of textual transmission. Some manuscripts (C, D, F, G, 629, and a few others) read the present infinitive λογίζεσθαι. The cause for this variant may be itacism,

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[25]What the author asserts in verse 5 had been anticipated in an important statement in 2 Cor. 1:9: ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς. On the other hand, verse 5 recalls the ἀπόστολος οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ πατρός in Gal. 1:1.

for both forms are pronounced almost alike. Or, it may be a
deliberate change from aorist to present in order to
emphasize that the author is actually engaged in the process
of reckoning. The variant may have little or no chance of
being accepted as text according to standard textual
critical rules, but it does call attention to the fact that
λογίσασθαι is aorist. In fact, it is the first aorist
in the text. Is it significant? In what does
λογίσασθαι differ from λογίζεσθαι? The aorist
"concentrates attention upon the act itself, not upon the
relationship which may exist between it and an actor."[26]
This use of the aorist fits well into the context.

A further detail that strikes the eye of the reader is
the phrase ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν. It appears to be redundant
after the preceding ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, being added merely for
the sake of emphasis. The text would make perfect sense
without it. Since it is there, how should one read it? To
begin with, the switch from ἀπό to ἐκ should probably not
be pressed, for both prepositions are "markers of source of
event or activity,"[27] belonging to the same semantic domain,
and seem to be used interchangeably for the sake of
stylistic variation. And yet, there is one detail that is

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[26]James W. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament,"
in Aufstieg und Nierdergang der roemischen Welt, edited by
Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, volume 2, part 25.2
(New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 967.

[27]Louw and Nida, Domains 90.15 [see Matt. 5:42] and
90.16 [see 1 Thess. 2:6], p. 799.

disturbing. Why ὡς ἐξ ἐαυτῶν? This phrase is probably best
taken in the sense of "with the assertion that it comes from
us," or "as if we were trying to give the impression that it
issues from ourselves."[28] Thus, ὡς ἐξ ἐαυτῶν is not
quite the same as ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν.

In what follows, ἀλλά establishes a relation of
contrast[29] to verse 5a, and is followed by the indication
that the source of the apostolic ἱκανότης is God.
Ἱκανότης, which is <u>hapax legomenon</u>,[30] denotes the state
of being adequate or qualified for something.[31] This
"something" still has to be supplied by the reader. Only in
verse 6 will it become clear that the authors are talking
about qualification for the ministry. The ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ
is set in contrast to ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν and ὡς ἐξ
ἐαυτῶν, and runs parallel to the διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
πρὸς τὸν Θεόν of verse 4.

The phrase ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν is a strong
statement, particularly in the light of the context. Even
though the reader who began reading chapter three verse four
may not be aware of this, the fact is that here the authors

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[28]This use of ὡς is classical. It could be argued that
the ὡς is usually followed by a participle, which does not
seem to be the case here. Yet, the participle of εἰμί is
implied in 2 Cor. 3:5. There is a similar use of ὡς in 2
Cor. 2:17. See also 2 Cor. 10:2.

[29]Louw and Nida, Domain 89.125 [see Matt. 5:17], p. 794.

[30]Literally, a word "spoken once," that is, a word that
occurs just once in the New Testament.

[31]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 75.1, Adequate, Qualified, p.
679.

are providing an explicit answer to the question raised in 2
Cor. 2:16: καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός; The reader
could have inferred, on the basis of the γάρ-clause that
follows in 2 Cor. 2:17, that the answer was: ἱκανοί
ἐσμεν. In verses 5 and 6 the answer is made explicit.

Verse 6 is tied to verse 5 through pronominalization,
that is, the pronoun ὅς stands for the preceding Θεοῦ.
Also the verb ἱκανόω takes up the preceding ἱκανότης.
A further link is the first person plural of ἡμᾶς.
However, the reader clearly notices that the scenario is
changing, for the "we" are no longer the subject, but rather
the object. The subject now is God.

In the opening ὅς καί, the use of καί is somewhat
puzzling. Some readers take it as emphasizing the following
ἱκάνωσεν, in the sense of "who actually qualified us."
Others take it in the sense of "really."[32] Carol K.
Stockhausen insists that it should be translated "God has
also made us competent," the assumption being that prior to
that someone else, namely, Moses was made competent by
God.[33] However, if this were the case, one would expect the
text to say ὅς ἱκάνωσεν καὶ ἡμᾶς rather than ὅς
καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς. Another possibility is to take
καί in the sense of also, the implication being that "God
also made us competent, in addition to calling us." Yet, it

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[32]Thus Bultmann, 76.

[33]Carol Kern Stockhausen, Moses' Veil and the Glory of
the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor.
3,1-4,6 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 84.

seems that καί was simply added in order to emphasize that the subject of the new sentence is identical with the last word in the preceding sentence.[34]

The verb ἱκανόω, "to make sufficient" or "to cause to be qualified," is an aorist indicative active. Some readers take the aorist as pointing to a specific event or point in time, and some even suggest that the apostle is referring to the Damascus road experience, but its use may simply indicate that the writer wants to concentrate attention upon the act itself.[35] This is the more so considering that the cognates ἱκανοί and ἱκανότης already occurred in the context.

While the first half of verse 6, ὃς καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς, is nothing but a restatement of verse 5b, the second half adds something that qualifies the ἡμᾶς: God qualified us as διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος.[36] Although διακόνους had not appeared previously in the pericope, its use is not totally surprising, for it harks back to the διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν in 2 Cor. 3:3. Διάκονος is, on the basis of its components of meaning, "a person who

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[34]For a similar construction, see 1 Cor. 1:8.

[35]From the standpoint of the writer this act or event clearly lies in the past.

[36]Ἰκάνωσεν is followed by what is commonly referred to as a double accusative.

renders service."[37] Questions like "what kind of service?"
or "service to whom?" can only be answered on the basis of
what follows, namely, καινῆς διαθήκης κτλ.

This reference to a new covenant comes with a bit of
surprise, though the reader at home in the Greek Old
Testament might perhaps have anticipated it on the basis of
verse 3, for the ἐγγεγραμμένη . . . . ἐν πλαξὶν
καρδίαις σαρκίναις reminds of Jeremiah 31, where
Yahweh promises a new covenant.[38] Even more surprising is
the combination of διακόνους with καινῆς
διαθήκης, which is unique in Paul's writings.[39]

Διαθήκη is an interesting sign. A reader familiar
with extra-Biblical Greek would take it in the sense of last
will and testament.[40] However, by the time of the New

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[37]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 35.20 [Serve; see Matt.
20:26], p. 460. Διάκονος stands in the same semantic
field, that is, in paradigmatic relation, with Θεράπων
and ὑπηρέτης. It occurs about thirty times in the New
Testament, eight times in the Gospels and the rest in the
Pauline epistles.

[38]In the Septuagint the pericope of the new covenant
appears in chapter 38. The closest verbal parallel occurs
in verse 33: καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω
αὐτούς (νόμους μου).

[39]In Paul, διάκονος, when applied to the Christian
minister, either stands alone (1 Cor. 3:5) or is used in
conjunction with Θεοῦ (2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Thes. 3:2),
δικαιοσύνης (2 Cor. 11:15), Χριστοῦ (2 Cor. 11:23;
Col. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:6), εὐαγγελίου (Eph. 3:7; Col.
1:23), and ἐκκλησίας (Col. 1:25). Διακόνους
καινῆς διαθήκης occurs only in 2 Cor. 3:6.

[40]Bauer, 183. Louw and Nida list this meaning under
Subdomain 57.124 [Give], p. 572, and indicate that it can be
found in Hebrews 9:16. They explain that this subdomain
involves
the transfer of some object or benefit from one person

Testament it had undergone a semantic change. It is now used in the sense of a divine covenant.[41] This process of semantic change may also be described in terms of a theological specialization.[42] Actually, this semantic shift was brought about by the Septuagint translators who rendered the Old Testament term b'rith by διαθήκη. In selecting διαθήκη rather than συνθήκη ("contract, agreement") the translators wished to emphasize the fact that the initiative for such a covenental relationship existed with God rather than being the result of negotiation and compromise.[43] Since this shift is already attested in the Septuagint, it may be considered a semantic loan in the New Testament. In 2 Cor. 3:6, the author apparently assumes that the readers know what this διαθήκη is all about, for he does not go into the pains of explaining it.

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to another with the initiative resting with the person who gives and without incurring an obligation on the part of a receiver to reciprocate. (566, note 23)

[41]Its lexical meaning, according to Louw and Nida, is either "to make a solemn agreement involving reciprocal benefits and responsibilities" [Subdomain 34.43, Establish or Confirm a Relation; see Rom. 11:27], or "the verbal content of an agreement between two persons specifying reciprocal benefits and responsibilities" [Subdomain 34.44; see Gal. 3:15]. Ibid., p. 452.

[42]Moises Silva, Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 79. Silva, following Stephen Ullmann, indicates that semantic changes are due either to linguistic innovation or to linguistic conservatism. Διαθήκη is an example of linguistic conservatism, in which an old word is preserved to denote an object that has changed considerably. Ibid., 78.

[43]Louw and Nida, 452.

The covenant of which the apostles are ministers is called a καινὴ διαθήκη. Καινή is, again, a polysemous sign. It can denote new in time, that is, something that is in existence for only a short time.[44] It can also denote new in class, that is, "new or recent and hence superior to that which is old."[45] Here it is probably used in the latter sense.

The reader may wonder if there was any particular reason why the author used καινός rather than any other word of the same semantic field. In fact, readers with a background in Classical Greek might well insist that there is a sharp distinction between καινός and νέος, and that, in using καινός, the author was signaling that he meant new in class. Yet, an investigation of the New Testament evidence does not allow such a facile conclusion. Though the distinction between καινός (novel and different) and νέος (young and recent) may be applicable to certain contexts and is more in accordance with classical usage, it cannot be found in all occurrences of these words in the New Testament.[46] Both καινός and νέος may be used to express the concepts of new in time and new in class. In other words, depending on the context they are

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[44]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 67.115 [Duration of Time; see Mark 2:22], p. 645.

[45]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 58.71 [New, Old (primarily non-temporal); see 2 Pet. 3:13], p. 594.

[46]Ibid., 594, note 9.

synonyms and can be used interchangeably.[47] In the New

Testament, both καινός (2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:15) and νέος

(Heb. 12:24) are applied to διαθήκη, showing that in a

context with διαθήκη, καινός and νέος are clearly

synonymous.[48]

Besides figuring out the meaning of καινῆς

διαθήκης, the reader also has to determine how this

genitival construction relates to the governing

διακόνους. In other words, what is a minister of a new

covenant?[49] Is it someone serving or standing in the

service of the new covenant? Could it be someone dispensing

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[47]Anthony C. Thiselton points out that "most so-called
synonyms are context-dependent," that is, in some contexts
two different words may be used interchangeably, in others
not. For example, in a context where the subject is a young
man, a writer would hardly use καινός. "Semantics and
New Testament Interpretation," in New Testament
Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, edited by
I. Howard Marshall (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1977),
92.

[48]Philip Edgcumbe Hughes points out that Heb. 12:24
affords an indication that at the time when the New
Testament was being written the distinction between
καινός and νέος was becoming blurred. Philip Edgcumbe
Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: The
English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes (Grand
Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 96, note 21. One could even
venture the suggestion that, given the fact that, in the New
Testament, καινός (42 occurrences) is much more frequent
than νέος (23 occurrences), and considering that καινός
is used in Jeremiah 31, the rule was to use καινός in
connection with διαθήκη. Any departure from this, like,
for instance, in Hebrews, may be taken as a sign that a
special nuance is being envisaged.

[49]Most modern translations render διακόνους
καινῆς διαθήκης as "ministers/servants of a/the new
covenant." This is as ambiguous as the Greek. The Today's
English Version translates "it is he who made us capable of
serving the new covenant."

or delivering the new covenant? Could it be both? It could be either one or both.[50] The most natural way of taking it would be in the sense of someone serving the new covenant. Yet, a reader familiar with the ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν of 2 Cor. 3:3 could also take it in the sense of "someone who dispenses or delivers the new covenant."

Διακόνους is qualified by καινῆς διαθήκης, and this, in turn, is further explained by οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος. The use of these words is not totally unexpected, for both had been anticipated in the roots γραμμ- and πνευμ- which occurred twice and once respectively in 2 Cor. 3:1-3.[51] Nevertheless, what comes as a bit of a surprise is the singular γράμμα, considering that the plural is much more common.[52] Why did the author use the singular? The reader can only guess. It is possible that he used the singular because it rhymes with

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[50]This ambiguity could, perhaps, be solved if we had at least one example of διακονέω as a verb being used in a sentence with καινὴ διαθήκη. This, however, is not the case in the New Testament.

[51]The same holds good for the ζωοποιεῖ at the end of verse 6, which takes up the ζῶντος of verse 3. This passage, then, illustrates well Paul's habit of dwelling on a word and coming back to it again and again. He does it with the following stems: ικαν-, διακον-, and γραμμ-. The Latin rhetoricians called this artifice traductio. J. H. Bernard, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, The Expositor's Greek Testament, volume 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1897), 53.

[52]In the singular it occurs only in this passage and in Romans 2:27,29 and Romans 7:6.

πνεῦμα. Much more important and complex than this is the meaning of γράμμα. Its lexical or unmarked[53] meaning is probably "a writing," or "what has been written."[54] It may have a contextual meaning, that is, a particular meaning that is derived from the context.[55] In order to determine this contextual meaning, the reader has to take into consideration the arrangement of words in the syntagm or, put another way, the grammatical constructions in which the term occurs. In the case of γράμμα, the latter part of verse 6 is very important, for here it is followed by the predicate ἀποκτέννει. The reader also has to consider that γράμμα is placed in antithesis to πνεῦμα, and this has a bearing on its meaning in this context.

Γράμμα is that which lacks the life-giving Spirit and

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[53]Unmarked meaning is the same as general meaning, namely, that meaning which would be readily applied in a minimum context where there is little or nothing to help the receptor in determining the meaning. Louw, Semantics of New Testament Greek, 34.

[54]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 33.50 [Written Language; see John 5:47], p. 395. Γράμμα can also denote a letter of the alphabet [Subdomain 33.35; see Gal. 6:11]; an epistle [Subdomain 6:63; see Acts 28:21]; and a record of debts [Subdomain 33.39; see Luke 16:6].

[55]According to Johannes P. Louw, contextual meaning are those features of meaning derived from a particular context which are attached to a word in a particular context, but do not make up a new meaning as such. "How Do Words Mean -- If They Do?" Filologia Neotestamentaria 4 (1991): 137. Louw explains that the Bauer Lexicon is an usage or contextual meaning dictionary, while the Louw and Nida Lexicon deals primarily with lexical meaning. Although words usually represent a relatively small number of meanings, as presented in the Louw and Nida Lexicon, they have numerous usages or contextual meanings, as described in the Bauer Lexicon. Ibid.

kills.

Πνεῦμα could be anything from Holy Spirit to man's inner being or spiritual nature, to wind or breath. In this context, and in the light of the πνεύματι Θεοῦ ζῶντος of 2 Cor. 3:3, it is certainly the Holy Spirit.

A difficult question, which is up to the reader to answer, is with what γράμματος and πνεύματος go. Grammatically they could be dependent on either διακόνους or καινῆς διαθήκης, or even on the phrase as a whole. Many readers take it as qualifying διαθήκης and elaborating on καινῆς. In other words, the διαθήκη is καινή inasmuch as it is πνεύματος and not γράμματος. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor disputes this view, arguing that it qualifies καινῆς διαθήκης, and that Paul is making a distinction between two types of new covenant, one characterized by γράμμα and the other by πνεῦμα.[56] From the viewpoint of this reader, however, the flow of the text suggests that the genitives depend on διακόνους, in the sense of "we are ministers of the new covenant, ministers not of the letter, but of the Spirit."

Verse 6b, τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτέννει τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζῳοποιεῖ, sounds like a proverb, which is

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[56]Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The New Covenant in the Letters of Paul and the Essene Documents," in To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J., ed. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 196.

easily memorized and detached from the context.[57] Both

members of the pair have about the same number of syllables.

There is also a double homoioteleuton, that is, πνεῦμα

rhymes with γράμμα, and ζῳοποιεῖ matches with

ἀποκτέννει.[58] The first half of verse 6b, τὸ γὰρ

γράμμα ἀποκτέννει, had not been announced in the

context.[59] The second half, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα

ζῳοποιεῖ, echoes the πνεύματι Θεοῦ ζῶντος of 2

Cor. 3:3.[60] The articles (τό and τό) could be either

generic or anaphoric, that is, they either point to

γράμμα and πνεῦμα in general (any letter and spirit)

or take up the γράμμα and the πνεῦμα mentioned in the

first half of verse 6. They are best taken as anaphoric.

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[57]Hans Windisch refers to it as "ein fein geschliffene Gnome." Der zweite Korintherbrief (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 108.

[58]Jacob Kremer, "'Denn der Buchstabe toetet, der Geist aber macht lebendig': methodologische und hermeneutische Erwaegungen zu 2 Kor 3.6b," in Begegnung mit dem Wort: Festschrift fuer Heinrich Zimmermann, ed. Josef Zmizewski and Ernst Nellessen (Bonn: Hanstein, 1979), 229-230.

[59] Windisch points out that 2 Cor. 2:15,16 might have prepared the way for this statement in verse 6. In subsequent verses Paul returns to this topic. Windisch, 110.

[60]Ζῳοποιεῖ, "to make alive," provides a good example of a composite word that is relatively transparent. As Moises Silva explains, "the notion of transparency is applied rather broadly to all those words that are motivated, that is, words that have some natural relation to their meaning." Silva, Biblical Words and Their Meaning, 48. Elsewhere in Paul's letters, the connection between πνεῦμα and ζωή occurs in Rom. 8:2-11; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Cor. 5:4-5; and Gal. 6:8.

The typically Pauline γάρ . . . δέ antithesis,[61] which is
sometimes used to introduce a parenthetical statement,
reinforces this view.

The Structure of the Section

Retrospecting, the reader now perceives that this
section comprises two major assertions (verses 4 and 6a),
each of which is followed by a clarification couched in the
form of an antithesis (οὐχ ὅτι . . . ἀλλά, verse 5; οὐ
. . . ἀλλά, verse 6b). The latter clarification (verse
6b) is again followed by an explanatory antithesis, which
comes close to a parenthetical remark. Although the two
antithetical clarifications do not appear to be related in
any sense, one is tempted to suggest that the two major
assertions (verse 4 and verse 6a) run parallel, the latter
throwing light on the former.

Section Two: 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

Verses 7-8

Moving into the next section, we encounter the
following statement: εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου
κτλ, which allows us to draw three conclusions: 1) the
author seems to be stating a condition (εἰ); 2) the
conversation continues and is in some sense related to the

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[61]The only exception seems to be Matthew 22:14. Other
instances in Paul are 2 Cor. 4:18, Rom. 6:23, Rom. 10:10,
and Gal. 5:17. 2 Cor. 4:18 is another case in which the
γάρ . . . δέ antithesis is used to explain an immediately
preceding antithesis.

context (δέ); and 3) there has been a shift in subject matter (ἡ διακονία).

The opening εἰ establishes a condition, which may be either real or hypothetical, either actual or contrary to fact.[62] The sequence of the text will probably indicate that the condition is real and actual. Δέ may be taken as a marker of an additive relation, with the possible implication of some contrast.[63] It shows that the discourse is not over yet. At the same time, it indicates that what is about to follow is not directly related to the subject matter of verse 6b. In fact, the topic is no longer τὸ γράμμα or τὸ πνεῦμα, but rather ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου.

The occurrence of διακονία in this context is, to a certain extent, surprising. Many a reader expects the author to elaborate on either the καινὴ διαθήκη or the γράμμα-πνεῦμα contrast, but instead he goes on talking about διακονία.[64] Διακονία as such had not yet

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[62] Ibid., Subdomain 89.65 [see Matt. 26:42], p. 786.

[63] Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.94 [see Titus 1:1], p. 790.

[64] Murphy-O'Connor points out that those who insist that the new covenant is Paul's subject in 2 Cor. 3:7-18 fail to see that Paul does not use καινὴ διαθήκη one single time in this pericope. He deliberately switches from covenant to ministry, giving the impression that he wants to avoid διαθήκη. Murphy-O'Connor, "The New Covenant in the Letters of Paul and the Essene Documents," 195-196.

occurred in the text of 2 Corinthians.[65] Θάνατος had

been employed in chapter one, verses 9 and 10, and in

chapter two, verse 16.

If the use of ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου is

surprising, it is that only to a certain extent, for on the

semantic level both διακονία and θάνατος had been

anticipated in the διακόνους and ἀποκτέννει of verse

6 respectively. Thus, what takes place is indeed a switch

from one subject to another, although not to a subject that

is totally foreign to the context. In view of this, the

author's use of δέ begins to make sense. It signals that,

although the conversation is being carried on, it is not

just the continuation of the immediately preceding

discussion in verse 6b, namely, the contrast between

γράμμα and πνεῦμα, but rather that the author is

returning to the subject of the διάκονος/διακονία,

which had been mentioned a little earlier in verse 6a.

What follows in verse 7 is meant to further qualify

διακονία τοῦ θανάτου. Here the reader who is

perusing a critical edition of the Greek New Testament has

to decide what version of the account he is going to read.

He has to choose between reading ἐν γράμματι

ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις with Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex

Claromontanus (D), and a few other manuscripts, and reading

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[65]All in all it occurs 34 times in the New Testament, 12
of which are in 2 Corinthians (3:7; 3:8; 3:9 [twice]; 4:1;
5:18; 6:3; 8:4; 9:1; 9:12; 9:13; 11:8).

ἐν γράμμασιν κτλ. with the rest and vast majority of

the Greek manuscripts. The difference is more than just a

switch from plural to singular or vice-versa, for it has

semantic implications. Ἐν γράμμασιν are letters, marks

on stone. Ἐν γράμματι has to do with the deadly τὸ

γράμμα of verse 6. At first sight, the singular seems to

be an attempt to assimilate or closely connect verse 7 to

verse 6. And yet, what follows in verse 7 cannot be left

out of the picture, for the option between singular and

plural is bound up with the question of with what ἐν

γράμμασιν/ἐν γράμματι goes. Does it go with the

preceding ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου or with the

following ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις? If joined to the

preceding phrase, the sense would be: "the διακονία τοῦ

θανάτου consisting in γράμμασιν." It is already

apparent that the singular would make better sense.

However, if ἐν γράμμασιν is linked to what follows, the

text reads as follows: "the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου

engraved on stones in the form of letters." The reader is

now in position to draw some conclusions. First, he

realizes that, were the singular original, it would quite

naturally go with what precedes it.[66] The plural, on the

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[66]This is apparently the major argument in favor of the
singular, namely, that it goes well with the preceding
expression. According to Henry Alford (The Greek Testament,
revised by Everett F. Harrison [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958],
644), the reading in the plural originated because "it was
imagined that γράμματι belonged to ἐντετυπωμένη."
This argument also works the other way round, namely, that
the singular resulted from the close connection that was
seen between this phrase and the preceding ἡ διακονία

other hand, seems to be connected with what follows. The
rhythm of the text points in that direction.[67] Granted that
the plural is text and the singular is variant, it follows
that the participle ἐντετυπωμένη, sitting between ἐν
γράμμασιν and λίθοις, is clearly doing double duty,
namely, the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου is both ἐν
γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη as well as
ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις.

Ἐντετυπωμένη, which is perfect participle of
ἐντυπόω, a verb which appears only here in the New
Testament, modifies ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου. This
sounds awkward, for the reader hardly expects a διακονία
engraved on stones. It would be more natural for a
διαθήκη to be engraved on stones.[68] The sign λίθοις,
which stands for the ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις of verse 3 and
reminds of the πλάκας τῆς διαθήκης (Exod. 34:28,
LXX), seems to support this view. Yet, this is not what the

τοῦ θανάτου, or, to be exact, between ἐν γράμματι
and θανάτου. The phrase τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμματι
would then be a sort of paraphrase of τὸ γράμμα
ἀποκτέννει (verse 6). The problem with this suggested
connection is that, were it really intended, one would have
expected the repetition of the article: ἡ διακονία τοῦ
θανάτου τοῦ ἐν γράμματι, which is not the case.
Christian F. Kling, Corinthians, Lange's Commentary of the
Holy Scriptures, translated and edited by Philip Schaff
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1949), 49.

[67]Windisch, 113.

[68]Rudolf Bultmann is bold enough to say that the
expression ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις "is incorrect to the
extent it was of course not the διακονία, but rather the
διαθήκη which was ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις."
Bultmann, 80.

text says.

The **διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐγενήθη ἐν
δόξῃ**. Ἐγενήθη, which is aorist indicative passive of
γίνομαι, is usually referred to the coming or
inauguration of the **διακονία**.[69] However, it would also
make good sense if taken as "it proved to be or showed
itself to be in glory."[70] This seems to be the case here,
especially when the aorist is compared with the preceding
perfect participle (**ἐντετυπωμένη**), and if the sequence
of the underlying Old Testament narrative is taken into
consideration. There is no reference to the origin or
inauguration of the **διακονία** in the passage that is in
the author's mind. The **διακονία** had been engraved on
stones and was still there in the state of being engraved on
stones. It showed or proved itself to be in glory when
Moses' face shone, as the continuation of the text makes
clear.[71]

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[69]**Γίνομαι** in the sense of "to come into existence."
Louw and Nida, Subdomain 13.80 [see John 1:3], p. 158. Most
translations render it by "came with glory." Plummer
translates it as "had a glorious inauguration." Alfred
Plummer, <u>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second
Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians</u>, International
Critical Commentary (New York, Scribner, 1915), 89.

[70]In this case, **γίνομαι** is part of subdomain 41.1,
"to exist or to conduct oneself, with the particular manner
specified by the context." See 1 Thes. 2:10. Louw and
Nida, p. 504.

[71]**Δόξα** is a polysemous sign. In this passage it
could denote either "brightness" [Louw and Nida, Subdomain
14.49 (see Acts 22:11), p. 175], or "glorious power" [Louw
and Nida, Subdomain 76.13 (see Rom. 6:4), p. 682]. The
former is more likely.

What follows in verse 7b is a clause introduced by
ὥστε. The construction is known as an accusative with the
infinitive, that is, the subject is the accusative τοὺς
υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ, and the verb is in the infinitive.
Ὥστε is usually a marker of result, "so that."[72] The
result is an action, namely, ἀτενίσαι εἰς τὸ
πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως, that could not be performed
(μὴ δύνασθαι) by the children of Israel.[73]

The ὥστε-clause is followed by a διά-clause, which
gives the reason why the children of Israel could not gaze
upon Moses' face.[74] From a logical viewpoint, the διά-
clause precedes the ὥστε-clause. In other words, the
δόξα τοῦ προσώπου Μωϋσέως, which is the cause,
resulted in the μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι. This may lead
to the conclusion that the διά-clause, though somewhat
removed from ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ, is actually an
explanation of the latter, that is, the διακονία proved
to be ἐν δόξῃ when Moses' face shone.

The attributive participle τὴν καταργουμένην,
due to its placement at the end of the sentence, looks like

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[72]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.52 [see 1 Cor. 5:7-8], p.
784.

[73]This is the first explicit reference to Moses in 2
Corinthians, although his mediation of the law had been in
view since verse 3. In 2 Corinthians, the sign Μωϋσῆς
is going to recur only in verses 13 and 15 of chapter three.
Elsewhere in Paul's letters, Moses is mentioned in Rom.
5:14; 9:15; 10:5,19; 1 Cor. 9:9; 10:2.

[74]Διά, in this case used with the accusative, is a
marker of cause or reason. Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.26
[see Acts 21:34], p. 780.

an afterthought.[75] Paul could have introduced the participle within the phrase rather than after it, and it would have run like this: διὰ τὴν καταργουμένην δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ. However, this is not the case. In trying to understand why Paul used the word order he did, some readers suggest that the position of τὴν καταργουμένην is emphatic. Yet, the reader's first impression is that the author is throwing in something that has to be expressed, even if it is in the form of an afterthought, and that he will come back to it later on.

The whole explanatory phrase ὥστε . . . καταργουμένην seems to perform a double function. On the one hand, it further defines ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ. On the other hand, it helps the reader to locate the episode that is being referred to in the history of the people of Israel. It works like a cross reference. Were Paul writing today, he would probably have said something like this: "as you can read in Exodus 34:29-35." Paul assumes the readers' familiarity with the story, for he does not retell it in detail. He alludes to the story, reflects on it, but makes little effort to interpret specific details. In view of this, 2 Corinthians 3 can hardly be described as a

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[75]Richard Hays describes it as "a theological afterthought." Richard B. Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 135.

"Christian midrash on Exodus 34:29-35,"[76] unless "midrash"
is taken in a somewhat looser sense.[77]

Verse 8, which is a continuation of verse 7, starts
out with πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον and is followed by ἡ
διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος, which is the second term of
the comparison. Each sign in πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον is
significant. Πῶς, which is technically "an interrogative
reference to means,"[78] and which is usually rendered by
"how," tells the reader that the apodosis, if not the whole
sentence, is actually a question. Οὐχί, a marker for an

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[76]This designation goes back to Hans Windisch, who, in
1924, in his commentary in the Meyer series, described 2
Cor. 3:7-18 as a "christlicher Midrasch ueber Ex 34,29-35
zum Erweis der ueberragenden Herrlichkeit des neuen Amtes
gegenueber der des Alten." Windisch, 112. After Windisch,
it has become fashionable to refer to the passage as being a
midrash. Some scholars, like Siegfried Schulz ("Die Decke
Moses," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
49 [1958]:1-30), even hold that Paul incorporated and
corrected a midrash composed by his opponents in Corinth.
They draw this conclusion on the basis of the unusual amount
of unique vocabulary present in this pericope and from the
internal tensions of the passage. However, as Richard B.
Hays notices, "these reconstructions are conjectural
attempts to explain certain gaps or disjunctions within the
text that might be patient of other explanations." Hays,
xii.

[77]E. Earle Ellis explains that "as a literary expression
midrash has traditionally been identified with certain
rabbinic commentaries on the OT. However, in accordance
with its use in Ben Sira and at Qumran, the term is now
employed more broadly to designate interpretive renderings
of the biblical text (=implicit midrash) and or various
kinds of 'text + exposition' patterns (=explicit midrash)."
"Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," in
Mikra: Text, Translation and Interpretation of the Hebrew
Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, edited by
Martin Jan Mulder (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 703.

[78]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 92.16 [see John 4:9], p. 815.

affirmative response to questions, is designed "to elicit agreement with the intent of the question, even though it is seemingly negatively posed."[79] It helps the reader to see the question, not as one of doubting, but rather as a rhetorical question.[80] **Μᾶλλον** is a marker of contrast indicating an alternative,[81] and may be translated as "on the contrary, instead, but rather." The whole expression, taken in its context, may be paraphrased as "if that is the case with the first **διακονία**, then, on the other hand, it holds good also for the **διακονία** I am about to mention, and I expect you to agree with me."

The subject of the apodosis is **ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος**. Much to the reader's surprise, especially in comparison to the **διακονία τοῦ θανάτου**, no lengthy explanation is appended this time. An additional surprise is the future tense in **ἔσται ἐν δόξῃ**. Readers have been perplexed by this **ἔσται**. Some take it as a real, chronological, future tense, pointing to something that is still to come. Others take it as "a 'logical' future expressing result."[82] A third possibility is a combination of logical and eschatological, as explained by James D. G.

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[79]Louw and Nida, 666, note 7. **Οὐχί** appears under subdomain 69.12 [see Matt. 5:46].

[80]Bultmann, 81.

[81]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.126 [see Gal. 4:9], p. 794.

[82]Victor Paul Furnish, II Corinthians, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 204.

Dunn:

> ῎Εσται should be taken as a logical future . . . .,
> although the still future eschatological sense is
> present also in so far as the glory increases as the
> consummation approaches (verses 8 and 18).[83]

At this juncture, however, since he has not yet read

verse 9, to say nothing about verse 18!, the reader is

unable to solve the problem, and has to live with the

ambiguity. All he knows is that a contrast is being

established between two διακονίαι, and that, compared to

the ἐγενήθη of the former, the ἔσται of the latter

sounds much more impressive.

Verse 9

Verse 9a reads, εἰ γὰρ τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆς

κατακρίσεως δόξα. Γάρ is the marker of a new

sentence.[84] It appears that verse 9 is an explanatory

restatement of verses 7 and 8. As shall be seen, it is much

shorter than verses 7 and 8.[85] And yet, the basic elements,

διακονία and δόξα, are there.

The modern reader, unlike the Corinthian

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[83]J. D. G. Dunn, "2 Corinthians III.17 -- 'The Lord is
the Spirit', The Journal of Theological Studies 21 (1970):
311.

[84]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 91.1 [see Matt. 27:23], p.
811. It can also be "a marker of cause or reason between
events" [Subdomain 89.23; see Mark 16:8], but this does not
apply here. Windisch already sensed this, although he could
not completely get rid of the logical force of γάρ. He
writes: "Also darf die logische Kraft des γάρ hier (wie v.
11) nicht allzu streng genommen werden." Windisch, 116.

[85]"V. 9 ist verkuerzte Wiederholung von V. 8."
Windisch, 115.

readers/hearers who had access to the autograph, has to decide whether he is going to read τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως, with Papyrus 46, Codex Sinaiticus, some other manuscripts and the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland, or ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως, with Codex Vaticanus, the corrector of Codex Claromontanus, the Majority Text, a few ancient versions, and the 25th edition of the Nestle text. In either case, the sense would not be essentially altered.[86] Having decided to follow the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland, which is supported by the so-called stronger external evidence, the reader encounters a nice inverted parallelism or chiasm, which may be outlined as follows:

Dative (τῇ διακονίᾳ)   -   Nominative (δόξα)

Nominative (ἡ διακονία)   -   Dative (δόξῃ)

The second half of verse 9 is introduced by πολλῷ μᾶλλον. The dative πολλῷ may come as a surprise to many a reader. Yet, it is normal even in classical Greek, where πολλῷ is often used with the comparative for πολύ.[87] The πολλῷ μᾶλλον shows that the

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[86]Granting that the dative is original, it may have been changed to the nominative in assimilation to the nominative in verses 7 and 8. On the other hand, if the nominative were original, the only reason for an alteration would be the difficulty found in the assertion that the διακονία itself is δόξα.

[87]Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, ninth edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 1443. In the New Testament, this πολλῷ occurs in Matthew 6:30, Mark 10:48, Luke 18:39, Rom. 5:9,10,15,17; 1 Cor. 12:22; 2 Corinthians 3; and Phil. 2:12.

opposition between the **διακονίαι** is no longer phrased as a question, but takes on the form of an assertion. This feature, together with the use of **περισσεύω**, provides the passage with a rising tone, a crescendo. Thus, it can be seen that verse 9 is not simply an abbreviated reiteration of verses 7 and 8. Although it is a variation on the same theme verbalized before, with new genitival phrases attached to each **διακονία**, it is a variation that is certainly added for the sake of emphasis.

Verse 10

Verse 10 runs like this: **καὶ γὰρ οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.** The reader's first impression is that he is dealing with a very opaque text.[88] The major problems are the function of the opening **καὶ γάρ**, the referent of **τὸ δεδοξασμένον**, and the meaning of the phrase **ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει.**

Καὶ γάρ comes with a bit of surprise, because the reader was expecting an additional **εἰ γάρ**. The **καὶ** tells him that what follows is somehow appended to the preceding verse, the only question being what kind of relationship exists between the two verses. There seem to be two possibilities: **καὶ γάρ** either adds something that runs parallel to verse 9, in the sense of "and furthermore," or

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[88]Hans-Josef Klauck refers to it as "der undurchsichtige Vers 10." Hans-Josef Klauck, <u>Zweiter Korintherbrief</u>, Die Neue Echter Bibel, second edition (Wuerzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 38.

introduces a parethetical remark, in the sense of "and by
the way."[89] It may well introduce a parenthetical remark
that elaborates on verse 9.[90]

Οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον is an
example of oxymoron, that is, a combination of contradictory
words: "the thing that was glorified was not glorified."[91]
The word order points out that **οὐ δεδόξασται** is being
underscored. The major difficulty with this oxymoron is the
referent of **τὸ δεδοξασμένον**. It could refer to
either one of the **διακονίαι**. Most readers take it as
referring to the **διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως** in verse
9.

The phrase **ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει** "is difficult and

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[89]Paul uses this **καὶ γάρ** three times in Romans (11:1;
15:3; 16:2), three times in the Thessalonian correspondence
(1 Thes. 3:4 and 4:10; 2 Thes. 3:10), once in Philippians
(2:27), and several times in the Corinthian correpondence (1
Cor. 5:7; 8:5; 11:9; 12:13,14; 14:8; 2 Cor. 2:10; 3:10;
5:2,4; 7:5; 13:4). In some cases it has the force of an
"for also, for even" (Rom. 11:1; Rom. 15:3). Sometimes it
introduces a statement that runs parallel with a preceding
one (1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Thes. 4:10). Its primary intention,
says Edmund Hill, "is to introduce an aside, an
illustration, a further point." Edmund Hill, "The
Construction of Three Passages from St. Paul," The Catholic
Biblical Quarterly 23 (1961): 300.

[90]Rudolf Bultmann says that verse 10 "gives the reason
for the **πολλῷ μᾶλλον** in verse 9." Bultmann, 83.
Carol K. Stockhausen presumes that "verse 10 elaborates on
one word of verse 9, the verb **περισσεύω**." Stockhausen,
117. Yet, verse 10 appears to be a negative restating of
verse 9 as a whole.

[91]Windisch describes it as a paradox that is explained
by what follows in verse 10. Windisch, 116.

many scholars are happy not to translate these words."[92]

Some take it as a redundant phrase. Martin H. Scharlemann,

for instance, says that "the phrase en toutoi toi merei

constitutes a redundance, probably referring back to

dikaiosyne."[93] Saint John Chrysostom took it in the sense

of 'in this respect,' that is, in respect of the

comparison.[94] The phrase as such is rare in the New

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[92]Jean Hering, The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the
Corinthians, translated by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock
(London: Epworth Press, 1967), 25.

[93]Martin H. Scharlemann, "Of Surpassing Splendor: An
Exegetical Study of 2 Corinthians 3:4-18," Concordia Journal
4 (1978): 116. Also Carol K. Stockhausen voices the opinion
that the use of this "somewhat awkward expression" is
"somewhat redundant with the εἴνεκεν that follows." She
attempts to simplify [sic] Paul's Greek, representing it in
English as "that is" [sic]. Stockhausen, p.88, note 5.

[94]Chrysostom's words are taken from a homily on 2
Corinthians 3. They occur in this context: "Here he also
shows the superiority, how great it is, saying, 'if I
compare this with that, the glory of the Old Covenant is not
glory at all; not absolutely laying down that there was no
glory, but in view of the comparison. Wherefore also he
added, 'in this respect', that is, in respect of the
comparison. (Διὸ καὶ ἐπήγαγε, Τούτῳ τῷ μέρει·
τουτέστι, κατὰ τὸν τῆς συγκρίσεως λόγον.)
Not that this doth disparage the Old Covenant, yea rather it
highly commendeth it: for comparisons are wont to be made
between things which are the same in kind." Chrysostom,
"Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians: Homily
VII - 2 Cor. III.7,8," in A Select Library of the Nicene and
Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, volume XII,
edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1889), 310. For the Greek text, see S. Joannes
Chrysostomus, "In Epist. II Ad Cor. Homil. VII," In
Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Omnium SS. Patrum,
Doctorum Scriptorumque Ecclesiasticorum, qui ab Aevo
Apostolico ad Tempora . . . Concilii Florentini (Ann. 1439)
. . . . Floruerunt, Edited by Jacques Paul Migne, Series
Graeca Prior, Volume 61 (Paris: 1862), 444.

Testament, occurring only here and in 2 Cor. 9:3.[95] In

fact, the parallel of 2 Cor. 9:3 is an important clue for

the understanding of 2 Cor. 3:10. In both cases the

expression can be taken at face value, that is, in the sense

of "in this matter."[96] Paul is saying something like this:

"And by the way, the δεδοξασμένον was not

δεδόξασται in this matter I am referring to on account

of. . ."

The concluding phrase in verse 10 gives the reason for

the οὐ δεδόξασται. Paul writes: εἵνεκεν τῆς

ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης. The vocable εἵνεκεν is "a

marker of a participant constituting the reason for an

event."[97] It belongs to the same semantic domain as διά

followed by the accusative, and is best rendered as "because

of."

Ὑπερβαλλούσης is classified with περισσεύω

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[95]A third example can be found in 1 Peter 4:16, where
the Majority Text reads ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ instead of
ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ. It appears that the normal
word order is ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, and that here the
word order is reversed for the sake of emphasis.

[96]Few interpreters take it in this most obvious sense.
One of them is Johannes Schneider, in Theological Dictionary
of the New Testament, Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard
Friedrich, Translated and edited by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand
Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) s.v. "μέρος," 4:596, who takes it
as "in this connection or instance."

[97]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 90.43 [see Matt. 5:11], p.
803. Εἵνεκεν, and the alternate form ἕνεκα are rare in
Paul's writings, occurring only in Rom. 8:36, Rom. 14:20, 2
Cor. 3:10, and 2 Cor. 7:12.

in the same semantic domain,[98] which indicates that the last

phrase of verse 10 echoes the πολλῷ μᾶλλον

περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ

of verse 9. The περισσεία of the διακονία τῆς

δικαιοσύνης is ὑπερβάλλουσα and overshadows any

other glory. Or, as Alfred Plummer has it, "when the sun is

risen, lamps cease to be of use; <u>orto sole lumen lucernae</u>

<u>caecatur</u>."[99]

Verse 11

In verse 11 the author comes back to the familiar εἰ

γάρ . . . πολλῷ μᾶλλον construction. For the third

time now he comes up with an <u>a minore ad maiorem</u> argument,

that is, an argument from the lesser to the greater. What

he says is probably not that much different from what he

said before, for in this verse he restates his argument

presented in verses 7-8 and repeated in verse 9. The

astonishing thing, however, is that the διακονίαι have

dropped out of the picture. They are replaced by τὸ

καταργούμενον and τὸ μένον. The former had been

announced in the τὴν καταργουμένην of verse 7, while

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[98]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 78.33 [Comparative Degree; see Eph. 2:7], p. 689. Both signs are very frequent in the Corinthian correspondence. Περισσεύω occurs 25 times in Paul, 3 of which are in 1 Corinthians (8:8; 14:12; 15:58) and 9 of which are in 2 Corinthians (1:5 - twice; 3:9; 4:15; 8:2; 8:7 - twice; 9:8; 9:12). The ὑπερβαλλ- stem occurs 14 times in Paul, mostly in 2 Corinthians (ὑπερβάλλω - 3:10; 9:14; ὑπερβολή - 1:8; 4:7; 4:17; 4:17; 12:7; ὑπερβαλλόντως - 11:23).

[99]Plummer, 91.

the latter is unprecedented. This switch is very
significant, for it tells the reader that the comparison is
coming to a close, that this is the last item of the
series.[100]

Two more aspects of verse 11 deserve special
attention. First of all, the sentence is verbless, being
one of the few examples of "a Pauline sentence having an
articular participle as subject and no expressed verb."[101]
It provides a neat illustration of the principle that "all
language usage is shorthand."[102] In the use of language, it
is very common that words or signs are elided, producing an
economical but potentially ambiguous communication, whose
full set of signs must be supplied by the reader. Another

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[100]This phenomenon has been noticed by Prof. Voelz and
seems to be very common in the Greek New Testament. In
other words, in presenting a sequence or chain of elements,
be it a list of imperatives or a sequence of characters in a
story, very often an author departs from his pattern when he
comes to the last element of the series. The purpose of
this device is apparently to help the reader/listener to
realize that the series is coming to a close. James W.
Voelz, "Paul, Seminary Professors, and the Pastoral Office,"
Unpublished Essay Delivered to the Joint Exegetical
Departments of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia
Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (Terre Haute, IN: March
1990).

[101]Daryl D. Schmidt, "The Syntactical Style of 2
Thessalonians: How Pauline is It?," in The Thessalonian
Correspondence, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: University
Press, 1990), 387. Other instances in Paul are Rom. 8:33-
34; Rom. 12:7-8; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; and 2 Thes. 2:7.

[102]James W. Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where Are We
Now? Where Are We Going?," in Light for Our World: Essays
Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis, Missouri, edited by John W. Klotz (St. Louis:
Concordia Seminary, 1989), 239.

way of referring to this would be in terms of 'gaps' or 'open spaces' in the text.[103] The reader is enticed to close the 'openness' of the text, by supplying the missing information. How can the reader close the 'openness' of verse 11? For the first half of verse 11 he is likely to supply ἐγενήθη, whereas for the second half he can supply either ἐστίν or ἔσται, or both.

The second aspect is that in the first half of verse 11 Paul introduces the propositional phrase διὰ δόξης. Up to this point he had almost consistently used the phrase ἐν δόξῃ. Most scholarly readers or commentators agree that "St. Paul is fond of changes in prepositions."[104] So, he can say both ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ as well as ἐγενήθη διὰ δόξης. The switch from ἐν to διὰ may have to do with the series coming to a close, as referred to above. On the other hand, however, if the whole phrase is

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[103]The concept of 'open spaces' (Leerstellen) was developed by Wolfgang Iser and originally applied to the study of narrative texts. An open space occurs whenever the writer "breaks off his narrative at a certain point or leaves certain things unsaid." Bernard C. Lategan, "Current Issues in the Hermeneutical Debate," Neotestamentica 18 (1984), 12. This concept, as James W. Voelz explains, is "not necessarily useful for the analysis of argumentative texts," although it is there in the form of different types of ambiguity. James W. Voelz, quoted in Bernard C. Lategan, "Reception: Theory and Practice in Reading Romans 13," Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament, edited by P. J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 157-158. Thus, the elision of a word or sign is an 'open space' in a transferred sense, for it contributes to the potential ambiguity of the text.

[104]Plummer, 92. Also Kling, 50; Alford, 645; Windisch, 117.

compared to the following τὸ μένον ἐν δόξῃ (verse
11b), διά seems to be the right choice. As Christian
Friedrich Kling points out, "διά seems appropriate to the
καταργούμενον, and ἐν to the μένον,"[105] for διά
designates a point of transition, whereas ἐν implies that
which is permanent. Yet, this can only be perceived on the
basis of the context. In other words, it is the combination
of διά with τὸ καταργούμενον and ἐν with τὸ
μένον that yields this conclusion, and not the use of
this or that preposition as such. Therefore, no major
argument can be based on a minor grammatical detail taken in
isolation. As Moises Silva explains,

> no interpretation is worth considering unless it has
> strong contextual support. If it doesn't, then the use
> of the grammatical detail becomes irrelevant; if it
> does, then the grammar is at best a pointer to, not the
> basis of, the correct interpretation.[106]

Section Three: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Verses 12-13

This section begins with the participial clause
ἔχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα. Apparently, that
is, judging from the the surface structure, a change of
subject is entailed. After all, the διακονίαι dropped
out of the picture and the author is again talking about

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[105]Kling, 50.

[106]Moises Silva, God, Language and Scripture (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 118.

himself.[107]   Yet, if **διακονία** is taken in the sense of

"that which serves death," or "that which serves life," then

verses 7-11 are not a digression and what follows in verse

12 is simply the carrying on of the argumentation started at

the beginning of the chapter.

Verse 12 is tied to the context by means of **οὖν**,

which incidentally is the first (and only) **οὖν** in the

text. Such a sign should not be overlooked, for at times it

can be of crucial importance. In Romans 12:1, for instance,

as Peter Cotterell and Max Turner observe, it is a reminder

that "if the sentence can be fully explicated grammatically

from within itself, it cannot be explicated **semantically**

without reference to chapter 11."[108]

Lexically, **οὖν** can be a discourse marker of

emphasis, as in 1 Cor. 3:5.[109]   It can also be "a marker of

result, often implying the conclusion of a process of

reasoning."[110]   In this case it is translated as "so," or

"therefore." Some readers, for example Martin H.

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[107]Or, the authors themselves, for **ἔχοντες** is plural.
This participle could, in fact, refer to any persons in the
plural (we, you, or they). It is only later on, with
χρώμεθα, that it becomes clear that the subject of
ἔχοντες is **ἡμεῖς**.

[108]Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, <u>Linguistics &
Biblical Interpretation</u> (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press,
1989), 190.

[109]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 91.7 [see 1 Cor. 3:5], p.
812.

[110]Ibid., Subdomain 89.50 [Relation of Result; see Matt.
7:24], p. 783.

Scharlemann, argue that it should be taken in this sense in 2 Cor. 3:12. Scharlemann states that οὖν "gathers up into itself the previous arguments to introduce a further elaboration."[111] Οὖν can also be "a marker of relatively weak contrast,"[112] in the sense of "but." Sometimes, particularly in historical narratives, οὖν may be used "to resume a subject once more after an interruption," in the sense of "so, as has been said."[113] It appears that, in the context of 2 Cor. 3:12, one should not press the inferential use of οὖν, particularly if this should lead to the conclusion that the whole preceding paragraph is somehow crammed into that one little sign. Οὖν is part of a larger transitional syntagm, namely, ἔχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα, and in this syntagm it helps to signal that a new topic, different from the one tackled in the preceding paragraph, is about to be introduced. Thus, in this context οὖν is to a certain extent contrastive. Since this new topic is again the person of the διάκονος rather than the διακονίαι, οὖν also helps to point back

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[111]Scharlemann, 116. Walter Bauer, in his Lexicon, also takes it as inferential, "so," "therefore." Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated, adapted, augmented, and revised by William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, second edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 593.

[112]Louw and Nida, Domain 89.127 [Relation of Contrast; see John 9:18], p. 794.

[113]Bauer, 593. Οὖν is said to have this sense in 1 Cor. 8:4 and 1 Cor. 11:20.

to verse 4. It is almost tautological to say, as W. C. van Unnik does, that οὖν "takes the result of the preceding argument as a basis on which the new structure can be built."[114] From the viewpoint of the reader, this is quite obvious. The text, like any text, is read in a linear fashion, and once the reader is about to begin reading verse 12, he will have incorporated verses 7-11 as a basis for what lies ahead. The οὖν helps him to realize this. It helps him to see that the conversation continues, based on what went on before, although not necessarily introducing the conclusion of the author's argumentation.

As indicated above, readers who put too much emphasis on the οὖν tend to overlook the whole phrase, ἔχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα. In fact, what indicates that something is put as the basis for that which is about to follow is the participle ἔχοντες, and not so much the οὖν. The participle is best taken with the force of "since", "on the basis of."[115] The basis is τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα, an ἐλπίς which is of such a kind as identified in the context.

Ἐλπίς is another one of those event words, denoting the act of ἐλπίζειν, of looking forward with confidence

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[114]W. C. van Unnik, "'With Unveiled Face': An Exegesis of 2 Cor. III:12-18," <u>Novum Testamentum</u> 6 (1963): 158-159.

[115]The force of ἔχοντες is somewhat similar to εἰ in verses 7, 9, and 11.

to that which is good and beneficial.[116] The major problem

here is the problem of the referent, that is, to what does

$\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ refer. It might be something mentioned in verses 7-

11. It might be the confidence expressed in verses 5-6. It

might even be the whole of verses 4-11.[117]

On the basis of $\tau o\iota\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\tau\eta\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha$, the authors

conduct themselves ($\chi\rho\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$) in $\pi o\lambda\lambda\tilde{\eta}$ $\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$.

The verb $\chi\rho\acute{\alpha}o\mu\alpha\iota$, which is somewhat rare in the New

Testament,[118] may be classified under different semantic

domains, but in this context is best taken as indicating

behavior.[119] Its denotation is "to behave or to conduct

oneself in a particular manner with regard to some

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[116]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 25.59 [Hope, Look forward
to; see 1 Tim. 4:10], p. 296. $\dot{'}E\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ can also be taken is
the sense of either "that which is hoped for" [Subdomain
25.61; see Col. 1:5] or "that which constitutes the cause or
reason for hoping" [Subdomain 25.62; see 1 Thes. 2:19].

[117]The original readers were probably in a better
position to fill in the blanks, that is, they were able to
finish a sentence beginning with "we hope that . . .," or
"we put our trust in . . ." This is so because they were
conscious of the so-called "external entailment," that is,
all that was implied by the sign $\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ in that context and
required no further explanation. Modern readers have a hard
time with the text because they are not aware of that
external entailment.

[118]It is a middle deponent verb, which occurs in the New
Testament mostly in Paul's letters (1 Cor. 7:21,31; 1 Cor.
9:12,15; 2 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 13:10; 1 Tim. 1:8;
1 Tim. 5:23). Besides Paul's letters, it occurs only in
Acts 27:3,17.

[119]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 41.4 [Behavior and Related
States; see Acts 27:3], p. 505. $X\rho\acute{\alpha}o\mu\alpha\iota$ is also part of
subdomain 42.23 [Perform, Do; see 1 Tim. 5:23], but this
does not apply here.

person."[120]   In 2 Cor. 3:12, this person could be God or the

Corinthians.   In view of the use of παρρησία, it is

probably the latter.

The author acts or proceeds[121] with πολλῇ

παρρησίᾳ, a great deal of boldness and confidence.[122]

The text does not tell what is entailed in this παρρησία

or how it is manifested.   It could be boldness with respect

to God, as in Ephesians 3:12, but here it is best read as

referring to "the courage with which he [Paul] acts to

fulfill his apostolic commission in relation to others."[123]

The original readers certainly were well acquainted with

this παρρησία, so that the author had no need to further

explain it.

Verse 13a reads: καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς

ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ.

Καθάπερ is a marker of comparison.[124]   What is being

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[120]Louw and Nida, p. 505.

[121]Χρώμεθα is present tense of connected action,
stressing the agent rather than the action.   It could be
either indicative ("we act") or subjunctive ("let us act"),
but in this syntagm it is clearly indicative.

[122]Πολλῇ points to "the upper range of a scale of
extent," and can be translated as "great, a great deal."
Louw and Nida, Subdomain 78.3 [see Acts 21:40], p. 685.
Παρρησία belongs to subdomain 25.158 [Courage, Boldness;
see Heb. 4:16], p. 307.

[123]Furnish, 230.   Other instances of παρρησία in in
the sense of "to be bold to proclaim the gospel" are 2 Cor.
7:4; Phil. 1:20; 1 Thes. 2:2; and Philemon 8.   On the
semantic level it corresponds to the οὐ γὰρ
ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον of Rom. 1:16.

[124]Louw and Nida, Domain 64.15 (Comparison), p. 619.

compared is Moses' act of putting a veil over his face. The question is: to what is it compared? The answer is: the text does not tell. There is a gap in the text. It appears that the main clause of the comparison is missing. After the opening καὶ οὐ one would have expected a verb like ποιοῦμεν, or a phrase like τίθεμεν κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ἡμῶν.[125] It is also possible to supply something after καθάπερ. One reader, Mathias Rissi, suggests that καὶ οὐ καθάπερ is an introductory formula to a quotation from Exodus 34, and that a verb like λέγει or γέγραπται is to be supplied after καθάπερ. In this case, Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα κτλ. would be the Old Testament quotation.[126] The problem with this suggestion is that something is still missing after καὶ οὐ. Another reader, Lloyd Gaston, argues that the verb to be supplied is "they say," the subject of the verb being Paul's opponents at Corinth. In this case, the comparison would be between the apostolic πολλὴ παρρησία and the rhetoric of Paul's opponents.[127] The

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[125]Kling, 54. Technically, this ellipsis is called an "aposiopesis," a breaking-off of speech. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated, revised, and augmented by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University Press, 1961), paragraph 482, page 255.

[126]Mathias Rissi, Studien zum zweiten Korintherbrief (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1969), 30.

[127]Lloyd Gaston, "Paul and the Torah in 2 Corinthians 3," in Paul and the Torah (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 162-164.

problem with this view is that only the primary readers at
Corinth could have perceived such a reference. Most
secondary readers take it as a comparison between Moses'
veiling and the apostolic παρρησία presented in verse
12.

Moses ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον
αὐτοῦ. The word κάλυμμα is in all likelihood drawn
from the Septuagint text of Exodus 34. The fact is that in
the New Testament the word appears only in this passage.
The question that enters the reader's mind is how in the
world the author can pass from the topic of the δόξα
(verses 7-11) to the subject of the κάλυμμα. The most
natural explanation is that the author is here following the
sequence of the narrative in Exodus 34. One gets the
impression that he cannot get away from the Old Testament
narrative, for he keeps coming back to it. Not that the
author necessarily had an open Greek Bible sitting in front
of him. What James Barr has to say about the influence of
the Septuagint upon the meaning of words in the New
Testament can also be applied to this situation. Barr
writes:

> If LXX meanings influenced later language, it was not
> because they were there in the book on paper but
> because they were in someone's mind.[128]

If Paul comes to the κάλυμμα after having dwelt on
the δόξα, a sequence which seems to have been influenced

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[128] James Barr, "Common Sense and Biblical Language,"
Biblica 49 (1968): 379.

by the Septuagint, this does not necessarily mean that he

had the story on paper in front of him, but it certainly

means that the story was embedded in his mind.

This same reasoning can be applied to the use of the

imperfect ἐτίθει in verse 13. Many readers find great

significance in the use of this imperfect, which is

interpreted as iterative in the sense of "Moses used to

place a veil over his face,"[129] or "Moses habitually wore a

veil."[130] Now, an imperfect may well be interpreted as

iterative. Should this be the case in 2 Cor. 3:13, the

question that naturally follows is: in which way or to what

extent is this significant? The significance is usually

seen in the contrast between the imperfect in 2 Corinthians

3 and the aorist (ἐπέθηκεν) in the Greek text of Exodus

34. Paul is seen as reinterpreting the Old Testament text,

stressing that Moses had to habitually put a veil over his

face. Paul, in this case, would be "rewriting" the Old

Testament narrative only to put Moses down. Yet, the

contrast does not seem to be one between the aorist of the

Septuagint and the imperfect of 2 Corinthians 3, but rather

between the present (χρώμεθα) of verse 12 and the

imperfect (ἐτίθει) of verse 13. Both the present and the

imperfect are connective, that is, the writer that makes use

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[129]Hughes, 108.

[130]David E. Garland, "The Sufficiency of Paul, Minister
of the New Covenant," Criswell Theological Review 4 (1989),
31.

of them "connects the verbal action to the person doing the acting."[131] What, then, is the significance of the change from present to imperfect? The switch from the present to the imperfect appears to be simply a switch from the present to the past. The author is switching back from his present situation to the Old Testament episode narrated in Exodus 34. He wants to show that Moses was engaged in veiling his face, and he does so by using the imperfect.[132]

Just as significant as the ἐτίθει κάλυμμα is the καὶ οὐ at the beginning of verse 13, provided that something like ποιοῦμεν is supplied after it. The author is saying that he does not use a veil like Moses did. This is surprising, not to say paradoxical, especially in the light of verses 7-11. If the διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης περισσεύει δόξῃ (verse 9), should one not expect the apostles to wear a veil much thicker than the veil of Moses, "since now the irradiation hazard must be infinitely greater"?[133] As Morna D. Hooker explains,

> This would be the logical conclusion of Paul's
> argument, but in fact Paul makes precisely the opposite
> point. Unlike Moses, Paul does not cover his face; he

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[131]Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 967.

[132]This use of the imperfect could also be emphatic, in the sense of "as Moses actually placed a veil . . ." James W. Voelz, "Present and Aorist Verbal Aspect: A New Proposal," unpublished essay delivered at the 47th annual meeting of the Societas Novi Testamenti Studiorum (Madrid: July 1992), 6.

[133]Morna D. Hooker, "Beyond the Things that Are Written? St. Paul's Use of Scripture," in From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 142.

is in no way ashamed, and makes no concealment, but acts boldly – a sign of the liberty that comes through the Spirit.[134]

What follows in verse 13 is very similar, but at the same time substantially different, from what was said in verse 7. Paul writes: πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. Most of these signs, like μή, ἀτενίσαι εἰς, τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ, and καταργουμένου, are familiar to the reader that went through verse 7. However, there are also significant changes. First, the ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι εἰς of verse 7 has given way to πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι εἰς.[135] The former expresses result; the latter, purpose.[136] Second, the object of ἀτενίσαι is no longer

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[134] Ibid.

[135] The construction πρὸς τὸ μή + infinitive is somewhat rare in the New Testament, occurring only in Matthew 5:28; 6:1; 13:30; 23:5; 26:12; Mark 13:22; Luke 18:1; Acts 3:19 (variant reading); Eph. 6:11; 1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8; James 3:3 (variant reading); and 2 Cor. 3:13. Its force is "generally final, expressing the subjective purpose, 'with a view to,' 'in order that." Plummer, 97.

[136] Some readers have a hard time with this construction. This is the case of R. C. H. Lenski, who is a good example of a resistant reader. Lenski recognizes that grammarians are reluctant to admit that this construction means result and not always purpose. And yet, says he, "in spite of this stand . . . . we confess that here result is better than purpose." R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), 937. Result is certainly better than purpose, but that is not what the text is saying. It is also true that verses 7 and 13 are not necessarily contradictory, as if one motive were assigned to Moses in verse 7 and a different one in verse 13. As Carol Stockhausen points out, "the two verses are complementary."

τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως, but rather τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. The sign τὸ τέλος comes as a surprise,[137] and has met with many a resistant reader. For instance, the copyist of <u>Codex Alexandrinus</u> (A) and some of the ancient translators, particularly of the Old Latin and of the Vulgate, changed it to τὸ πρόσωπον. This πρόσωπον was taken either from the previous line in verse 13 or, what seems more likely, from verse 7.[138] On the other hand, the genitival phrase τοῦ καταργουμένου seems to be carried over, not from verse 7, but rather from verse 11. In verse 7 it is feminine and qualifies δόξα; in verse 13 it is neuter and seems to hark back to verse 11.[139]

The whole phrase, τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου, is "one of the most disputed sentences

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Stockhausen, 126, note 66.

[137]Τέλος had been used in 2 Cor. 1:13, in the phrase ἕως τέλους, which is not at all related to τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου.

[138]It is hard to see how τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ καταργουμένου would have made better sense than τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου.

[139]Τοῦ καταργουμένου could also be masculine, but there is no masculine antecedent in the context. Ralph P. Martin, however, argues that "the subject [sic] of τοῦ καταργουμένου . . . . is . . . . either κάλυμμα ("veil") or νόμος ("law") in agreement with the neuter or masculine participial ending." Ralph P. Martin, <u>2 Corinthians</u>, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986), 68. Only an extremely sophisticated reader could think of νόμος as the antecedent of τοῦ καταργουμένου.

in this puzzling chapter."[140] To begin with, τέλος, like many other signs in this chapter, is ambiguous. In Paul's letters it occurs thirteen times and can denote temporal cessation;[141] outcome or result;[142] purpose or goal;[143] and even tax or revenue.[144] In most passages the context helps the reader to decide which meaning makes the best sense. Two passages are much discussed by readers, namely, Rom. 10:4 and 2 Cor. 3:13. In the latter passage it could denote one of three: either temporal cessation, or goal, or outcome. It could be deliberately ambiguous.[145] Yet, the majority view among readers is that, in the context of 2 Corinthians 3, it denotes "end" in the sense of "cessation." Scharlemann, for instance, states that "the telos of this verse is not that of Romans 10:4. It occurs here in its simple sense of ending."[146]

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[140]Hays, 136.

[141]"A point of time marking the end of a duration." Louw and Nida, Subdomain 67.66 [1 Cor. 15:24], p. 638.

[142]Ibid., Subdomain 89.40 [Rom. 6:21], p. 782.

[143]Ibid., Subdomain 89.55 [1 Tim. 1:5], 784.

[144]Ibid., Subdomain 57.179 [Rom. 13:7], p. 578.

[145]This is the view of Frances Young and David F. Ford, Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 105.

[146]Scharlemann, "Of Surpassing Splendor," 116. One of the reasons why, in the case of Rom. 10:4 and 2 Cor. 3:13, it is so difficult to choose between the different meanings of τέλος is that such a choice "entails an overall judgment about the role of the law in Paul's theology." Hays, 137.

The present passive participle τοῦ

κατ**αργουμένου** is best taken in the sense of "the

thing that is being abolished or rendered ineffective."[147]

Many readers assume the meaning "to fade away."[148] Yet, "in

no case, either active or passive, does καταργέω refer

to the gradual 'fading away' of some aspect of reality."[149]

Its semantic field is the realm of legal process rather than

of visual images.[150]

Thus far is this section the author has stated that

his great παρρησία, based on τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα, is

different from what Moses did. His attention then moves

from Moses to the children of Israel. The whole subsequent

section, verses 14-18, is regarded as parenthetical by some

readers, dealing as it does, not with the ministry, but with

those to whom the ministry is directed.[151] It remains to be

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[147]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 76.26 [1 Cor. 1:28; 2:6], p. 683. Of the 27 times καταργέω appears in the New Testament, 25 are found in Paul's letters, and 14 are passive. Scott Hafemann, "The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Cor 3:7-14: An Example of Paul's Contextual Exegesis of the OT - A Proposal," Horizons in Biblical Theology 14 (1992): 37-40.

[148]Such is the case of Charles H. Talbert, Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 151. Translations like the NIV and others also take it in the sense of "fading away."

[149]Hafemann, The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Cor 3:7-14, 40.

[150]Hays, 134.

[151]Kling, 55. Dietrich-Alex Koch observes that this departure from the author's main track, namely, the apostolic διακονία, requires a sort of a new beginning at

seen how it is tied to the context.

Verse 14

At the beginning of verse 14 the reader comes across

ἀλλὰ ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. This statement

is not easily linked to the context. There is a gap in the

sequence of thought. The logical connection between the

veil over Moses' face and the hardness of Israel's heart is

far from obvious.[152]   As C. J. A. Hickling observes,

> there is a difference between inability to see a face
> which has been veiled and the 'hardening' of one's mind
> so as to be incapable of seeing what is there, be it
> veiled or manifest.[153]

Much depends on how one is going to read the opening

ἀλλά. Semantically it is a marker of contrast, in the

sense of "but, on the contrary."[154] Its function at this

juncture, however, is a matter of dispute. One possibility

would be to link it way back to the πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ

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2 Cor. 4:1, with διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην. Dietrich-Alex Koch, Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zum Verwendung und zum Verstaendnis der Schrift bei Paulus (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), 332.

[152]Young and Ford, Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians, 108.

[153]C. J. A. Hickling, "The Sequence of Thought in II Corinthians, Chapter Three," New Testament Studies 21 (1974), 391. In Hickling's view,
> the problem of Jewish failure to believe in Jesus . . .
> was one sufficiently painful and urgent in Paul's mind
> to be raised almost automatically by the thought of the
> inadequacy of the Mosaic dispensation. Ibid., 393.

[154]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.125 [see Matt. 5:17], p. 794.

χρώμεθα of verse 12. The connection would be as
follows: "in spite of our great παρρησία, their minds
were hardened." Yet, this attempt to connect ἀλλά to
verse 12 seems far-fetched. Some readers insist that ἀλλά
has a corrective sense, and that the author is stressing the
guilt and culpability of the children of Israel and not of
Moses.[155] Others take it as saying that Moses had no need
to hide anything for the minds of the Israelites were
already hardened.[156] Walter Bauer notes that, before
independent clauses, ἀλλά may be used "to indicate that
the preceding is to be regarded as a settled matter, thus
forming a transition to something new."[157] To this reader
ἀλλά appears to form such a transition to something new.
The reference to τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ in verse 13
triggered off a reference to their reaction to Moses'
ministry in the wilderness. At first, it looks like a big
jump, namely, from Moses' veiling to the people's dullness
of heart. On further consideration, however, it is easy to
perceive that there is a close relation between both events,
a relation which is not necessarily logical, but which
certainly is temporal. After all, both incidents belong to
the same period in the history of the people of Israel. To

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[155] Jan Lambrecht, "Structure and Line of Thought in 2
Cor 2,14-4,6," Biblica 64 (1983): 359.

[156] Plummer, 99. Plummer himself does not espouse this
view, for, in his view, "this is a less obvious connexion."

[157] Bauer, 38.

the veiling of Moses corresponds the dullness of heart on the part of the people. And yet, the perceptive reader may well suspect that the author is including this in anticipation of something else that is about to follow.

What follows is a clear leap from the past to the present. This is indicated by ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας. With the exception of γάρ, all the signs in this phrase belong to the semantic field of time. Ἄχρι, which is an Attic form,[158] points to "the continuous extent of time up to a point,"[159] and may be rendered as "until." Σήμερον is "the same day as the day of a discourse."[160] Ἡμέρας appears to be redundant, and this may be one of the reasons why it is missing in the Majority Text.[161] The phrase as a whole indicates that the preceding ἀλλὰ ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν belongs to the past.

Γάρ, in ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας, can be taken as a marker of cause or reason between events, though in this context the relation is somewhat remote or

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[158] In Hellenistic Greek it is spelled ἄχρις, and in the New Testament occurs only in Gal. 3:19 and Heb. 3:13.

[159] Louw and Nida, Subdomain 67.119 [see Acts 20:11], p. 645.

[160] Ibid., Subdomain 67.205 [see Matt. 21:28], p. 654.

[161] Another reason might be the use of σήμερον without ἡμέρας in the following verse. It is interesting that in Paul's writings σήμερον occurs only three times (Rom. 11:8; 2 Cor. 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:15). In the two first instances it is used in combination with ἡμέρας.

tenuous.[162] The γάρ can be read as "I am saying this

because . . ."

In what follows in verse 14, the author declares that

τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς

παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει. "Covenant" is clearly a

reference to the books of Moses. Its use in connection with

παλαιά is hapax legomenon, that is, the phrase does not

occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The preposition ἐπί

is best taken in the sense of "at the reading," or "during

the reading."[163] No indication is given as to where the old

covenant is being read, although most readers assume that it

refers to the worship of the synagogue.[164]

The author is saying that the ἀνάγνωσις of the

παλαιὰ διαθήκη is veiled. Since there can be no

ἀνάγνωσις without a reader, it follows that what is

actually veiled are the eyes of the readers. Thus, while in

verse 13 the author says that the Israelites in the

wilderness were prevented from seeing (πρὸς τὸ μὴ

ἀτενίσαι), and while in verse 14a he adds that they could

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[162]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.23 [Relation of Cause
and/or Reason, see Mark 16:8], p. 780.

[163]This use of ἐπί of the occasion on which or
circumstances in which something takes place occurs also in
2 Cor. 1:4 and 2 Cor 7:4. Plummer, 99.

[164]An alternative would be a reference to "something
read in the Corinthian church." Gaston, p. 239, note 63.
Mathias Rissi takes it as referring to what was going on
both in the synagogue and in the Corinthian church, although
primarily in the church, for his assumption is that in this
passage Paul is engaged in polemics with "Christian"
opponents. Rissi, 34.

not see (ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν), in verse 14b

he switches to a new topic, declaring that the eyes of the

readers of the παλαιὰ διαθήκη are veiled.[165] In the

past the children of Israel could not understand what they

saw; in the present they cannot understand what they read.

The topic has shifted from seing the glory to understanding

the text.

How the latter part of verse 14 attaches to the

context is a matter of dispute. To begin with, the comma

before μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is editorial, just as any

other diacritical mark or accent in the text. Thus, J. H.

Bernard takes it predicatively with the preceding μένει,

in the sense of "it remains unlifted." His argument is

based on word order, which, in his view, "seems to force us

to take the present participle with μένει - it having a

merely explanatory force and being almost redundant."[166] In

response to this one could argue that, if this were the

case, the text should read οὐκ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον

rather than μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον.[167] Another

possibility is to take it as an accusative absolute in the

sense of "because it has not been revealed (to them) that .

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[165]Verse 15 clarifies that the veil lies over the minds
of the readers (ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν). From a
semantic viewpoint, to have one's mind hardened and to have
a veil over the mind are closely related. The latter may
well be the result of the former.

[166]Bernard, 57.

[167]Bultmann, 87.

. . "[168] The conclusion to this sentence usually runs like this: ". . . that the old covenant is done away with in Christ." The problem with this view is that the text does not read μὴ ἀποκαλυπτόμενον, as one would expect in such a case, but rather μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον.[169] It seems better to take μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον in apposition to the preceding τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα,[170] reading the following ὅτι as causal ("because, in view of the fact that").[171] The reason why the κάλυμμα is μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is because ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται.[172] Καταργεῖται is roughly equivalent to ἀνακαλύπτω, and the subject of καταργεῖται is

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[168]Blass-Debrunner-Funk, #424, p. 219. According to this Greek grammar, the only example, rather obscured, of an accusative absolute is τυχόν ('perhaps, possibly') in 1 Cor. 16:6 and Luke 20:13. In 2 Cor. 3:14 it is only a possibility, which the authors seem to reject, inasmuch as they ask if ἀνακαλυπτόμενον should not be referred to κάλυμμα. Ibid.

[169]Bultmann, 87. The verb ἀνακαλύπτω is rare in the New Testament, being found only in this verse and in 2 Cor. 3:18. Louw and Nida classify it under domain 79 ("features of objects"), and take it in the sense of "to cause something to be uncovered." Ibid., 705. Its use with πρόσωπον in verse 18 seems to point in that direction.

[170]Lambrecht, "Structure and Line of Thought," 360, note 41.

[171]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.33 [see Matt. 2:18], p. 781. The option would be ὅτι as a marker of discourse content ('that'). Ibid., Subdomain 90.21 [see 2 Cor. 13:6], p. 800.

[172]The emphatic position of ἐν Χριστῷ should not be overlooked.

κάλυμμα.[173]

Verse 15

Verse 15 is, to a large extent, an explanatory restatement of the second half of verse 14, as shown in the following table:

2 Cor. 3:15	2 Cor. 3:14b
ἕως σήμερον	ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας
ἡνίκα ἂν	ἐπὶ τῇ
ἀναγινώσκηται	ἀναγνώσει
Μωϋσῆς	τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης
κάλυμμα	τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα
κεῖται	μένει

The only phrase that is without parallel in verse 14b is ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν, although on the semantic level part of the concept had surfaced in the τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν of verse 14a.[174]

The opening ἀλλά is similar to the one in verse 14.

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[173]This view is disputed by Bultmann, who takes the παλαιὰ διαθήκη (or its δόξα) as the subject of καταργεῖται. His argument, though, is weak. He indicates that κάλυμμα cannot be the subject because "the destruction of the veil is of no consequence." Bultmann, 86. Equally feeble, at least from a linguistic standpoint, is J. D. G. Dunn's view that "the subject of καταργεῖται must be determined by the subject of the same verb in verses 7, 11, and 13 -- i.e. the old dispensation and its δόξα, not the veil . . . " Dunn, "2 Corinthians III.17," p. 311, note 7.

[174]Windisch, 123.

In other words, it is best taken as "Yes, even more!"[175]

Ἕως belongs to the same semantic field as ἄχρι in verse 14.[176] Ἡνίκα ἄν, which in the whole New Testament occurs only here and in the next verse, conveys the idea of "indefinite and multiple points of time, simultaneous with other corresponding points of time,"[177] and may be rendered as "whenever." The particle ἄν is omitted in some manuscripts, especially in the Majority Text, and this is certainly due to haplography.[178] Μωϋσῆς is a metonymy which stands for the writings of Moses. Κάλυμμα has no article, and some readers take this as an indication of a change of meaning.[179] This change, however, is indicated more by the context than by the omission of the article. Already in verse 13 the author had moved from a literal

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[175]Scharlemann, 116.

[176]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 67.119 [see Matt. 2:9 and Acts 20:11], p. 645.

[177]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 67.36, p. 634.

[178]In a case of haplography the scribe inadvertently omits one of a pair of letters or sequence of letters. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, translated by Erroll F. Rhodes, second edition, revised and enlarged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 283. It could also be a case of dittography, that is, the repetition of one or more letters or a syllable by accident, but this seems less likely in this case. The source of the confusion is the identical beginning of the next word, ἀναγινώσκηται.

[179]Plummer, 101. It would be more accurate to refer to this as a shift from literal to non-literal meaning. Κάλυμμα is still a veil, worn over the face and impeding clear vision, but one component is missing: it is no longer a piece of solid material.

κάλυμμα to a metaphorical one.

Verses 16-17

Verse 16, which seems to elaborate on the phrase ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται of verse 14, starts out with ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον. The ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν with the aorist subjunctive "points to repeated individual experience,"[180] in the sense of "whenever, every time." In ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, which is simply another way of referring to conversion,[181] it is not clear who is the subject of the verb nor who is the referent of κύριον.

The subject of ἐπιστρέψῃ is something or someone in the third person singular.[182] There are several possibilities among which the reader can make a choice: Moses, the Israelites of the past, the Jews of Paul's time, the heart of the Jews (καρδία, verse 15), anyone who needs to turn to the Lord, or anyone who has already turned to the Lord, including Paul himself.[183] On the basis of the

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[180]Scharlemann, 116.

[181]This expression, in a slightly different form (ἐπέστρεψαν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον), occurs only twice elsewhere in the New Testament, namely, in Acts 9:35 and Acts 11:21. In both cases it refers to conversion.

[182]Ἐπιστρέψῃ is being read as third person singular, aorist subjunctive active. It could also be read as second person singular, aorist subjunctive middle. In this case, the sense would be "whenever you turn to the Lord."

[183]Emily Wong, "The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor 3,17a)," Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses 61 (1985): 53.

context, it could well be **καρδία**, although an indefinite **τις** is perhaps the best suggestion.[184]

Κύριος could be a reference to either Christ or Yahweh. Readers who argue that verse 16 is a quote from the Old Testament take it as a reference to Yahweh, the God of the Scriptures.[185] One might even argue that this is what the author had in mind. And yet, once again, the reader has no access to the author's mind apart from the text. The fact is that this is the first occurrence of **κύριον** in this pericope.[186] A Christian reader would naturally think of Christ, who had been mentioned in verse 14.[187] In either

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[184]According to Origen, the subject is **τις**, "someone." Plummer, 101. This was also the view of Augustine. Tertullian said that the subject is Israel. Calvin picked Moses as subject. Hughes, 113, note 10. J. D. G. Dunn states that Paul does not specify the subject of the verb, so that its ambiguity might embrace both Moses and the Jews. Dunn, "2 Corinthians III.17," 313, note 1. It is quite clear that Dunn's view rests on the assumption that Paul is quoting the Old Testament and has the same subject of the Exodus passage in mind, namely, Moses. From the reader's perspective, though, this connection is far from obvious.

[185]It is sometimes pointed out that Paul usually writes **ὁ κύριος** in reference to Christ and **κύριος** (without the article) in reference to Yahweh. The latter occurs mainly in Old Testament quotations.

[186]In the context, **κύριος** had occurred in 2 Cor. 1:2; 1:3; 1:14; and 2:12. In every instance but 2 Cor. 2:12 the Lord is identified as Jesus Christ. In 2:12, **ἐν κυρίῳ** could refer to either God or Christ.

[187]Scholarly readers are divided on this issue. Edmund Hill states that "in this context, the word 'Lord' must refer to Christ, since v. 14 clearly states that 'only in Christ is it (the veil) removed'." Hill, 278. Victor P. Furnish replies that "the reference to Christ at the end of v. 14 cannot be used as an argument in favor of a christological interpretation." Furnish, 211. A possibility that cannot be ruled out is that this is a case of **double**

case, as he moves on in the text the reader will probably be
disappointed, for in verse 17 the author instructs his
readers that the κύριος is no other than τὸ πνεῦμα.

Whenever one turns to the Lord, περιαιρεῖται τὸ
κάλυμμα. With this statement, the author begins to turn
his attention to those who are not veiled.[188]
Περιαιρέω is "to remove something which is around
something else."[189] What is removed is τὸ κάλυμμα.
Wherefrom it is removed is something the reader has to
supply. In the light of the context, the veil is removed
from the heart. And yet, one could also think of the veil
ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης (verse
14). In fact, the veil has wandered from Moses' face (verse
13) to the reading of the παλαιὰ διαθήκη (verse 14),
to the heart of the reader (verse 15). In traveling from
Moses' face to the heart of the reader, the veil has not
ceased to be a veil, but it certainly changed from a literal
veil to a metaphorical veil.

Verse 16 as a whole is hardly an exact quote from the

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entendre.

[188]Verse 16 can be taken as the beginning of a new sub-
unit. Wong, 60.

[189]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 15.204 [see Acts 27:40], p.
207. The compound verb περιαιρέω, which is rare in the
New Testament, occurring only in Acts 27:20, Acts 27:40,
Acts 28:13, 2 Cor. 3:16, and Heb. 10:11, is classified by
Louw and Nida under four different semantic fields: take
from around (Subdomain 15.204), lift anchor (Subdomain
54.24; see Acts 28:13), do away with (Subdomain 13.38; see
Heb. 10:11), and stop (Subdomain 68.43; see Acts 27:20).

Greek Old Testament, for in the Septuagint Exodus 34:34

reads as follows: ἡνίκα δ' ἂν εἰσπορεύετο

Μωυσῆς ἔναντι κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ,

περιῃρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα ἕως τοῦ

ἐκπορεύεσθαι.[190] Yet, the structural similarity, that

is, the identical beginning and ending as well as other

parallel elements, allows the conclusion that this is a

modified quotation from Exodus 34:34.[191] Today most

scholarly readers take it as a quotation. One must add,

though, that only readers well acquainted with the Old

Testament are able to perceive this. Verse 16 makes perfect

sense when read as a piece of Paul's own writing.[192]

Scholarly readers who take verse 16 as an Old

Testament quotation refer to verses 16 and 17 as an example

of pesher exegesis, such as is often found in rabbinic

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[190]Septuaginta, edited by Alfred Rahlfs (Stuttgart:
Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979, 147.

[191]N. T. Wright refers to verse 16 as "an adapted quote"
or "a deliberate allusion." N. T. Wright, "Reflected Glory:
2 Corinthians 3:18," in The Glory of Christ in the New
Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George
Bradford Caird, edited by L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 142, 144. Nestle-Aland
takes it as a quotation, as the printing in italics
indicates.

[192]This does not mean that Paul is not making use of the
language of the Exodus 34 passage. He seems to be doing
just that, although not necessarily alluding to the incident
depicted in that text. As Wong explains, "if by 'allusion'
we mean a reference to the content of a text, then we cannot
really say that Paul is alluding to Ex 34,34 in 2 Cor 3,16."
Wong, 59.

exegesis.[193] In **pesher** exegesis, the interpreter briefly
quotes the Old Testament and then provides an exegetical
gloss, usually identifying one of the elements in the text
he has cited.[194] Even if verse 16 is not an Old Testament
quote, which seems to be the case, verse 17 is nonetheless
an interpretative comment. It almost looks like a
parenthesis, made up of two abrupt sentences, which "might
be omitted without loss to the argument,"[195] for verse 18
would follow well immediately after verse 16. Given the
complexity of verse 17, many a reader would rather treat it
as a parenthesis. And yet, read verse 17 one must.

In the first half of verse 17, one element of verse 16
is singled out for explanation, and that element is
κύριος. The author's exegetical note is attached by means
of ὁ δέ. The article is usually taken as anaphoric, that
is, as directing the reader's attention to the κύριος in
verse 16.[196] The coupling of the article with δέ is fairly
common at the beginning of explanatory remarks, especially
following quotations from the Old Testament.[197] Some refer

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[193]Van Unnik, "With Unveiled Face," 165.

[194]Stockhausen, 112.

[195]Plummer, 102. A reader as daring as Walther
Schmithals took verse 17 as an exegetical gloss added to the
letter by Paul's Gnostic opponents in Corinth! Dunn, "2
Corinthians III.17," 314, note 1.

[196]C. K. Barrett, <u>A Commentary on the Second Epistle to
the Corinthians</u> (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), 122.

[197]See 1 Cor. 15:56; Eph. 4:9; see also 1 Cor. 10:4, and
Gal. 4:25.

to it as the "exegetical ὁ δέ."[198] Τὸ πνεῦμα, which
seems to occupy an emphatic position, is certainly the
predicate. The whole sentence, then, can be rendered as:
"The Lord referred to in the preceding verse is the Spirit."

The second half of verse 17 adds a short and pithy
remark about the πνεῦμα, saying that οὖ δὲ τὸ
πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. Past and present
readers have had difficulty with this statement, as the
textual tradition and some proposals of textual emendation
and of a different punctuation well indicate. Codex
Angelicus (L), for instance, which is a ninth century A.D.
Byzantine manuscript,[199] has πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον instead
of πνεῦμα κυρίου. One eleventh century manuscript
(323) has just τὸ πνεῦμα. In more recent times, as
Philip E. Hughes reports, the famous text critics Brooke
Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort suggested that
κυρίου was "probably a primitive error for κύριον."[200]
If this bold suggestion were accepted, the sense of the text
would be: "Where the Spirit is sovereign, there is liberty."
Another reader, Ernst von Dobschuetz, proposed κύριος for
κυρίου, in which case the second half of verse 17 would be
a repetition and expansion of the first half in the sense
of: "The Lord is the Spirit; but where the Spirit is the

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[198]Bultmann, 89.

[199]Aland and Aland, 113.

[200]Hughes, 116, note 16.

Lord, there is liberty."[201] Jean Hering came up with a

different proposal, namely, to change the punctuation of

verse 17b to οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα, κυρίου

ἐλευθερία.[202] What is exactly the problem with this

text? It is this: In the preceding statement the author had

equated κύριος and πνεῦμα. Now he writes πνεῦμα

κυρίου, in which κύριος is no longer equated with

πνεῦμα but rather modifies it. This phrase, πνεῦμα

κυρίου, though very common in the Old Testament, is rare

in the New Testament. In Paul it is hapax legomenon.[203]

Of the suggestions above, the one by Jean Hering is no

doubt the most attractive. It does make sense and serves as

a reminder that, since there were no commas in the original

text, all commas are negotiable. One almost feels tempted

to suggest that the comma should be altogether omitted, so

that κυρίου could do double duty, qualifying both

πνεῦμα and ἐλευθερία. This possibility, though,

would be ruled out in case the next variant, the insertion

of ἐκεῖ before ἐλευθερία, were accepted. Yet, this is

only a remote possibility. The variant is found in some

Greek manuscripts (D, F, G, Ψ, The Majority Text) as well

as in a few ancient versions, and was probably added under

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Hering, 27.

[203] It occurs elsewhere only in Luke 4:18, a quotation
from Isaiah 61, and in Acts 5:9 and Acts 8:39, passages
which reflect the vocabulary and style of the Septuagint.

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the influence of analogous passages like Matthew 18:20,
Matthew 24:28, and James 3:16. Paul does not commonly use
ἐκεῖ after οὗ, as can be seen in Rom. 4:15 and Rom.
5:20.[204] Yet, this does not mean that the ἐκεῖ cannot be
mentally supplied. Much depends on how one takes οὗ, which
can be either "a reference to a position in space"[205] or "a
relative reference to a set of circumstances."[206] If οὗ
is a reference to a position in space, then the ἐκεῖ
follows naturally, for it also belongs to the domain of
spacial positions.[207] If οὗ is a relative reference to a
set of circumstances, which seems to be the case in this and
other Pauline passages, then ἐκεῖ is less likely to be
expected.

The last sign of verse 17 is ἐλευθερία, which
comes as a big surprise. It had not been mentioned before
in this letter.[208] Neither is it further explained. It
stands there, and the reader is left wondering as to what it
refers or to what in the context it is related. Is it

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[204]Kling, 54.

[205]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 83.5 [see Luke 4:16], p. 713.

[206]Ibid., Subdomain 92.28 [see Rom. 4:15], p. 817.

[207]Ibid., Subdomain 83.2 [see Matt. 26:36], p. 713.

[208]It will not be mentioned later on either, for "this is the only occurrence of this noun in 2 Cor., and there are no instances of the cognate verb or adjective." Furnish, 213. Elsewhere in the Pauline letters the ἐλευθερία occurs in Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 10:29; Gal. 2:4; Gal. 5:1,13; and ἐλευθερόω occurs in Rom. 6:18,22; Rom. 8:2,21; and Gal. 5:1.

equivalent to the removal of the veil, which is referred to in verses 14 and 16?[209] Could it be the resurgence of the παρρησία of verse 12, in which case it would amount to "freedom of speech"? Is it freedom in a broad sense, or should it be taken in a more technical way as "freedom from the law?" An unsophisticated modern reader will naturally take it in the light of the context (verses 14-16). Chances are that the following verse will confirm his insight.[210]

Verse 18

Verse 18 begins with ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες. Δέ is best taken as "a marker of an additive relation, but with the possible implication of some contrast."[211] It signals both the continuation of the discourse as well as a contrast with those who have their faces veiled. This contrast, however, as well as the nature of the contrast can only be clearly perceived as the discourse unfolds in verse 18.

Ἡμεῖς, which is the real marker of contrast, is again a reference to the writer and those associated with

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[209] It is interesting that both ἐλευθερία and καταργέομαι are grouped in the same semantic domain in the Louw and Nida Lexicon, namely, "Release, Set Free" (Subdomains 37.133 and 37.136). Louw and Nida, p. 488-489.

[210] This use of ἐλευθερία must have made a deep impression on the first readers of this letter, the Christians at Corinth. In the light of Paul's dealing with this topic in 1 Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 9:1,19; 10:29), his use of this sign in 2 Corinthians would have made a lot of sense.

[211] Louw and Nida, Subdomain 89.94 [see Titus 1:1], p. 790.

him, either including or excluding the audience.[212] In a

sense, it is a return to the ἔχοντες of verse 12. Here

the main question is not whether ἡμεῖς includes or

excludes those associated with the writer, but rather

whether the audience is included or not. The reader readily

perceives that ἡμεῖς, besides being emphatic is followed

by πάντες.[213] This combination of ἡμεῖς and πάντες

is rare in the New Testament.[214] In 1 Cor. 12:13, which is

the only other instance of this phrase in Paul, the audience

is included. Most readers take ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες as

inclusive, that is, the author is referring to himself, his

associates, and his audience.[215]

The reader may expect a main verb to follow

immediately after ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες, but what follows

instead are two participial clauses. This turns verse 18

into a long, though well structured, sentence, "with ideas

piling up one on top of another."[216] The first participial

clause is ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ. Both signs

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[212] Ibid., Subdomain 92.4, p. 814.

[213] "The omission of πάντες in Papyrus 46 may safely be ignored." Wright, 144, note 18.

[214] It occurs only in John 1:16; Acts 2:32; Acts 10:33; 1 Cor. 12:13; and 2 Cor. 3:18. In the two Acts passages, the sequence is πάντες ἡμεῖς.

[215] A few exegetes, like Erasmus, Bengel, and some others, "have taken it to indicate other ministers of the Gospel rather than all believers without discrimination." Hughes, 117.

[216] Wong, 70.

are familiar to the reader. The participle takes up the

ἀνακαλυπτόμενον of verse 14, and shows that "there

has been a veil and that it has been removed."[217]

Προσώπῳ comes with a bit of surprise, for the reader

might have expected καρδία rather than πρόσωπον.[218]

The last reference to something veiled had been the

κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται in verse

15. Thus, this participial clause may be seen as "a

positive qualification of what was mentioned negatively in

3:13: καὶ οὐ καθάπερ . . . ."[219] The reader is also

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[217]Plummer, 105.

[218]In 2 Corinthians 3, this is the fourth occurrence of πρόσωπον, which had appeared twice in verse 7 and once in verse 13. As a matter of fact, 12 out of 22 occurrences of πρόσωπον in the Pauline corpus are found in 2 Corinthians, namely, 2 Cor. 1:11; 2:10; four references in chapter 3; 4:6; 5:12; 8:24; 10:1; 10:7; 11:20. Charles F. D. Moule, in "Peculiarities in the Language of II Corinthians" [in Essays in New Testament Interpretation (Cambridge: University Press, 1982), 158-161] calls attention to what he describes as "the almost obsessive frequency with which the word πρόσωπον occurs" in 2 Corinthians as a whole. This applies also to other words, like διακονία, περισσεύω, ὑπερβάλλω and cognates. Moule's explanation to this phenomenon is, to say the least, interesting.
It is a common experience, probably for most persons, that they get into the habit of over-working certain words or expressions, and continue to do so until they realize for themselves what they are doing or are laughed out of it by others. Is it possible that the proliferation of πρόσωπον-phrases in II Cor. is due largely to some psychological chance of this kind? (159-160)

[219]Lambrecht, "Structure and Line of Thought," 358. Bultmann's understanding of this phrase sounds strange. He states that "it is easy to assume that the Christians are not seen in parallel with the Jews, but with Moses himself." (Bultmann, 90) But then he goes on:
According to the context, the Christians can certainly

struck by the use of the perfect aspect in

ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ, certainly "to express state or

condition consequent upon action."[220] This action must be

the removal of the veil dealt with in verses 13-15.[221] We,

says the author, have had the veil removed and now live in a

state or condition characterized by an unveiled face. The

dative is a dative of manner.

The second participial phrase is τὴν δόξαν

κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι. Τὴν δόξαν κυρίου

occupies an emphatic position in relation to the participle.

Κατοπτριζόμενοι is a present participle, indicating

that the verbal action is connected to the persons doing the

acting. Having had the veil removed, we now are engaged in

τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτρίζεσθαι. The sign

δόξα had appeared in section two, that is, verses 7-11.

Now it resurfaces, no longer as the δόξα of this or that

διακονία, but rather as δόξα κυρίου.[222] This

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not be paralleled with Moses, but only with Jews, and
for good or ill the ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ
must be construed in terms of the ἀνακεκαλυμμένῃ
καρδίᾳ of verse 15. (Ibid.,91)

[220] K. L. McKay, "Syntax in Exegesis," Tyndale Bulletin
23 (1972): 47.

[221] Louw and Nida point out that "the symbolic
significance of ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ 'unveiled
face' in 2 Cor 3.18 needs to be understood only in terms of
the preceding discussion in 2 Cor 3.13-15." Ibid., p. 705.

[222] The expression δόξα κυρίου is rare in Paul,
occurring only here and in 2 Cor. 8:19. In the latter
passage it reads τὴν τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν and apparently
refers to Christ.

κύριος could be either God or Christ. The semantic classification of the hapax legomenon κατοπτρίζεσθαι is hotly debated. There are two possibilities, both registered in the Louw and Nida Lexicon. The first option is to place it in subdomain 24.44, "to see indirectly or by reflection as in a mirror -- 'to see as in a mirror, to see by reflection'."[223] The text could, then, be translated as follows: "And we all with uncovered faces behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror (or, by reflection)." The alternative is to put it under subdomain 14.52, "to reflect light or visual patterns coming from some source -- 'to reflect'."[224] A possible translation would be: "All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces."

Which meaning is to be preferred: to see as in a mirror or to reflect as in a mirror? Could it be both?[225] Could it be simply to see or to reflect, without any mentioning of a mirror?[226] What is at stake here? Where

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[223]Louw and Nida, 281-282.

[224]Ibid., 176. Louw and Nida register both possibilities and leave it at that. Subdomain 24.44 (See by Reflection"), however, is letter a, whereas subdomain 14.52 (Reflect) is letter b, which may indicate that their first option is "see by reflection."

[225]This is the view of Stockhausen, who asserts that both are correct and that this is a deliberate word-play on both possible meanings. Stockhausen, 11.

[226]Some readers take it in the sense of "beholding as in a mirror" [Jan Lambrecht, "Transformation in 2 Cor. 3,18," Biblica 64 (1983), 250], others simply as "beholding" [Martin, 71]. Some take it in the sense of "reflecting as in a mirror" [Lenski, 948], others simply as "reflecting" [van Unnik, "With Unveiled Face," 167].

does this notion of a mirror come from?

The notion of a mirror is there, at least for some readers, by way of etymologyzing. They argue that, since it is an hapax legemenon, we are allowed to resort to the study of the etymology of the verb. As Scharlemann explains, "at the heart of the word, etymologycally speaking, there seems to be the suggestion of a mirror."[227] Or, as Lambrecht puts it, "already because of its very rareness it can be presumed that κατοπτρίζομαι in 2 Cor 3,18 most probably retains its original force, i.e., the mirror-notion."[228] Yet, this may be just another instance of a dead metaphor. In this case, the mirror metaphor "is no longer any more a live force than when we speak of 'losing heart.'"[229] Besides this, there is an additional reason why the notion of a mirror should, perhaps, be left out of the picture and this has to do with what is sometimes called "the rule of maximal redundancy," namely, "the best meaning is the least meaning."[230] In other words, in trying to decide what a hapax legomenon most probably means, the reader should define it in such a fashion as "to make it [the hapax] contribute least to the total message derivable from the

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[227]Scharlemann, 117. "Mirror," in Greek, is κάτοπτρον.

[228]Lambrecht, "Transformation in 2 Cor 2,18," 248.

[229]Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," 81.

[230]Silva, Biblical Words, 153.

passage where it is at home."[231]

Even if the notion of the mirror is left out of the picture, the reader still has to choose between "to reflect" and "to behold." Or, he can come up with a different solution. Before anything else, however, he has to know what is at stake, or, why some readers prefer "to reflect," while others favor "to behold." It appears that those who take the verb in the sense of "to reflect" try not to lose sight of the fact that the immediately preceding expression is τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, and that in the remote context (verse 7) this glory is said to have been on Moses' face. As a result, verse 18 is taken as if it were saying that Christians take on the role of Moses, that they reflect the glory of the Lord as Moses did in the past.[232] On the other hand, those who take it in the sense of "to behold" relate the verb κατοπτρίζομαι to the phrase ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ in verse 18 and to the immediately preceding context of verses 14-16. As a result, the force of the verb is seen in establishing a contrast between unveiled Christians, who are able to see, and veiled

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[231] Ibid., 154. Silva adds that such a statement may appear strange or even unacceptable to exegetes, for exegetes tend "to assume that an odd word must have some odd sense, the odder the better." Ibid. Yet, a moment's reflection on the redundancy of natural language seems to suggest that the principle of "the best meaning is the least meaning" is reasonable.

[232] As van Unnik puts it, "Christians are in communion with God. They are therefore permanently in the same situation which Moses, according to Exod 34, only temporarily enjoyed." van Unnik, "With Unveiled Face," 167.

Israelites, who are unable to see.

The reader may well dispute the presence of such a contrast in verse 18. Yet, this does not mean that he is not allowed to read κατοπτρίζομαι as "to behold" or "to see." To this reader, the notion of beholding or seeing makes good sense. In this case, κατοπτρίζομαι echoes the ἀτενίζειν of verses 7 and 13.[233]

The phrase τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα goes with the ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες of the beginning of verse 18, so that the author is basically saying that "we all are being transformed τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα." Μεταμορφόομαι is a rare verb in the New Testament, occurring, in Paul, only in Rom. 12:2 and in the present passage.[234] It is being used here probably in the basic sense of "to change the essential form or nature of something," and can be rendered as "to be changed into, to be transformed."[235] The verb is in the passive form, as

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[233]This is also the view of Bultmann, 95. It is interesting that, in later Patristic literature, κατοπτρίζομαι is used in the sense of seeing or beholding. G. W. H. Lampe, _A Patristic Greek Lexicon_ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 734. As Cotterell and Turner explain, it is not totally unlikely that

> some senses only certainly attested in the period shortly after the NT might actually have been current in the NT period itself, although not witnessed to it in any extant writing. Cotterell and Turner, 134-135.

[234]Besides these instances, it occurs only in the narrative of the Transfiguration of the Lord (Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2).

[235]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 13.53 [Change of State; see Rom. 12:2], p. 155. The other possibility listed by Louw and Nida is μεταμορφόομαι in the sense of "to take on

always in the New Testament, and in the present tense. The

present conveys an action which is contemporaneous with the

preceding participle, κατοπτριζόμενοι.[236] In other

words, we are being transformed while (or as) we are

κατοπτριζόμενοι.

This idea of "being transformed as we see or as we

reflect" is unique in the New Testament.[237] The reader may

well wonder how the author comes to this transformation

topic, or what led him to write μεταμορφούμεθα. Jan

Lambrecht came up with the suggestion that the immediate

reason is the Moses parallel. In his view,

> just as by contact with God Moses' face was glorified
> and transformed, so, too, by beholding the glory of the
> Lord the Christians are being transformed.[238]

Τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα, which is placed in an

emphatic position vis-a-vis μεταμορφούμεθα, is an

accusative with a passive verb. It is usually taken as an

"accusative of the thing,"[239] and is rendered as "into the

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a different form or appearance, to change in appearance."
Ibid., Domain 58.16 [Appearance as an Outward Manifestation
of Form; see Mark 9:2], p. 587. While this latter sense
does not apply in 2 Corinthians 3, it certainly is the sense
of the verb in the Transfiguration narrative.

[236]Actually it is the other way round, namely, the
action expressed by the participle is contemporaneous with
the main verb.

[237]This can be inferred from the fact that
κατοπτρίζομαι is hapax legomenon and
μεταμορφόομαι occurs only twice in the Pauline corpus.

[238]Lambrecht, "Transformation," 251.

[239]Blass and Debrunner, #159.

same image."[240] Jean Hering translates "according to the
same image," noting that it could also be translated "to
become the same image," in which case it would denote the
result of the transformation.[241] A further possibility is
to read τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα as an apposition to the
preceding τὴν δόξαν κυρίου.[242] This is, perhaps,
unlikely, especially because both phrases are separated by
the participle κατοπτριζόμενοι, unless, of course, the
participle, which is placed between the two phrases, is
doing double duty. The merit of this suggestion is that it
calls attention to the connection between δόξα and
εἰκών. In Paul's letters, it is not uncommon to find both
mentioned in one breath, as it were. Εἰκών occurs eight
times in his letters, four times being in a context where
δόξα is also mentioned.[243] It may well be that εἰκών
cannot be properly understood unless δόξα is also taken
into consideration. This is more likely so in view of the
surprising αὐτήν that goes with εἰκόνα. Αὐτήν
indicates that the εἰκών into which we are being

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[240]It is actually a retained accusative in a double
accusative construction.

[241]Hering, 27.

[242]Thus Lucien Cerfaux, as noted by Lambrecht,
"Transformation," 244, note 5.

[243]Rom. 1:23; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 11:7; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2
Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Col. 3:10. Underlined are
those passages where εἰκών is used in conjunction with
δόξα.

transformed is identical to something.[244] The question is:

identical to what? It is up to the reader to fill in the

blank. It might be "the image of Christ reflected in the

mirror."[245] It may also be the δόξα, "the glorious image

the believers see (or reflect)."[246]

This seems to be confirmed by the expression that

follows, namely, ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν. It can be

read as indicating sequence, in the sense of "from divine

glory (as source) to glory (as gift)."[247] Furthermore, it

can be read as suggesting continual and gradual progress, in

the sense of "from one degree of glory to another." The

phrase might also be taken as an idiom, in the sense of

"very glorious."[248] Be that as it may, the rhetorical

effect of ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν is certainly

tremendous, particularly for readers who still recall the

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[244]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 58.31 [Same or Equivalent Kind or Class; see Mark 14:39], p. 589.

[245]Plummer, 106. This quote shows clearly that, for Plummer, the referent of κυρίου is Christ and the sense of κατοπτρίζομαι is "to reflect."

[246]Lambrecht, "Transformation," 246.

[247]Stockhausen, 90, note 12. Also Scharlemann takes it in this sense. He writes: "The glory moves from the Lord to us. . . . The splendor leaps from our glorified Lord by way of the Spirit to us." Scharlemann, 114.

[248]Idioms are "complex lexemes acting as a single semantic constituent." D. A. Cruse, quoted in Cotterell and Turner, 131. In other words, an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts. If ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν is an idiom, then one should not press the meaning of ἀπό and εἰς.

οὐ δεδόξασται of verse 10.[249] A phrase like this is
certainly an appropriate conclusion to a series of
references to δόξα in chapter three. All in all, δόξα
occurs eleven times in twelve verses (verses 7-18), while
δοξάζω in the perfect occurs twice in verse 10.

The concluding phrase of verse 18, καθάπερ ἀπὸ
κυρίου πνεύματος, is as enigmatic as many other
expressions in 2 Corinthians 3. To begin with, καθάπερ,
which had been met in verse 13, is an "emphatic marker of
comparison between events and states,"[250] and can be
rendered as "just as," or "precisely as." The question
that remains is: what is just as or precisely as what? The
reader is enticed to fill in the blanks somewhat along these
lines: "this whole transformation business takes place just
as one would expect ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος." In ἀπὸ
κυρίου πνεύματος, two genitives stand side by side
after the preposition ἀπό. This should pose no
difficulty, for it is as grammatical and acceptable in Greek
as ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρός (2 Cor. 1:2). The problem is
that, in contrast to Θεός and πατήρ, κύριος and
πνεῦμα are rarely (or never) used in such a combination.
The reader has to decide whether one genitive is dependent
on the other or not. If the former, which one is dependent

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[249]Victor Paul Furnish points out that "the permanence
and even the increase of the splendor are being emphasized
over against the diminishing splendor of Moses." Furnish,
215.

[250]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 64.15 [Comparison; see 1
Cor. 10:10], p. 619.

on the other? Grammarians have it that "an anarthrous gen.
dependent on a preposition, if it governs another gen., must
stand first (to avoid misunderstanding)."[251] In this case,
one should render it as "from the Lord of the Spirit." Yet,
as F. Blass and A. Debrunner observe, this rule is not
without exception, and an attributive genitive may well come
first.[252] Thus, ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος might be
translated as "from the Spirit of the Lord."

The reader might as well decide, on the basis of the
opening statement of verse 17, that one genitive is not
dependent on the other, but that they stand in apposition.
The sense, then, would be "from the Lord, that is, the
Spirit."[253] In the light of the context, which is always
primarily the preceding context, this is the most natural
way of taking it.[254]

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[251]Buttmann, referred to in Blass-Debrunner, #474.4, p.
250.

[252]Blass and Debrunner, #474, p. 250.

[253]This view is taken, among others, by Barrett, 126;
Scharlemann, 117; and Stockhausen, 151.

[254]Stockhausen explains that "the ambiguous κυρίου and
πνεύματος of verse 18c point unmistakably to verse 17
for their explanation if indeed one exists at all in Paul's
text." Stockhausen, 151. The phrase ἀπὸ κυρίου
πνεύματος can be translated in at least six different
ways: 1. by the Spirit of the Lord (Latin commentators,
KJV); 2. from the Lord, the Spirit (most modern
translations); 3. from the Spirit which is the Lord
(Chrysostom); 4. from the Lord of the Spirit; 5. from the
Lord who is spirit (Plummer); 6. from a sovereign Spirit
(Westcott and Hort, taking κυρίου as an adjective).
Plummer, 108.

CHAPTER III

EXPLORING SOME CONCEPTS OF 2 CORINTHIANS 3 IN THE LIGHT OF

THE NARROW CONTEXT AND OF THE PAULINE CORPUS

Since not every aspect of the text could be analysed
and described in chapter two, for my aim in that chapter was
a more linear reading of the text, in this chapter I am
going to focus on some topics or concepts of 2 Corinthians 3
that deserve further investigation. In a sense I will be
going over 2 Corinthians 3 for a second time, with a
different purpose in mind. It will not be a reading in a
linear or temporal fashion, but will basically consist of
"reading" some phrases or clusters of ideas in a narrower
and a wider context. In other words, some select topics
will be "read" intratextually and intertextually. By
"intratextual" I mean "within the confines of 2 Corinthians
3:14-18," and by "intertextual" I mean "within the canon,
particularly the Pauline corpus."[1]

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[1]It has to be pointed out that my role as a reader will
be as important as ever, although the reading I am about to
begin is of a different kind. Furthermore, my role as a
"critical reader" will be clearly evidenced. After all, a
reader who is able to matrix signs and concepts of 2
Corinthians 3 with similar or different signs and concepts
elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, and who interacts with
other readers of the same material, is certainly more than a

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Four topics will be considered. The first is the use of διάκονος in verse 6 and its connection with the two contrasting διακονίαι of verses 7-11. The second is the καινὴ διαθήκη of verse 6, its relation to the immediate context, as well as its connection with the παλαιὰ διαθήκη of verse 14 and with other instances of διαθήκη in Paul's letters. The third topic is the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition, with special emphasis on the relationship between γράμμα and νόμος. The last topic is κάλυμμα. Here I am going to deal with questions such as: Does the text tell what the κάλυμμα hides and what can be seen when it is removed? Where else does the hardening motif play a role in Paul's writings? What is the hermeneutical significance of 2 Corinthians 3, in particular of verses 14-18?

Διακονία τοῦ θανάτου // Διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος

Since Paul's primary concern in 2 Corinthians 3 is the apostolic ministry, particularly in contrast to what he calls, among other things, the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου, this seems to be the appropriate topic with which to start this exercise in reading intratextually and intertextually.

The Connection Between διάκονοι and διακονίαι

Beginning with what, for the sake of convenience, is termed "intratextual matrixing," the reader is initially

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simple reader; he is a critical reader.

faced with the question of what in 2 Corinthians 3 relates to the assertion in verse 6, [Θεὸς] ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους. In glancing over the context, the reader is able to spot a parallel in verse 3, where Paul writes that the Corinthian church is an epistle from Christ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ'ἡμῶν. Looking ahead in the text, the reader is likely to assume that verses 7-11 hang together with verse 6. In other words, the διάκονοι of verse 6 and the διακονίαι in the next section appear to be closely related.

The connection between verse 6 and verses 7-11 appears to be very obvious on the level of sense, for nothing could be more natural than a transition from servants to service. Yet, this connection needs to be stressed because some modern translations tend to obscure it. The Revised Standard Version, for instance, translates διακονία by "dispensation," in an attempt, so it seems, to relate διακονία to διαθήκη. The result is that it conceals the connection with διάκονοι. The same criticism applies to the Today's English Version, which renders ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου (verse 7) as "the Law, which brings death when it is in force." Τῇ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως (verse 9) comes out as "the system which brings condemnation," and ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος (verse 8) is translated as "the activity of the Spirit."

Assuming the connection between verse 3, verse 6, and verses 7-11, the reader is able to draw the following

picture: The service rendered by the ministers is the "delivery" of the letter of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God (verse 3). To be able to do this, the ministers have to be qualified. Thus, verse 6 indicates who qualified the ministers for their task, namely, God himself. In addition, the same verse explains that they are ministers of a new covenant of the Spirit. In verses 7-11, there is a switch from διάκονοι to διακονίαι, a move which may be interpreted as an attempt to deal with the subject in a more detached or objective manner. Here the focus is on the surpassing glory of the ministry of the Spirit as compared to the ministry of death and condemnation.

The Modifiers of διάκονοι and διακονία

The term διάκονοι is modified by the adjectival phrase καινῆς διαθήκης. One exercise in intertextual matrixing is to set the latter phrase in paradigmatic relation to similar phrases in the Pauline corpus.[2] In other words, one may compare that syntagm with other syntagms in which διάκονοι occurs, only followed by different genitival constructions. Phrases like θεοῦ διάκονοι in 2 Cor. 6:4, διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης in 2 Cor. 11:15, and διάκονοι Χριστοῦ in 2 Cor. 11:23 stand

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[2]The paradigmatic relation is also known as substitutional or associative. Words stand in paradigmatic relation when, in a given syntagm, they can be fit into the same slot, that is, substituted for each other. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 155.

in paradigmatic relation with **διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης** and could have been chosen in place of the latter. Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus the following two genitival phrases modify **διάκονος**, when used of the apostles: **εὐαγγελίου** in Eph. 3:7 and Col. 1:23, and [**τῆς ἐκκλησίας**] in Col. 1:25. In applying **διάκονος** to Christ, Paul asserts, on the one hand, that the Lord is **διάκονος περιτομῆς** (Rom. 15:8) and denies, on the other hand, that he is **ἁμαρτίας διάκονος** (Gal. 2:17).[3] That the author wrote what he did can only mean that he brought up this topic of the new covenant on purpose, either reacting to something that was going on at Corinth, or, what seems more likely, simply because he felt the need to introduce it at this point.

An analysis of the context of 2 Corinthians raises the question whether the author could have used any other term instead of **διάκονος**, and, since he did not, why he refrained from doing so. The first candidate is **ἀπόστολος**, which occurs in the opening verse of the epistle. Yet, this word could probably not have been used in the context of 2 Corinthians 3 because one is either an apostle of Christ, as indicated in 2 Cor. 1:1 and 11:13, or of the churches, as shown in 2 Cor. 8:23, but never of a

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[3]All references have been checked in Kurt Aland, ed., Vollstaendige Konkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament unter Zugrundelegung aller modernen kritischen Textausgaben und des Textus receptus, two volumes (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983).

covenant or of the gospel. One wonders if **δοῦλος**, which occurs in 2 Cor 4:5, could have been used instead of **διάκονος**. The answer is "probably not," for one is either a servant of a person ("you," 2 Cor. 4:5; "Christ," Rom. 1:1, Gal. 1:10, Phil. 1:1) or a servant of a personified power ("sin," Rom. 6:16-20). In keeping with this, the Louw and Nida Lexicon classifies **ἀπόστολος** and **δοῦλος** under different semantic domains, 53 and 87 respectively.[4]

The **διακονία** to which the ministers of the new covenant of the Spirit belong is described as **τοῦ πνεύματος**, and **τῆς δικαιοσύνης**, besides being characterized as **τὸ μένον**. This cluster of ideas may help to interpret the genitive in **ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος** (2 Cor. 3:8). Since **διακονία** is an event word which denotes the action of **διακονεῖν**, the following genitive can be taken either as the subject or as the object of the event word.[5] If according to the deep structure the genitive is the subject, then the sense is something like "the ministry which is carried out by the Spirit." If the genitive of the surface structure conceals the object of the event word as far as the deep structure is concerned, then

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[4]Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, <u>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</u>, second edition (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989). Domain 53 has to with "religious activities," and 87, "status."

[5]In traditional grammar the genetive is described as either "subjective genitive" or "objective genitive."

the phrase can be rendered as "the ministry which delivers the Spirit." In the light of the context, the latter seems to be the case. The parallel expression "the ministry of righteousness", which is best taken as "the ministry that bestows righteousness," points in this direction. It follows that the ministers of the καινή διαθήκη πνεύματος deliver the Spirit and righteousness.

The connection between πνεῦμα and δικαιοσύνη, which is established by the fact that both words stand in paradigmatic relation, is confirmed elsewhere in Paul's letters. It is detectable, for instance, in Galatians 3, particularly in verses 5, 6, and 14, as well as in Romans 8, especially in verses 4 and 10.[6] This warrants the conclusion that "for the apostle, justification and the Spirit are inseparable and coincidental."[7]

The Semantic Field of διάκονος

Moving beyond the confines of 2 Corinthians 3, that is, engaging in intertextual matrixing, we take into consideration the semantic field of διάκονος. In looking up semantically neighboring terms, we become aware of the lexical options available to the writer. A look at Domain

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[6]See also Gal. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:11, and Rom. 14:17.

[7]Sam K. Williams, "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 29 (1987): 100, note 15.

35 in the Louw and Nida Lexicon[8] reveals that Θεράπων;[9] ὑπηρέτης, which in the Pauline literature occurs only in 1 Cor. 4:1 in combination with Χριστοῦ;[10] and Λειτουργός, as used in Rom. 15:16 in combination with Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, fit into the same semantic domain with διάκονος. What this means is that the author could have used either one of these terms instead of διάκονος.[11] That he used the latter rather than any other may be due to the fact that in this context he is dwelling upon a series of cognate words, beginning with διακονέω in verse 3 and continuing with διακονία in verses 7-11.

Before moving on, it is necessary to point out that the context clearly indicates that the διάκονοι of this passage are not just any kind of servants of God or of the church, servants in a general or watered-down sense. Far from that, they are messengers who are on assignment from God and their primary task is the communication of the

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[8]Louw and Nida, 458-465. In reality, these words belong to subdomain B - Serve (35.19-35.30), p. 460-461.

[9]This word is an hapax legomenon used of Moses in Hebrews 3:5.

[10]In Luke 1:2 ὑπηρέτης is followed by τοῦ λόγου.

[11]Even a cursory investigation of the semantic field of διάκονος shows that this word, whenever used in a context like the one of 2 Corinthians 3, comes closer to ὑπηρέτης and λειτουργός than to the same sign διάκονος used in the sense of "deacon," as seems to be case in Rom. 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8. In the Louw and Nida Lexicon, this latter διάκονος belongs to Subdomain 53.67, where it is classified with ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος, and others. Louw and Nida, 541-545.

gospel.[12] In a time in which **διακονία** tends to be taken in a generalized sense as "any kind of service to the world", this is a point that requires emphasis.[13]

Ἱκανόω

The text also states that the **διάκονοι** are qualified by God, and the reader wonders whether this pattern can be discerned elsewhere. Since the verb **ἱκανόω** is rare in the New Testament[14] and **ἱκανότης** is an hapax legomenon, the reader is prompted to investigate the semantic domain of these words. The result is that words from the **δύναμις** group turn out to be closely related to **ἱκανόω**. Thus, passages like 2 Cor. 4:7, 2 Cor. 12:9b, 2 Cor. 13:4b, Phil. 4:13, and 1 Tim. 1:12 may be

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[12]This is not explicitly stated by the text. Yet, it is part of the so-called external entailment.

[13]This point is well made by Karl Paul Donfried in "Ministry: Rethinking the Term Diakonia," Concordia Theological Quarterly 56 (1992):1-15. Donfried points out that
> the Greek term diakonia is quite analogous to the term hoplon ("weapon," "tool," "instrument") that Paul uses in Romans 6:13; we can use our bodies either as instruments of sin or as instruments of righteousness. Diakonia, like hoplon, is a neutral term waiting to be placed in a context. (4)

At the same time he indicates that Paul, in a wide range of texts, 2 Cor. 3:6 included, "is not talking in some imprecise way about 'servants' of God or of Christ" (6-7), but about those engaged in a ministerium docendi evangelii, as the Augsburg Confession puts it.

[14]It is used only here and in Col. 1:12, a passage where it refers to the calling of Christians in general.

set in parallel to 2 Cor. 3:5,6.[15] One can gather from this

that the God who qualified the apostles continues to supply

the all-surpassing power which manifests itself in the

frailty of their mortal existence (2 Cor. 4,12,13).

Furthermore, Paul can do everything in his apostolic

ministry through the one who gives him strength (Phil.

4:13).[16]

Καινὴ διαθήκη // Παλαιὰ διαθήκη

In attempting to throw some light on the components of

meaning of these two concepts the reader should probably

start out with what may be called "intratextual matrixing,"

that is, he can look for parallels and contrasts in the

pericope itself. Subsequently he can proceed with

"intertextual matrixing," bringing into the discussion

parallels and contrasts from elsewhere in the Pauline

corpus.

The Connection Between Verses 6 and 14

Paul explicitly mentions the καινὴ διαθήκη in

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[15]Louw and Nida place ἱκανόω in domain 75, "adequate, qualified," while ἐνδυναμόω is found in domain 74, "able, capable." Yet, in a note on p. 679 they explain that it would be possible to combine these domains, for the meanings are closely related.

[16]Passages like 2 Cor. 5:18 and Acts 20:24 also have a bearing on this topic. 2 Cor. 5:18 points out that God gave the apostles the ministry of reconciliation, and Acts 20:24 is Paul's declaration that the Lord Jesus gave him the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

verse 6 and the παλαιὰ διαθήκη in verse 14.[17] Both

phrases are in the genitive, following event words, and may

thus be paraphrased as "we serve the new covenant," "they

read the old covenant." Though it is true that Paul does

not set both covenants in opposition to each other in either

verse, at least not on the level of sense,[18] it is also a

fact that the reader almost instinctively draws a line

between them, establishing a connection between both. The

question that can be raised is whether this procedure is

justified or not. In answer to this, it must be pointed out

that the absence of the expression "old covenant" from verse

6 does not mean that the concept is not there.[19] In fact,

readers have tended to take the γράμματος of verse 6 as

a reference to the old convenant. Furthermore, the

connection between "letter" and "old covenant" seems to be

substantiated by the fact that the old covenant is read.

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[17]The former occurs, in Paul, only here and in 1 Cor.
11:25. The latter is hapax legomenon.

[18]This point is brought out, among others, by Dietrich-
Alex Koch, Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums:
Untersuchungen zum Verwendung und zum Verstaendnis der
Schrift bei Paulus (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), p. 335,
note 20.

[19]Anthony C. Thiselton calls attention to the fact that
"statistical statements about word-occurrences may often be
superficial or even misleading guides to the occurrence of
actual concepts." He illustrates this point with Rom. 3:27,
where "boasting" is written only once, but is implied five
times. "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," in New
Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods,
ed. I. Howard Marshall (Exeter: The Paternoster Press,
1977), 97.

While the new covenant is πνεύματος rather than
γράμματος, the old covenant is read. And since writing
and reading belong to the same semantic domain, the latter
being a type of semantic converse of the former,[20] the
connection between παλαιὰ διαθήκη and γράμμα as
opposed to καινὴ διαθήκη seems to be warranted. In
this case, the contrast between both covenants spills over
into the discussion of the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition
and the διακονία pertaining to each one of them.

The Modifiers Καινή and Παλαιά

This previous discussion has some bearing on the
understanding of "new" and "old." The question whether
these modifiers entail more than merely "new in time" and
"old from a chronological viewpoint" is intimately bound up
with the question whether the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου
is still in force or not. Put another way: is there a
substantial difference between old and new covenant, or is
the new covenant simply a refurbushing of the old?

There is anything but consensus on this issue among
scholars. Many of them come down on the side of continuity.
They follow in the footsteps of W. D. Davies, who came to
the conclusion that "the new covenant of Paul . . . . offers
reinterpretation of the old."[21] Actually, Davies reads the

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[20]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 33.68, p. 397, note 15.

[21]W. D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," New
Testament Studies 24 (1977/78):11.

first half of 2 Corinthians 3 in the light of the discussion

of the veil in the second half, and concludes that

> Paul as minister of the new covenant was not founding a
> new religion or a new people, and not dismissing the old
> covenant but revealing a new meaning and character in
> it.[22]

This new meaning, according to Davies, is the

revelation of the purpose of God to include all, both Jews

and Gentiles, in his promise.

Given the complexity of the issue, it may be wise to

investigate how the concept of a "new covenant" was

understood in the Judaism of that time and what Paul has to

say about the διαθήκαι elsewhere.

Διαθήκη Outside the New Testament

The theme of the covenant, which is so common in the

Old Testament,[23] is much less frequent in post-exilic

Judaism, at least in explicit references. This fact has led

some scholars to the conclusion that covenant was not an

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[22]Ibid., 12. Davies argues with the use of "new" in
connection with the phases of the moon. He states that the
adjective hadasah in Jer. 31.33, translated καινή by Paul,
can be applied to the new moon, and that this is simply the
old moon in a new light. Yet, phenomenologically, that is,
apart from any scientific sophistication, the new moon is
indeed a brand new moon.

[23]Διαθήκη occurs some 270 times in the Septuagint.
It is not uncommon to come across with statements like this:
"The covenant concept is a foundational theme of the Old
Testament as a whole." Carol Kern Stockhausen, Moses' Veil
and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical
Substructure of II Cor. 3,1-4,6 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto
Biblico, 1989), 43.

important concept in Rabbinic Judaism.[24] Yet, as E. P.

Sanders points out, "the covenant, especially God's side, is

more presupposed than directly discussed."[25] What is

particularly conspicious by its absence is any talk about a

"new covenant." This applies to Rabbinic Judaism and in

particular to Jewish apocalypticism, where one would have

expected new covenant terminology being used in the

depiction of the new aeon. However, this is not the case.

Qumran seems to be the only exception, for in Qumran

there is mention of a new covenant. An example is the

following passage from The Damascus Rule (CD 6:19):

> None of those brought into the Covenant shall enter the
> Temple to light His altar in vain. They shall bar the
> door . . . . They shall take care to act according to
> the exact interpretation of the Law during the age of
> wickedness. They shall separate from the sons of the
> Pit, and shall keep away from the unclean riches of
> wickedness acquired by vow or anathema or from the
> Temple treasure; they shall not rob the poor of His
> people, to make of widows their prey and of the
> fatherless their victim (Isa. x,2). They shall
> distinguish between clean and unclean, and shall
> proclaim the difference between holy and profane. They
> shall keep the Sabbath day according to its exact
> interpretation, and the feasts and the Day of Fasting
> according to the finding of the members of the New

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[24]This view is expressed, among others, by Friedrich
Lang, "Gesetz und Bund bei Paulus," in Rechtfertigung:
Festschrift fuer Ernst Kaesemann zum 70. Geburtstag, ed.
Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Poehlmann, and Peter
Stuhlmacher (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976), 310.

[25]E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A
Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Minneapolis: Fortress
Press, 1977), 236.

Covenant in the land of Damascus.[26]

The drift of this passage clearly indicates that the "new covenant" of Qumran is nothing but a renewal of the old covenant, that is, the old covenant interpreted by the Teacher of Righteousness and put into practice in all of its aspects.[27] Joining the "new covenant" is equivalent to returning to the law of Moses.[28] It seems that the Pauline antithesis of law and new covenant is without parallel in Judaism, Qumran included.

Καινὴ διαθήκη in 1 Corinthians 11

In Paul, there is only one reference to the new covenant besides 2 Cor. 3:6, namely, 1 Cor. 11:25: τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι. This text is part of the eucharistic tradition and liturgy which Paul himself had transmitted to the Corinthian church,[29] and of which he reminds them in writing the letter known as 1 Corinthians. It is true that 1 Corinthians 11 is usually left out of consideration when

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[26]Geza Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, third edition (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 87. Other references to the new covenant are CD 8:21; CD 19:33; CD 20:12; 1QpHab 2:3.

[27]Lang, "Gesetz und Bund bei Paulus," 312. As Carol K. Stockhausen puts it, "the 'new covenant' remains essentially only a radical renewal of the Mosaic covenant." Stockhausen, 44.

[28]Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 241.

[29]Paul uses the expression ὅ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, 1 Cor. 11:23.

it comes to Paul's view of the new covenant, because it is
thought that Paul was simply passing on traditional material
with which he did not necessarily identify.[30] This raises
the question of whether Paul could simply pass on a
tradition without identifying with it in the sense of
appropriating it for himself.[31] There is a clear indication
that Paul took this "tradition" seriously, and this is the
phrase παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου at the beginning
of 1 Cor. 11:23. Paul is not saying, "I am passing on an
old piece of tradition," but rather, "this is what I
received from the Lord himself." This "receiving from the
Lord" may be read in different ways, either as an immediate
reception through revelation or as a mediated reception
through the church. What seems clear, however, is that for
Paul this block of teaching was very important. This is

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[30]Erich Graesser, for example, treats 1 Cor. 11:25, not
in the section called "Die expliziten Diatheke-Stellen bei
Paulus," but in a section titled "Diatheke in den
Abendmahlstexten." The reason why Graesser does not take
this as part of Paul's view is because "Paulus and dieser
Stelle nur zitiert, nicht interpretiert." Erich Graesser,
"Der Alte Bund im Neuen: Eine exegetische Vorlesung," in Der
Alte Bund im Neuen: Exegetische Studien zur Israelfrage im
Neuen Testament (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck],
1985), 117.

[31]Some scholarly readers, inasmuch as they relegate 1
Corinthians 11 to the discussion of the Eucharistic Words of
Jesus -- where they, in fact, do belong, although not
exclusively -- give the impression that Paul transmitted
this tradition in a detached manner, more or less like an
agnostic pastor who teaches the Creed without personally
believing in it, or maybe as a concession to those
traditionalists who would insist that this is what has to be
taught in every church! Paul will hardly fit into this
category.

corroborated by Gal. 3:15-18, Gal. 4:21-28, which indicate
that for Paul the concept of covenant was more than a mere
traditional motif.[32] One even has to raise the question if
1 Corinthians 11 could not be the source and interpretive
key to what Paul has to say about covenant in general and
new covenant in particular. This is an hypothesis that
should not be dismissed out of hand. From the viewpoint of
the reader, it is easy to establish the connection between 1
Corinthians 11 and 2 Corinthians 3. Even the original
readers could have made the connection, for 1 Corinthians is
chronologically prior to 2 Corinthians.[33]

   1 Corinthians 11 may help to elucidate whether the
καινὴ διαθήκη is new indeed or simply a rehashing of
the old covenant. The answer seems to be that the covenant
is in fact a new or different covenant, for the blood of
Christ (verse 25) and his death (verse 26) bring the old
covenant to a conclusion and mark the beginning of the new
covenant. The newness of the covenant is witnessed to by
Christian worship, which began as table fellowship with the
risen Lord and is, therefore, centered around the Eucharist.

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[32]This point is made by Friedrich Lang in "Abendmahl und
Bundesgedanke im Neuen Testament," _Evangelische Theologie_ 35
(1975): 535-536: "Dass aber der Bundesgedanke fuer Paulus
nicht nur ein Traditionelles Motiv war, geht aus dem
Galater- und dem Zweiten Korintherbrief hervor."

[33]It could be asserted that Paul does not go into the
pains of explaining καινὴ διαθήκη in 2 Cor. 3:6
because he is dealing with a traditional expression, known
to the Corinthians from the eucharistic liturgy.

If anything is new in Christian worship, as compared to the worship of the Synagogue, that is the Eucharist, accompanied by the preaching of the Gospel.

Διαθήκη Elsewhere in Paul

Broadening the focus the reader can also take into consideration those passages in which Paul uses covenant language, even though the adjective "new" is lacking. All in all there are 9 occurrences of διαθήκη in Paul: two in Gal. 3:15-18, one in Gal. 4:21-28, one in 1 Cor. 11:25, two in 2 Corinthians 3, one in Rom. 9:4, one in Rom 11:27, and one in Eph. 2:12.[34] Of these passages, the ones in Galatians are particularly important, not only in view of the thematic parallelism, but also because of the chronological proximity between Galatians and 2 Corinthians.[35]

Galatians 3:15-18

In Gal. 3:15-18, Paul introduces the term διαθήκη

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[34] In the New Testament as a whole, διαθήκη occurs 33 times: 17 in Hebrews (particularly in Heb. 8:6-13; 9:11-22; 10:4; and 13:20); 9 in Paul; 4 in the Synoptic Gospels; 2 in Acts; and 1 in Revelation.

[35] Although it is usually assumed that Galatians is early, even the oldest preserved Pauline epistle, it may also be argued that it was penned in about the same time as 2 Corinthians. Thus Werner Georg Kuemmel: "The composition fo Galatians cannot be chronologically far from that of II Corinthians and Romans." Paul Feine, Johannes Behm, and Werner Georg Kuemmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr., 14th revised edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 197.

in verse 15 and comes back to it in verse 17. He is talking about a covenant προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, a covenant previously established by God.[36] This covenant was established when the promises were spoken to Abraham and his descendant. This descendant is Christ, as indicated in verse 16. Thus, in this context the covenant is roughly equivalent to the promises spoken to Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The law (νόμος) is introduced in verse 17 and set in contrast to the promise, particularly in what follows in verse 18. Yet, it is interesting that Paul does not refer to the coming of the law, 430 years after the covenant with Abraham, as the establishing of another covenant.[37] It is also noteworthy that the law, which, in the light of 2 Corinthians 3, is the "old covenant," and the promise, which is the "new covenant," are not set in a strict historico-salvific continuity, as if one were to follow upon another. On the contrary, Paul shows that the "new covenant" is actually the oldest, for it coincides with the promise spoken to Abraham.[38] The law "slipped in" later on, as he explains in Gal. 3:19. Thus, if there is any continuity it

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[36]Προκεκυρωμένην is a participle perfect passive. The prepositional prefix προ- brings out the notion of "in advance." The perfect "tense" fits well into a context were juridical language is being used. The covenant was established and remained in effect.

[37]He does it, though, in the Galatians 4 passage.

[38]Graesser, 68.

is the continuity from Abraham to Christ. The "new
covenant" can by no means be a mere rehashing of the "old
covenant" established at Mount Sinai.

Galatians 4:21-28

In Galatians 4, Paul recalls a historical narrative
recorded in the law,[39] namely, that Abraham had two sons,
one born of the slave woman κατὰ σάρκα, the other born
of the free woman δι' ἐπαγγελίας (verses 22-23). The
name of the slave woman, Hagar, is mentioned later on, in
verse 24. The name of the free woman, Sarah, is never
brought up explicitly.[40] Paul takes this figuratively as
standing for δύο διαθῆκαι (verse 24). In what follows,
he introduces the first covenant as being ἀπὸ ὄρους
Σινᾶ ("from Mount Sinai") and εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα
("bearing children for slavery"). Later on, in verse 25,
this covenant is associated with the νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ,
the "present Jerusalem." The other covenant is not formally
introduced, at least not in the same manner as the first one
had been introduced by μία in verse 24.[41] All Paul does is
to identify it with ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ ("the Jerusalem

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[39]Νόμος is being used here in a clear reference to
the Pentateuch.

[40]The name Σάρρα occurs, in the New Testament, only
at Rom. 4:19; Rom. 9:9; Heb. 11:11; and 1 Pet. 3:6. Aland,
Vollstaendige Konkordanz, 1199.

[41]Graesser suggests that one might supply either "the
covenant of mount Zion" or "the covenant of mount Calvary."
Graesser, 77.

above"), which is ἐλευθέρα ("free") and is our mother.

It may be helpful to summarize this passage by drawing

two columns, as follows:

Abraham's son born of the slave woman according to the flesh	Abraham's son born of the free woman through promise
One covenant	Another covenant
The one covenant from mount Sinai bearing children into slavery	------------- ------------
This corresponds to the present Jerusalem, which is in slavery together with her children	The Jerusalem above which is free and is our mother

Several aspects of this passage are of significance.

First of all, in this passage Paul inverts the exegesis

which he probably had learned in Judaism, namely, that the

people of Israel descends from Sarah and that the gentiles

are the offspring of Hagar. In Paul's interpretation "it is

the people of the law who are the offspring of the slave

woman; the offspring of the free woman is found in those who

embrace the gospel of salvation by faith."[42]

It is also noticeable that there is no mention of

νόμος or πίστις in Galatians 4. The same holds good for

"old covenant" and "new covenant," although it may be argued

that the whole discussion presupposes the concept of a new

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[42]F. F. Bruce, "Abraham Had Two Sons: A Study in Pauline Hermeneutics," in New Testament Studies in Honor of Ray Summers, ed. H. L. Drumwright and C. Vaughan (Waco: Markham Press, 1975), 75.

covenant versus an old one.[43] What Paul does contrast is

σάρξ and ἐπαγγελία (verse 23), as well as δουλεία

(verse 24) and ἐλευθερία (verse 26; see Gal. 5:1).

These antitheses recall the νόμος x ἐπαγγελία

contrast of Galatians 3 and anticipate the series of

contrasts in 2 Corinthians 3. The theme of freedom in

particular ties in with 2 Cor. 3:17.

Noteworthy is the fact that in Galatians 4 Paul does

apply the term διαθήκη to the covenant of mount Sinai.

In an earlier chapter, Galatians 3, he had applied it to the

promise spoken to Abraham.

Surprising yet at the same time illuminating is the

contrast between the "now or present Jerusalem" and the

"Jerusalem above." By ἡ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ Paul seems

to refer, not to the literal city, but to "the whole legal

constitution of Judaism, which then had its world-center in

Jerusalem."[44] Similarly, ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ is not a

place located in the realms above the sky, but stands for

the "new age."[45] Particularly significant is the fact that

this Jerusalem is the Jerusalem from above (ἄνω), and not,

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[43]Victor Paul Furnish, II Corinthians, The Anchor Bible
(New York: Doubleday, 1984), 198.

[44]Bruce, "Abraham Had Two Sons," 79.

[45]Hans Dieter Betz points out that "as in Jewish
apocalypticism, for Paul the 'heavenly Jerusalem' is
virtually identical with the 'new age'." Betz, Galatians: A
Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia,
Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 247.
Bruce takes it as standing for the community of the new
covenant. "Abraham Had Two Sons," 79.

as might have been expected in the light of the preceding

νῦν, the Jerusalem to come (μέλλουσα). As Ronald Y.

K. Fung points out, what Paul has done is

> to mingle the two forms, the temporal and the
> spatial, in such a way as to indicate that the Jerusalem
> that is to come has already arrived (. .₄₆. .) in the
> form of a heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem.[46]

This being so, the "two Jerusalems" stand side by

side, in opposition to each other. Translated into covenant

language, it means that there is no smooth transition from

one covenant to another, as if the new covenant were merely

a renewal of the old covenant. Paul explicitly mentions

δύο διαθῆκαι, and both are present realities.[47] He

never says that there is only one covenant, the Sinai

covenant, and that the Gentiles should be allowed to get

into this covenant by faith rather than by works of the law.

As J. Louis Martyn puts it, "when Paul contemplates Gentile

entry into the Sinai covenant, he sees only enslavement

under the power of the Law."[48] What Paul actually does is

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[46]Ronald Y. K. Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, The
New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand
Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 210.

[47]J. Louis Martyn remarks that here, for the first time,
Paul takes the unprecedented step of placing opposite one
another two covenants, one the promising covenant of Sarah,
the covenant that liberates, the other the Sinai/Law
covenant of Hagar, the covenant that enslaves. Martyn,
"Events in Galatia: Modified Covenantal Nomism Versus God's
Invasion of the Cosmos in the Singular Gospel: A Response to
J. D. G. Dunn and B. R. Gaventa," in Pauline Theology I:
Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon, ed. Jouette
M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 175.

[48]Ibid.

to posit a second covenant over against the Sinai covenant
"in order to deny that it is God's intention to bring the
Gentiles into the Sinai covenant on any conditions."[49]

In matrixing this with 2 Corinthians 3, the reader
comes to the following conclusion: the two covenants and the
two types of ministry which pertain to each one of them are
clearly antithetical, as much as killing and bringing to
life are antithetical. The two covenants are two competing
realms, **νόμος** opposed to and competing with **ἐπαγγελία**
(Galatians 3), the **νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ** opposed to and
competing with the **ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ** (Galatians 4), the
διακονία τοῦ θανάτου opposed to and competing with
the **διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος** (2 Corinthians 3).

This polarity, one should add, is not dialectical, at
least not in the sense in which the polarity of law and
gospel is commonly understood in Lutheran theology. Paul
does not say that "the letter kills in order that the Spirit
may give life." The antithesis is not strictly
heilsgeschichtlich either. Paul does not envisage two
consecutive epochs in God's dealing with his people, namely,
first the law and then the faith. On the contrary, God's
original plan is his promise to Abraham. The law was added
later on.

This whole discussion sheds some light on the question
of whether Paul saw the old covenant based on the **νόμος**

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[49]Ibid.

as gone or abrogated. The answer is: Paul does not

explicitly say so. The "present Jerusalem" and the

"ministry of death" are still there, in full swing. Yet,

Paul also says, and this should not be overlooked, that the

ministry of the old covenant is καταργούμενον (as

opposed to μένον) just as the glory on Moses' face was

καταργουμένην, and that the δόξα of the ministry of

the new covenant is overflowing (ὑπερβαλλούση, verse

10). Should Paul's readers ever be faced with the choice

between these two covenants, they would have been told

enough to know which one to prefer!

<u>Covenant in Paul</u>

Summarizing, one may say that Paul knows of

διαθῆκαι in the plural, as he indicates in Rom. 9:4.[50]

Of the different covenants mentioned in the Hebrew Bible,

three receive attention in his letters: a. the covenant with

Abraham (Galatians 3); b. the covenant through Moses

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[50]The singular, ἡ διαθήκη, which is read by Papyrus
46, B, D, F, G, some ancient versions, and Cyprian, is
rejected on the grounds that it is an assimilation to the
context, which is basically singular. Bruce M. Metzger in
his <u>A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament</u>,
corrected edition (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975)
explains that

> copyists would have been likely to assimilate the plural
> to the pattern of instances of the singular number in
> the series. . . . Certainly there is no good reason why
> the singular, if original, should have been altered to
> the plural. (519)

(Galatians 4); and c. the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3).[51]

The covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) is not central to

Paul's thought.

Two covenants, the one with Abraham and the new

covenant, are highly valued by Paul, while the importance of

the Mosaic covenant is minimized by the apostle. The

covenant with Abraham was important because it provided Paul

with a scriptural way of arguing that justification through

faith had been God's plan for both Jews and Gentiles from

the very beginning. The Mosaic covenant was seen by Paul as

a temporary phase in God's dealings with his people. As

Charles H. Talbert explains,

> Paul does not deny that Israel as a sociological reality
> for whom the Mosaic covenant is constitutive continues
> to exist. What he says is that such a sociological
> reality has ceased to have positive soteriological
> significance in God's plan because it has not recognized
> and responded positively to the new thing God is doing
> since Jesus.[52]

Another important observation is that Paul does not

develop a "covenant theology" on its own right. In

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[51]Some readers, like Charles H. Talbert in his Reading
Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary of 1 and
2 Corinthians (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 147, almost
automatically add "of Jeremiah 31." As indicated above, it
is debatable whether or not Paul derived the concept of a
new covenant from Jeremiah 31. Since Paul does not quote
Jeremiah 31 -- only the author of Hebrews does it (Heb.
8:8; 10:16) -- but quotes the Verba Domini in 1 Corinthians
11, the reader is more likely to establish the latter
connection than the former. In other words, Paul may have
taken the new covenant terminology and concept from the
Eucharistic liturgy, and not necessarily from Jeremiah 31.

[52]Ibid., 153.

Galatians 4 and in 2 Corinthians 3 the covenants are not the topic as such, but rather a subsidiary idea which is introduced to support a different topic: in Galatians, that the law cannot be placed alongside the gospel as a way of salvation, and in 2 Corinthians, the indisputable glory of Paul's apostolate.[53] It is also clear that Paul does not treat any of the covenants in isolation, but always in relation to one of the others. In Galatians, the covenant with Abraham is brought together and contrasted to the Mosaic covenant. In 2 Corinthians 3, the new covenant is set over against the old covenant.

Judging from the scarcity of διαθήκη in Paul, one might draw the conclusion that "covenant" was not a fundamental building block of his theology. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor goes as far as saying that "the concept of a new covenant was fundamentally alien to Paul's theology, and . . . . his use of it was a grudging concession to external pressure."[54] In Lloyd Gaston's view, the concept of covenant was characteristic of Jewish Christianity, and thus "it was also apt to be very congenial to the rival

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[53]Ulrich Luz, "Der alte und der neue Bund bei Paulus und im Hebraeerbrief," Evangelische Theologie 27 (1967), 318.

[54]Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The New Covenant in the Letters of Paul and the Essene Documents," in To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., ed. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 195.

missionaries."[55] Maybe the reason for this reluctance on
the part of the New Testament writers was the close
connection between covenant and law in the Jewish tradition,
so that the mention of covenant would immediately bring to
mind the concept of law.[56] As John Reumann puts it,

> perhaps the fact that the term 'covenant' had legal and
> legalistic connotations in the world of the day causes
> New Testament writers to shy away from it.[57]

γράμμα // πνεῦμα

The word γράμμα, which is rare in the New Testament
and amazingly cryptic when used in the singular,[58] is a
clear example of a word that, in order to be properly
understood, needs to be matrixed both intratextually and
intertextually.

In seeing it in its intratextual matrix, the reader

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[55]Lloyd Gaston, "Paul and the Torah in 2 Corinthians 3,"
In Paul and the Torah (Vancouver: University of British
Columbia Press, 1987), 156. In J. Louis Martyn's view, Paul
employs the term only when one of his churches has become
enamored of the use being made of it by traveling
evangelists who stand in opposition to his mission
(Galatians 3-4; 2 Corinthians 3). J. Louis Martyn, "Events
in Galatia," 171, note 26.

[56]This point was brought out by Walter Eichrodt,
"Covenant and Law: Thoughts on Recent Discussion,"
Interpretation 20 (1966):302-321.

[57]John Reumann, Jesus in the Church's Gospels: Modern
Scholarship and the Earliest Sources (Philadelphia: Fortress
Press, 1968), 476, note 82.

[58]It is used 14 times in the New Testament, 9 times in
the plural (Luke 16:6,7; John 5:47; 7:15; Acts 26:24; 28:21;
2 Cor. 3:7; Gal. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:15) and 5 times in the
singular (Rom. 2:27; 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6 [twice]).

notices that it occurs in a syntagm with ἀποκτέννει, and
that it is set in contrast to πνεῦμα. Particularly
striking is this relation between γράμμα and πνεῦμα,
which may be described as a relation of complementarity or
of two-way exclusion, in which "the denial of the one
involves the assertion of the other, and vice versa."[59]
This being so, and considering that γράμμα is so elusive,
the reader may well start out with πνεῦμα in order to
understand γράμμα.[60] This will not necessarily simplify
our task, but it provides us a different and, perhaps, more
appropriate approach to the problem.

Γράμμα in the Light of πνεῦμα

That this move in no way facilitates the inquiry into
the meaning of γράμμα can be seen in the fact that
πνεῦμα itself is a polysemous sign. The same sign stands
for different meanings which are relatively far apart in
semantic space. Louw and Nida classify it in five different
semantic domains: 1. Domain 12 (Supernatural Beings and
Powers): πνεῦμα as either Holy Spirit, spirit, evil

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[59] Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament
Interpretation," 90-92. According to Thiselton, "grace" and
"works" also stand in a relation of complementarity,
deriving their semantic value from this very relation.

[60] Quite apart from any linguistic theory, Mathias Rissi
already observed, back in 1969, that in order to understand
γράμμα one has to start out with πνεῦμα. "Um zu
verstehen, was Paulus mit Gramma meint, muessen wir vom
Gegensatzbegriff des Geistes ausgehen." Mathias Rissi,
Studien zum zweiten Korintherbrief (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag,
1969), 24.

spirit, or ghost. 2. Domain 26 (Psychological Faculties): πνεῦμα as inner being. 3. Domain 30 (Think): πνεῦμα as way of thinking. 4. Domain 14 (Physical Events and States): πνεῦμα as wind. 5. Domain 23 (Physiological Processes and States): πνεῦμα as breath.[61]

It is readily apparent that, in the context of 2 Cor. 3, πνεῦμα can be either some living, inner force, or a supernatural being, more precisely the Holy Spirit. Most readers take it in the sense of Holy Spirit. They reach this conclusion, so it seems, by matrixing the πνεῦμα of verse 6 with the phrase πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος in verse 3,[62] and with the πνεῦμα of verse 17. Readers in general tend to agree with Ferdinand Hahn, who asserts that it is very clear that the πνεῦμα of verse 6 is the Spirit of the Lord (verse 17b), the Spirit of the risen and exalted Christ.[63]

Yet, there are some dissenting voices, most notably Philip Edgcumbe Hughes and R. C. H. Lenski. Hughes finds no direct reference to the Holy Spirit in 2 Cor. 3:6,

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[61]These are actually eight different meanings, as the authors point out in the Introduction (p. x). For a similar categorization, see Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," 90-91. Thiselton proposes four semantic fields: 1. wind or breath; 2. men's spirit; 3. the Spirit of God; 4. spirit-beings.

[62]This connection is established via ζῳοποιεῖ in verse 6.

[63]Ferdinand Hahn, "Bibelarbeit ueber 2. Korinther 3,4-18," in Erneuerung aus der Bibel, ed. Siegfried Meurer (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1982), 86.

suggesting that 'spirit' should be written "with a small and not a capital initial letter."[64] He interprets the letter-spirit contrast as the difference between

> the law as **externally** written at Sinai on tablets of stone and the **same** law as written internally in the heart of the Christian believer.[65]

Hughes takes his clue from 2 Cor. 3:3, where external and internal are contrasted, and finds confirmation for his view in Rom. 2:28,29.

Lenski in turn argues that πνεῦμα is "spirit," the opposite of the "letter" of the law, an inward, living force, and not the Holy Spirit.[66] It is unmistakable that Lenski's procedure is diametrically opposed to that of most interpreters. He starts out with a definition of γράμμα and then interprets πνεῦμα accordingly, and this is certainly the main reason why he reaches a different conclusion.

Πνεῦμα is an important word in Paul's letters, occurring more than 130 times. Out of these many references those in the context of 2 Corinthians are particularly

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[64]Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 116.

[65]Ibid., 100.

[66]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), 921.

pertinent. In 2 Corinthians πνεῦμα occurs 16 times,[67] three of them before the pericope under consideration, namely, 2 Cor. 1:22; 2:13; 3:3. The first instance is a reference to Paul's own spirit or inner being. The passage of 2 Cor. 3:3 has been given given some consideration already. Most illuminating and relevant is 2 Cor. 1:22, where Paul introduces the πνεῦμα as the ἀρραβών given by God.[68]

'Αρραβών occurs three times in the New Testament, two times in 2 Corinthians (1:22; 5:5) and once in Ephesians (1:14). Taken literally it is "the first or initial payment of money or assets, as a guarantee for the completion of a transaction or pledge."[69] In the New Testament it is always used figuratively in reference to the Holy Spirit, who, as the eschatological gift par excellence, "anticipates, but without fully realizing, the glory that belongs to the future."[70] As F. F. Bruce has it, "for Paul, the Spirit is

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[67]2 Cor. 1:22; 2:13; 3:3; 3:6 (twice); 3:8; 3:17; 3:18; 4:13; 5:5; 6:6; 7:1; 7:13; 11:4; 12:18; 13:13.

[68]The genitive in the phrase τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος is best taken as epexegetical, that is, the Spirit is the ἀρραβών.

[69]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 57.170 [see Eph. 1:13-14], p. 577. A near synonym of ἀρραβών is ἀπαρχή, which is applied to the Holy Spirit in Rom. 8:23. Louw and Nida classify both terms in the same semantic domain, indicating that ἀπαρχή, when used in the sense of "foretaste, pledge," parallels closely the meaning of ἀρραβών. Ibid.

[70]C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), 126.

distinctively the herald and sign of the new age."[71]
Applied to the covenant, one may say that the Spirit is the
gift and sign of the new covenant.[72] The new covenant is
centered on the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the living God
(2 Cor. 3:3), is the one who makes alive (ζῳοποιεῖ). He
is ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐγείρων τοὺς νεκρούς (2 Cor. 1:9).[73]
He is the vivifying Spirit. This theme of the vivifying
Spirit had already appeared in Paul's earlier correspondence
with the Corinthians, particularly in 1 Corinthians 15,
where the apostle stresses that in Christ all will be made
alive (verse 22), and that the last Adam became a Spirit who
makes alive (verse 45). Later on, in Rom. 8:2, Paul
describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life (τὸ
πνεῦμα τῆς ζωῆς).[74]

A comparison between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2
Corinthians 3 discloses that the act of making alive is

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[71]F. F. Bruce, "Christ and Spirit in Paul," Bulletin of
the John Rylands Library 59 (1976/77): 281.

[72]Stockhausen, 132.

[73]Ἐγείρω and ζῳοποιέω belong to the same semantic
domain, as indicated in Louw and Nida, p. 262-263.
Ζῳοποιέω, meaning "to cause to live," seems to be more
general, whereas ἐγείρω, in the sense of "to cause someone
to live again after having once died," appears to be more
specific. The connection or parallelism between both verbs
is most clearly seen in Rom. 8:11: ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν
ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῳοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα
ὑμῶν.

[74]Another pertinent parallel, from outside the Pauline
corpus, is John 6:63: τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ
ζῳοποιοῦν.

ascribed both to Christ and the Holy Spirit. This raises
the question of the relationship between Christ and the
Spirit, which is so acute in the light of 2 Cor. 3:17.
Although it may sound like an attempt to oversimplify a very
complex matter, it is nonetheless true that this apparent
lack of differentiation between Christ and the Spirit
coheres with what Paul has to say elsewhere. One has to
keep in mind that Paul is not engaged in defining the
relationship between the persons of the Holy Trinity. His
view, seen in the light of later developments, is much more
dynamic and functional than essential. Put in dogmatic
terms, Paul's statements about Christ and the Holy Spirit
could be described as emphasizing the dogmatic principle,
opera ad extra indivisa sunt. In other words, when it comes
to giving life, the whole Trinity is engaged. Thus, for
Paul, to be "in Christ" and to be "in the Spirit" is one and
the same thing. Both statements are interchangeable. All
the same,

> the rule of the exalted Christ and the activity of the
> Spirit are so much one and the same ruling that the
> sentence, "the Lord is the Spirit," can mean both "the
> Spirit is "Lord" and "Christ is the Lord who is active
> as Spirit".[75]

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the exalted Christ
(Acts 16:7), and he is the vivifying Spirit. In contrast
to this, the letter, which is also envisaged as a power,

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[75]Edmund Schlink, The Doctrine of Baptism, translated by
Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 60-61.

kills. The text, however, does not tell whom or what the letter kills neither how it kills. There is no direct answer to these questions. Also open to dispute is the question of the meaning and possible referent of γράμμα. In order to shed some light on this issue, the reader has to move on and bring into the picture other passages in which the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition plays a role. Two passages call for investigation: Rom. 2:27-29 and Rom. 7:6.[76]

Romans 2:27-29

In the Romans 2 passage, γράμμα occurs in a context where νόμος figures prominently. The νόμος is something to be done (πράσσω, verse 25), kept (φυλάσσω, verse 26), or fulfilled (τελέω, verse 27). The one who fails to do so constitutes himself in a παραβάτης νόμου (verses 25 and 27). In verse 27, the apostle contrasts the physically uncircumcised who keeps the νόμον with the one who διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς is a παραβάτην νόμου. Two details stand out: γράμμα is used in tandem with περιτομή, and γράμμα is distinguished from νόμος.

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[76]Considering that Romans is chronologically later than 2 Corinthians, and considering that this theme reccurs in Romans, the reader is entitled to infer that the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition was not merely an ad hoc formulation prompted by the situation at Corinth. In other words, it seems to have played a significant role in Paul's theology, the more so if this opposition is taken as a variant of the νόμος-Χριστός polarity.

Somewhat puzzling is the διά in the phrase διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς. It could be taken as instrumental, in the sense of "you who through or by means of the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law." On the other hand, it can be seen as indicating the accompanying circumstance, namely, that the "you" who does not keep the νόμος is a transgressor in spite of γράμμα and περιτομή. No matter how the διά is taken, what seems clear is that γράμμα is distinguished from νόμος. Furthermore, γράμμα is paired with περιτομή. If one takes into consideration that these two were the badges of Judaism in those days, one may render περιτομή as "the sign of circumcision" and γράμμα as "the possession of the written commands of the law."[77]

In Rom. 2:29 Paul presents the circumcision of the heart ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι.[78] This circumcision is contrasted to the circumcision which is ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκί (verse 28). If ἐν πνεύματι is taken in the sense of "brought about by the Spirit," οὐ γράμματι can only mean: "not effected according to the written precept of the law."

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[77]Stephen Westerholm takes "letter" as "an abbreviated way of referring to the possession of the commands of God in written form." Stephen Westerholm, "Letter and Spirit: The Foundation of Pauline Ethics," New Testament Studies 30 (1984): 234.

[78]Contrary to 2 Cor. 3:6, in Rom. 2:29 πνεῦμα occurs before γράμμα.

Romans 7:6

In Rom. 7:6, γράμμα appears to be closely
coordinated with νόμος. The text says that now, namely,
in the present eschatological situation (νυνὶ δέ), which
contrasts with the former time when "our sinful passions,
aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear
fruit for death," we are fully freed from the νόμος. The
result of this freedom is δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν
καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι
γράμματος. Again, two details stand out: 1. The Spirit
sides with what is new (καινότης), while γράμμα is
bound up with what is old (παλαιότης). 2. 'Letter' and
'Spirit' mark different ways of rendering service
(δουλεύειν), one belonging to what is "old," the other
pertaining to what is "new." This matches with the teaching
of 2 Corinthians 3, where service (διάκονοι/διακονία),
newness (καινὴ διαθήκη), and Spirit (πνεῦμα) are
closely related.

This investigation of the Romans passages leads to the
conclusion that the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition is used
in basically the same sense as in 2 Corinthians 3, which
makes a coherent interpretation of these passages perfectly
feasible. Γράμμα and πνεῦμα are in all instances
opposed to each other and sharply distinguished from each
other. They point to different orders or ages. This fits
well into the scheme of Paul's theology, for, as Ralph P.
Martin has put it,

Paul loves to set 'old' and 'new' in antithesis as marking the transition from the old order of sin and death to the new, eschatological age of fulfillment in Christ.[79]

A Synonym for Γράμμα

Turning to the investigation of potential synonyms and referents for γράμμα, one must say that the reading history of 2 Corinthians 3, in particular of verses 5 and 6, reveals a certain consensus that γράμμα is somehow related to νόμος. This identification is suggested by the context of 2 Corinthians 3 and seems to be corroborated by passages like Rom. 2:15 and Gal. 3:21. Rom. 2:15 teaches that the Gentiles have "the work [demanded] by the law (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου) inscribed (γραπτόν) in their hearts." In Gal. 3:21 it is implied that the νόμος is unable to give life (ζωοποιῆσαι). Since, according to 2 Corinthians 3, this is something the Spirit can do, which implies that the γράμμα is not fit for such a task, the connection between γράμμα and νόμος is easily established.

This connection between γράμμα and νόμος is frequently assumed, although rarely explained or substantiated. The following quotations illustrate the point:

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[79]Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 54. Martin points to passages like 1 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 7:6; Gal. 4:24; Col. 3:9,10; and Eph. 4:22,24. To this one should certainly add the important passage of 2 Cor. 5:17.

. . . when Paul speaks of the law as γράμμα . . .[80]

There [in 2 Corinthians 3] the contrast between the old
and new covenant is described as the contrast between
the 'killing' letter and the life-producing
(ζωοποιεῖ) Spirit (v.6). The law [sic] thus has
nothing to do with life; quite the contrary.[81]

Given that it is so easy to switch from letter to law,

one has to raise the question of whether γράμμα and

νόμος are synonyms or not. A good definition of

"synonyms" is

> words which share several (but not all) essential
> components and thus can be used to substitute for one
> another in some (but not all) contexts without any
> appreciable difference of meaning in these contexts.[82]

If this is the case, then it follows that there can be

no a priori answer to the question above. It all hinges on

the contexts in which those words appear.

If it were necessary to examine the numerous contexts

in which νόμος occurs in the Pauline epistles, one would

be carried way beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet,

there is no need of doing that, for the meaning and use of

νόμος is not the issue here. Seldom or never has it been

suggested that γράμμα is the key to the understanding of

Paul's use of νόμος, while, as indicated above, many a

reader has tried to throw some light on γράμμα by

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[80]J. D. G. Dunn, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the
Law (Galatians 3.10-14)," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):
530.

[81]Heikki Raisanen, Paul and the Law (Tuebingen: J. C. B.
Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), 151.

[82]Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, The Theory and
Practice of Translation (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 73.

understanding it in terms of **νόμος**. The question, then,
is: could **νόμος** replace **γράμμα** in 2 Corinthians 3?

Such a question, to begin with, can only be raised by
readers who are acquainted with the whole Pauline corpus.
In case we had only 2 Corinthians, this question would never
be posed, for **νόμος** does not occur in this letter.
However, in reading intertextually, it is not improper to
ask if **νόμος** could stand for **γράμμα**.

In trying to tackle this matter, the reader cannot
overlook the fact that in the New Testament **γράμμα** is
always set in contrast to **πνεῦμα**. Thus, the right place
to begin is the investigation of those passages in which
πνεῦμα occurs in the same context with **νόμος**. This
should indicate if **νόμος** can stand for **γράμμα**. The
result of such an investigation is that there are some
passages, as, for instance, Gal. 3:2,5 and Gal. 5:18, where
νόμος and **πνεῦμα** are presented as being at odds with
each other, reminding of the **γράμμα-πνεῦμα** opposition.
On the other hand, Paul can also say that the **νόμος** is
πνευματικός (Rom. 7:14), and that the righteous
requirement of the **νόμου** is fulfilled in those who walk
κατὰ πνεῦμα (Rom. 8:4). This leads to the conclusion
that, while **γράμμα** is clearly something negative and is
always set in contrast to **πνεῦμα**, **νόμος** can be
coordinated with **πνεῦμα** in a positive way and it can be
played off against it. This seems to indicate that **νόμος**
is sometimes set in opposition to **πνεῦμα**, and therefore

could well replace γράμμα in 2 Corinthians 3.[83]

This leads to several more questions: Is the reader

justified in substituting νόμος for γράμμα, or, at

least, in trying to understand the latter in the light of

the former? Is there any real advantage in establishing

this connection? In the light of the heated debate over the

meaning and use of νόμος in Paul, it is hard to see what

could be gained by trying to understand γράμμα in the

light of νόμος. Νόμος is certainly more widespread

and more familiar than γράμμα, but it is not in and by

itself the key to the understanding of γράμμα.

Besides being synonymous in the sense described above,

νόμος and γράμμα could also be co-referential. In

other words, they could in certain contexts point

simultaneously to the same referent.[84] It follows that one

cannot evade the matter of trying to nail down the possible

referent of γράμμα.[85]

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[83]This would not be the case in Rom. 2:25-29, where
νόμος is distinguished from γράμμα. In Rom. 7:6, on
the other hand, νόμος and γράμμα seem to be used
interchangeably.

[84]Cotterell and Turner, Linguistics & Biblical
Interpretation, 161. The authors cite as an example of co-
referentiality the use of faith and gospel in some contexts
of the Pauline epistles. "Faith" and "gospel" do not carry
the same sense; they merely apply at the same time to the
same referent.

[85]Meaning and reference are intertwined, and it is not
easy to separate one from another. Eugene A. Nida describes
the difference as follows:
    The meaning (Bedeutung) of a word consists of the set of
    distinctive features which makes possible certain types
    of reference, while reference itself is the process of

The Referent of Γράμμα

There are those who take γράμμα as a reference to γραφή. Ralph P. Martin, for instance, asserts that "the term γράμμα naturally refers to the O[ld] T[estament] as Scripture."[86]. Robert Grant is more careful, stating that γράμμα refers, not the Old Testament as such, but to "the Old Testament as a legal document, as the unconverted Israelites interpret it."[87] Similar to this is Ernst Kaesemann's view that "γράμμα is the written O[ld] T[estament], which is separated from the Spirit and from the exposition which the Spirit makes possible."[88]

In response to this one must say that, although both γράμμα and γραφή share the common component of meaning of "something written," the fact is that Paul never identifies γράμμα and γραφή, either in 2 Corinthians 3 or in the Romans passages. On the contrary, in what follows in 2 Corinthians 3 Paul begins to cite and interpret Scripture, which shows that "Paul's rejection of gramma is

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designating some entity, event, etc. by a particular symbol. Cited by J. P. Louw, Semantics of New Testament Greek (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 50.

[86]Martin, 2 Corinthians, 55.

[87]Robert Grant and David Tracy, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, second edition, revised and enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 23.

[88]Ernst Kaesemann, Commentary on Romans, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 77.

by no means a rejection of <u>graphe</u>."[89] Rather than rejecting

or calling into question the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul clearly

indicates that

> those scriptures functioned for him authoritatively even
> when he was making a negative point about the law. . . .
> He knew of a greater glory revealed in the gospel (2
> Cor. 3.11), but that did not negate his commitment to
> the scriptures.[90]

To this one must add that Paul never plays γραφή

off against πνεῦμα. On the contrary, his use of the Old

Testament suggests that γραφή sides with πνεῦμα rather

than the other way around.

Perhaps the most prevalent view is that γράμμα

refers to the distortion of the law, either in the form of a

Jewish legalistic misinterpretation of the law or as a

certain interpretation of the law which prevailed at

Corinth.[91] The problem with the law, then, is not so much

the law itself, but rather its misinterpretation. In other

words, the problem is seen as a hermeneutical one.

Although this view seems to be supported by the latter

part of 2 Corinthians 3, which has to do with hermeneutics,

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[89]Richard B. Hays, <u>Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul</u> (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 151.

[90]Klyne Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," <u>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</u> 32 (1988): 96.

[91]The latter view is espoused by C. E. B. Cranfield in his commentary on Romans, while the former, which is much more popular, is represented, among others, by Rudolf Bultmann and C. K. Barrett in their commentaries on the passages where γράμμα occurs.

it is also true that Paul nowhere explicitly indicates that the problem with the law is its misinterpretation. What kills is not the misunderstanding of the law, but the fact that, as Paul himself explains in Romans 7, it encounters man, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (verse 14), as an instrument of ἁμαρτία (verse 11).[92]

The most recent view on γράμμα is closely tied up with the so-called "new perspective on Paul." James D. G. Dunn is perhaps the main representative of this position. In Dunn's opinion, "when Paul speaks of the law as γράμμα, what he has in view is precisely the law as the visible definition of the covenant people."[93] Γράμμα is

> the law as fixing a particular social identity, as encouraging a sense of national superiority and presumption of divine favour by virtue of membership of a particular people.[94]

Again, on this view Paul's quarrel is not with the law as such, not even with the law understood literally, but with "a particular attitude to the law as such, the law as a whole in its social function as distinguishing Jew from Gentile."[95] For Dunn, it is the law understood in this way, namely, as defining the covenant people with the physical

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[92]Koch, Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums, p.339, note 43. A concept like "legalism" cannot be found in Paul, unless it is subsumed under either νόμος or γράμμα.

[93]Dunn, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.10-14)," 530.

[94]Ibid., 531.

[95]Ibid.

visible rite of circumcision (as in Rom. 2:29), "which is so destructive of the life of the Spirit."[96]

This view is actually nothing but a new version of an old thesis, namely, that Paul is attacking, not the law as such or as a whole, but just "the law as viewed in some particular perspective, a particular <u>attitude</u> to the law, or some specific (mis-)<u>understanding</u> of it."[97] Since this view of γράμμα is intimately tied up with the whole matter of νόμος in Paul, one could only reach a more balanced conclusion after having examined what Paul has to say about these topics in all of his extant letters. For the time being it is enough to point out that Dunn's view, when applied to 2 Corinthians 3, does not seem to do justice to the sharp contrast between γράμμα and πνεῦμα, to say nothing about the assertion that the letter kills. It is questionable whether the ἀποκτέννει of 2 Cor. 3:6 can be watered down to something like "to be destructive of the life of the Spirit." The contrast between killing and making alive is much more radical than that, just as the contrast between letter and Spirit is sharper than Dunn would be willing to allow. This view is corroborated by Galatians 3 and 4, which cannot be read as an attack on just a particular attitude to the law.

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[96]Ibid., 532.

[97]Heikki Raisanen, "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," <u>New Testament Studies</u> 31 (1985), 544. (Emphasis by the author.)

Another suggestion of referent for γράμμα, this one put forth by Lloyd Gaston, is that in the context of 2 Corinthians 3 "the power that kills is a certain type of ministry."[98] In answer to this one has to say that the existence of a ministry related to or pertaining to γράμμα does not mean that this ministry coalesces with γράμμα, and so the question of the referent of γράμμα has not yet been answered.

Stephen Welterholm takes γράμμα as a reference, not to a perversion or a misunderstanding of the Old Testament law, but rather "the law of God in its written form, made up of concrete commands."[99] He argues that

> the reference to the 'ministry of death carved in letters on stone' (v.7) would seem more naturally to refer to the concrete demands of the law, which were so inscribed, than to a perversion of them. The very references to a 'ministry' (διακονία) and a 'covenant' (διαθήκη) of which Moses was a representative seem to preclude the possibility that a perversion of that covenant is meant.[100]

Is it possible to be even more specific than that? Heikki Raisanen thinks it is. Taking his clue from 2 Cor. 3:7, namely, that the killing letter was found carved in

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[98]Lloyd Gaston, "Paul and the Torah in 2 Corinthians 3," 157.

[99]Westerholm, "Letter and Spirit," 241. A view similar to this one had been put forth by Ehrhard Kamlah in 1954. According to Kamlah, "letter" is the Torah "nach ihrer schriftlich fixierten Gestalt." Ehrhard Kamlah, "Buchstabe und Geist: Die Bedeutung dieser Antithese fuer die alttestamentliche Exegese des Apostels Paulus," Evangelische Theologie 14 (1954), 277.

[100]Ibid., 240.

stone tablets, Raisanen asserts that γράμμα is "a clear reference to the <u>Decalogue</u>."[101] The fact is that "Paul made surprisingly sparse reference to the Decalogue,"[102] which does not mean that he never did. 2 Corinthians 3 may be seen as one of those few passages in which Paul does refer to the Decalogue.

κάλυμμα μένει // κάλυμμα περιαιρεῖται

Although 2 Corinthians 3 does not aim at providing hermeneutical guidelines, it is certainly a text laden with hermeneutical implications.[103]

To begin with, the γράμμα-πνεῦμα opposition in verse 6 is hermeneutically significant, although not in the sense in which that verse was read by many of those who theorized on Biblical hermeneutics in the past, particularly in the Middle Ages. Verse 6 does not warrant a distinction between two different senses of Scripture, the literal and the spiritual. Yet, it is significant inasmuch as it can be seen as the basis for the Law-Gospel hermeneutics, which lies at the heart of Lutheran hermeneutics. Γράμμα stands for the Law that kills. Πνεῦμα stands for the

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[101] Raisanen, <u>Paul and the Law</u>, 25.

[102] Joyce G. Baldwin, "The Role of the Ten Commandments," <u>Vox Evangelica</u> 13 (1983): 16. Baldwin acknowledges 2 Corinthians 3 and Romans 13 as two passages which undoubtedly deal with the Ten Commandments.

[103] Hays, 146.

Spirit, who makes alive through the Gospel.[104]

However, the most significant hermeneutical implications of 2 Corinthians 3 are to be found in verses 14-18, particularly in the phrases τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει μένει in verse 14, and περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα in verse 16.

Paul writes that the veil remains when the old covenant is read. Verse 15 makes it plain that the veil hangs over the heart of the reader. Καρδία is described by Louw and Nida as "the causative source of a person's psychological life in its various aspects, but with special emphasis upon thoughts."[105] Closely related to καρδία, that is, belonging to the same semantic domain, is τὰ νοήματα, which occurs in verse 14 and is best taken in the sense of "the mind" or "the psychological faculty of understanding."[106] This seems to indicate that the phrase ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτων in verse 14a runs parallel to κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται in verse 15b. To say that the heart is veiled is, from a semantic point of view, equivalent to say that the mind is hardened.

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[104]Ragnar Bring, "Die paulinische Begruendung der lutherischen Theologie," in _Luthertum_ 17, ed. Walter Zimmermann, Franz Lau, Herman Schlyter, and Johannes Pfeiffer (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 18-43.

[105]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 26.3 [Psychological Faculties; see Matt. 22:37], p. 321.

[106]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 26.14 [Psychological Faculties, 2 Cor. 11.3], p. 325.

It is interesting that both **νόημα** and **πωρόω** are rare in the New Testament, which is an indication that 2 Corinthians 3, in particular verses 14-18, is a unique passage in the New Testament. **Νόημα** occurs only six times in the New Testament.[107] **Πωρόω** is equally rare, occurring, in Paul, only at Rom. 11:7 and here.[108] Louw and Nida describe its components of meaning as follows: "to cause someone to be completely unwilling to learn or to accept new information."[109] It is used when "a situation of unbelief or misunderstanding is involved, an obtuseness toward God's revelation in Christ."[110] This concept of obtuseness, expressed either by the verb or by the noun, is found in the New Testament almost exclusively in contexts where the hardening of the Israelites is being referred to. The only exception seems to be Eph. 4:18.

In looking for parallels elsewhere, it appears that 2 Cor. 3:14 and Romans 11, in particular verses 7b-10 and 25, are closely related. In Rom. 11:8-10 Paul quotes two Old Testament proof-texts for this idea of hardening of the heart, namely Deut. 29:3 and Isa. 29:10. In an indirect

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[107]All instances are in Paul, five in 2 Corinthians (2:11; 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3) and one in Philippians (4:7).

[108]Elsewhere it occurs in Mark 6:52 and 8:17. The cognate **πώρωσις** is found only in Mark 3:5; Rom. 11:25; and Eph. 4:18.

[109]Louw and Nida, Subdomain 27.51 [Be Willing to Learn, John 12:40], 333.

[110]Stockhausen, 135.

way he answers the question of who hardened the Israelites,
a question to which there is no answer in 2 Corinthians 3.
The passage of Deut. 29:3 refers to God as giving them a
spirit of bewilderment, eyes so that they could not see and
ears so that they could not hear.[111]

Another question to which no answer is given in 2
Corinthians 3 is, "in what exactly does this dullness of
mind consist and how does it manifest itself?" An
intertextual reading, that is, a reading of 2 Corinthians 3
in the light of other passages in the Pauline corpus,
reveals that such a dullness of heart is basically ἀπιστία
(Rom. 11:23). This can also be inferred from the use of the
ἐν Χριστῷ formula in 2 Cor. 3:14 and is stated
explicitly in verse 16. In the light of 2 Cor. 3:17, it can
be described as the lack of the Holy Spirit. To have a
hardened heart, to have a veil over the heart, to lack
faith, to be without Christ, to be without the Spirit - all
these phrases are semantically parallel.

What comes as a surprise and turns out to be very
significant in the phrase τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ
ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει (verse
14) is that the veil is no longer on Moses, but rather on
the reading of Moses, and on the heart of the readers. John
Chrysostom had already called attention to the fact that

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[111]The parallelism between 2 Cor. 3:14 and Rom. 11:7-10
is further corroborated by the similarity between ἄχρι γὰρ
τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (2 Cor. 3:14) and ἕως τῆς
σήμερον ἡμέρας (Rom. 11:8).

Paul does not say that the veil remains on the writing, but rather "in the reading."[112] As Stockhausen has put it,

> since Moses, whom it originally covered, has become a book, logically the veil should now cover the books of Moses. Instead, it is the reading of the book by Israel that is veiled, and not the book itself, in 2 Cor 3:14, and the readers of the book whose understanding is veiled in 2 Cor 3:15.[113]

In which way is this switch from Moses to the reading of the books of Moses, and then to the readers of the books of Moses significant? In Paul's day the significance probably resided in this:

> If the veil of Moses still lay upon his book, no one in the contemporary scene could see it properly . . . . (Yet,) Paul is quite confident . . . . that he and his associates are well able to read Moses' book.[114]

At the time of Chrysostom this was important because it could be used as an argument against those who, assuming that the Bible was an obscure and veiled book, felt free to engage in all sorts or allegorizations.

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[112][Saint John] Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians: Homily VII - 2 Cor. III.7,8," in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, volume XII, edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), 312. The original reads as follows: οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν, Ἐν τοῖς γράμμασι μένει τὸ κάλυμμα, ἀλλ', Ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει. ἡ δὲ ἀνάγνωσις ἐνέργεια τῶν ἀναγινωσκόντων ἐστί. S. Joannis Chrysostomus, "In Epist. II Ad Cor. Homil. VII," In Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Omnium SS. Patrum, Doctorum, Scriptorumque Ecclesiasticorum, . . . qui ab Aeve Apostolico ad Tempora . . . Concilii Florentini (Ann. 1439) Floruerunt, Edited by Jacques Paul Migne, Series Graeca Prior, Volume 61 (Paris: 1862), p. 445.

[113]Stockhausen, 146.

[114]Stockhausen, 147.

In the contemporary scene, its significance lies in the fact that it calls attention to the importance of being the right kind of reader. Here, reader-response criticism[115] can be of help. Reader-response criticism insists that, in order to actualize a literary work one must be the right kind of reader, one must assume a specific role, the role of the implied reader.[116] This implied reader is the person who by accepting the pre-conditions of the text brings the potentialities of the text to actuality.[117] Unless the reader enters into the value system of the text, he will be unable to read it with understanding. In Paul's view, the old covenant can be read properly, that is, read with real understanding, only by those who have the right value system, that is, by those who, in Christ, as a result of the conversion operated by the Spirit, have the veil removed from their eyes. Terence J. Keegan explains:

> According to Paul the Jews are unable to read Moses. Why? Because their minds are veiled. They can read the words of the Pentateuch but they really cannot

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[115] In Terence J. Keegan's definition, <u>Interpreting the Bible: A Popular Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics</u> (New York: Paulist, 1985, 170, reader-response criticism is
   a methodology which maintains that the meanings of a text are the production of the individual reader. Arising ·in the 1960's, reader-response criticism shifts the perspective from the literary work as an achieved structure of meaning into an activity on the stage of a reader's mind.

[116] Ibid., 88.

[117] Ibid., 168.

appreciate them. They are unable to assume the role called forth from them by the text. Christians, however, can. Why? Because Christians have the Spirit . . . . Christians are being changed into God's likeness from one degree of glory to another. It is only by being changed into another being that Christians are capable of reading Moses with unveiled minds. The way reader-response criticism would express this idea is that Christians are capable of assuming the role called for by the text of the Pentateuch. Having been changed into God's likeness, they can become the reader of that text.[118]

It should be pointed out that such an emphasis on the implied reader is nothing new in the life of the church. In the early church, theologians such as Irenaeus and Tertullian already anticipated this principle. They did not use the term "implied reader," yet, in their struggle with unbelievers and heretics, they contended that the heretics had no right to the use the Scriptures against the church in their argumentation.[119] In their view, a valid interpretation depends on Christian faith, in the sense of accepting the regula fidei or creed accepted by the believing community.[120]

A further and related question is, "what does the veil prevent the reader from seeing?" No answer is provided by the text. Once again the reader is called upon to fill in the blanks. Some would say that the veil prevents the

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[118]Ibid., 89.

[119]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses 1.1.20; Tertullian, De Praescriptione Haereticorum, 15-18.

[120]Anthony C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980), 95.

reader from perceiving "that the period of the old covenant has passed."[121] Seen in the light of verse 18 and 2 Cor. 4:6, it could also be the image or the glory of the Lord on the face of Jesus Christ.

Much more important than the question of what the veil prevents the reader from seeing, at least from the viewpoint of what the text explicitly says, is the possibility of unveiling, of the removal of the veil. Paul asserts that the veil is rendered ineffective or abolished in Christ.[122] This ἐν Χριστῷ phrase is somewhat vague, and perhaps deliberately so. A. J. M. Wedderburn disputes the view that "in Christ" is a formula that is used in one way only in Paul's writings. In his view, it is a rather characteristic, and versatile, phrase of Paul's. The sense of the phrase will vary from instance to instance, and the decision is usually reached on the basis of an overall interpretation of Paul's theology into which the interpretation of the ἐν phrase is then fitted.[123] Is it possible to indicate in more precise terms what this "in Christ" of 2 Cor. 3:14 entails? Peter Richardson takes it

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[121]This is the view of Westerholm, "Letter and Spirit," p. 247, note 33.

[122]I am reading μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον, in verse 14, as an attributive participle referring back to τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα.

[123]A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases 'in Christ' and 'with Christ,'" Journal for the Study of the New Testament 25 (1985): 87.

as indicating the means whereby the veil is removed, as well as a pointer to the Christian community as the place where the unveiling takes place.[124]   On the basis of what follows in verse 16, the reader may conclude that to say that the veil is abolished in Christ is equivalent to saying that the veil is removed whenever someone turns to the Lord, the Spirit.

This raises two questions: 1. Is Paul saying that Christ can be found in "Moses," that is, in the old covenant, if only it is read by an unveiled reader, by a reader "in Christ?" 2. What exactly is the role of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutics?

Paul gives no explicit answer to either of these questions. Yet, regarding the first question, the tenor of the text suggests that this is, indeed, the case. Our observation that Paul does not disparage the Scriptures points in the same direction. The critical reader, the reader who has access to Paul's remaining letters, can find endorsement for this view in Paul's handling of, to give just two related examples, Gen. 15:6 in Rom. 4:3,9 and in Gal. 3:6. It is no overstatement to say that the assertion, ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί (2 Cor. 1:20), applies also to the promises that are found in the books of Moses.

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[124]Peter Richardson, "Spirit and Letter: A Foundation for Hermeneutics," The Evangelical Quarterly 45 (1973): 215.

Paul's hermeneutical principle spelled out in the latter part of verse 14 and in verse 16, as well as his handling of Scripture in general and in 2 Corinthians 3, indicates that he is clearly operating with a so-called "hermeneutical circle."[125] In other words, he reads the old covenant "in Christ," that is, with unveiled eyes, and then he finds Christ in the old covenant. His starting point is his being in Christ. He then goes to the old covenant and finds Christ there. His use of Exodus 34 in 2 Corinthians 3 is a case in point. He does not start with an exegesis of Exodus 34. His starting point is Christ and the apostolic ministry of Christ. He can use Exodus 34 to substantiate his view only because he has already interpreted it "in Christ." This is nowhere more evident than in 2 Cor. 3:10. It is from the viewpoint of the surpassing glory of the new covenant, that is, in Christ, that the glory of the old covenant is οὐ δεδόξασται.

One question remains: What is the role of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutics? This is obviously a question that goes far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet, it is not inappropriate to ask if 2 Corinthians 3 gives a clue in this regard. It appears that 2 Corinthians 3 corroborates the view of those who hold that here we should strike the middle course. It is neither that the work of the Holy Spirit is irrelevant, nor that it is the only thing that

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[125]Koch, Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums, 339.

matters. Paul refers both to reading, which is a process in which human rationality is involved, and to the Holy Spirit. Anthony C. Thiselton's comments are very appropriate:

> It in no way diminishes the crucial importance of the role of the Holy Spirit to say that the Spirit works **through** the normal processes of human understanding, and neither independently of them nor contrary to them. . . . . The Holy Spirit does not bypass human rationality, or make questions about the nature of human language irrelevant.[126]

The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for knowledge of grammar and reading. His role is to form the implied reader, that is, the reader that is called for by the text and is "congenial" to the text.

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[126]Thiselton, <u>The Two Horizons</u>, 90, 91.

CHAPTER IV

PROBING THE RHETORICAL DIMENSION OF

2 CORINTHIANS 3

A text or a discourse is not only a texture of signs used to convey information or to express meaning, but it is also an instrument to get things done. A discourse usually has a function, a pragmatic or rhetorical dimension. People use language to influence their environment, to name it and to change it. There is power in words.[1]

This could almost go without saying in the case of the Biblical authors, particularly the authors of the New Testament epistles.[2] It needs to be stressed, though, because Biblical scholars tend to emphasize the semantic dimension of the text to the exclusion of its pragmatic

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[1] Jeffrey A. Crafton observes that there is a sort of verbal magic involved in symbol use, for through language we are able to affect the world. We speak, and things change. Crafton points to Kenneth Burke, who drew a parallel between magic and rhetoric. Magic is the attempt to 'induce motion in things,' while rhetoric is the power to 'induce action in people.' Jeffrey A. Crafton, The Agency of the Apostle: A Dramatistic Analysis of Paul's Responses to Conflict in 2 Corinthians (Sheffield: University Press, 1991), 29.

[2] John explicitly states that he wrote ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε (John 20:31). Paul's reasons for writing to the Corinthian church are spelled out in passages like 1 Cor. 4:14; 5:11; 9:15; 2 Cor. 2:1-4,9; 13:10.

dimension. As Jan Lambrecht puts it,

> a content-oriented reading of the Bible neglects too
> much its faith argumentative character. Biblical
> language is provocative, apologetic, missionary,
> persuasive. That language is meant to be an instrument
> of influence on others.[3]

Thus, although scholars sometimes give the impression
that texts exist only to convey meaning, the truth of the
matter is that more often than not the syntactic/semantic
dimension of a text or discourse stands in the service of
pragmatics. In other words, a text or discourse is
structured in a meaningful way in order to accomplish some
end.

Speech-act Theory

Words are used to do things. People in the ancient
world were well aware of this. They understood language
primarily as a matter of pragmatics or rhetoric. They "did
not view language as a way of conveying meaning; they looked
upon language as power."[4] Since this dimension of human
language had been almost entirely forgotten (at least it was
not reflected upon for many years in scholarly circles),
sooner or later it had to be reclaimed. It was the British
philosopher of language John Langshaw Austin who brought
this quite self-evident truth to the attention of modern

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[3] Jan Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New
Testament," Bijdragen 50 (1989): 244.

[4] Robert M. Fowler, Let the Reader Understand: Reader-
Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark (Minneapolis:
Fortress Press, 1991), 49.

scholarship.[5]

Austin reacted against the view of philosophers assuming more or less as a matter of course "that the sole business, the sole interesting business, of any utterance - that is, of anything we say - is to be true or at least false."[6] In his view, language is used to do many different things. It may serve to report, describe, or otherwise make certain facts apparent, but this rather simple operation represents only one form of communication.[7] Some statements are intended "not to report facts but to influence people in this way or that."[8] Others are used to actually accomplish something. For example, if, in the context of a wedding, a man says, "I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife," he is **doing** something rather than merely **saying** something. He is not reporting on a marriage; he is indulging in it. Austin labeled utterances like that as "performative utterances."[9]

Austin's seminal work was carried on by others,

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[5]Austin (1911-1960) is best known by his book How to Do Things with Words (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), based on a series of lectures held at Harvard University in 1955 and published posthumously in 1962.

[6]J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," in Philosophical Papers, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, second edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 233.

[7]Such statements were labeled by Austin as "constatives." Austin, How to Do Things with Words, 3.

[8]Austin, "Performative Utterances," 234.

[9]Ibid., 235.

especially John R. Searle,[10] and is known today as speech-
act theory. According to this theory, there are three
components of the total speech act: the locutionary act, the
illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. The
locutionary act "is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the
traditional sense."[11] The illocutionary act is what the
speaker/writer does in saying/writing something, and the
perlocutionary act is "what we bring about or achieve by
saying something, such as convincing, persuading."[12]

For our purposes, what is most significant is the
distinction between the **meaning** of what we say and the **force**
of what we say, between meaning in the traditional sense
(the locutionary act) and the added components of illocution
and perlocution. The difference can be perceived in a
statement like this: "I understand what you are saying, but
I don't understand why you are saying it." The "I
understand **what** you are saying" refers to the meaning the
words and phrases have within the language system. The "I
don't understand **why** you are saying it" has to do with the

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[10]John R. Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the
Philosophy of Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1969).

[11]Austin, How to Do Things with Words, 109.

[12]Ibid. J. G. du Plessis ["Speech Act Theory and New
Testament Interpretation with Special Reference to G. N.
Leech's Pragmatic Principles," in Text and Interpretation:
New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament, ed. P.
J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 131]
notes that "we may also identify the intended perlocution,"
although this is a distinction not made by Austin.

purpose of the communication and the effects of the

utterance as communication, that is, its pragmatic.[13]

In trying to distinguish between illocutionary act and

perlocutionary act, it may be said that the illocution has

to do with the speaker's intention and that the perlocution

refers to the action or actions of the addressee.[14] In

other words, the illocution is what the text 'counts as' for

the speaker, whereas the perlocution is what the text or

discourse 'counts as' from the viewpoint of the reader or

listener.[15] Whenever the hearer/reader fails to perceive

why something is being said, there is a breakdown in

communication, not on the semantic level, but on the

pragmatic level. Technically this is described as the lack

of illocutionary uptake. As Kevin J. Vanhoozer has put it,

"illocutionary uptake involves understanding not merely the

meaning of a sentence but the force with which that meaning

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[13]Du Plessis, 131. The term "pragmatic" is employed somewhat gererally to designate the function of language as part of a larger social system. Joseph J. Schaller, "Performative Language Theory: An Exercise in the Analysis of Ritual," Worship 62 (1988): 419, note 12.

[14]Du Plessis, 131.

[15]This description of "illocutionary force" and "perlocutionary force" in terms of what the discourse 'counts as' is expounded by James W. Voelz in "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going?," in Light for Our World: Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, ed. John W. Klotz (St. Louis, Concordia Seminary, 1989), page 254, note 28.

is to be taken."[16]

As can be observed, speech-act theory operates on the
assumption that there is a pragmatic intentionality inherent
in any utterance. This can be conceived of as part of
authorial intentionality, inasmuch as the author is the one
who tries to achieve something by means of his discourse.
Yet, in order to avoid misunderstandings, it must be pointed
out that, if and whenever the author himself is not
available or does not elaborate on the illocutionary force
of his discourse, the "intention" will always be something
perceived by the reader/hearer. The intention is embedded
in the text and can be perceived by the reader in things
like the selection of signs/signifiers, the genre used, the
way the text is structured, and so on. The reader is
expected to decode the illocutionary force of the text, as
much as he is expected to decode the locutionary force. The
role of the reader at this point is as important as it is in
dealing with the sense of a text.

Rhetorical Criticism

In the field of New Testament studies, the counterpart
of speech-act theory is rhetorical criticism.[17] Rhetorical

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[16]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical
Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms,"
in Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon, ed. Donald A. Carson
and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 89.

[17]Both speech-act theory and rhetorical criticism fall
into the category of what text-linguists call pragmatics.

criticism, too, is interested in the effect of language-in-use and is based on the assumption that all language is rhetorical.

Rhetorical criticism as a reading strategy applied to the New Testament may appear to be a new discipline, but it is more accurate to say that rhetoric is undergoing a renaissance of attention among biblical interpreters. This means that prior to the twentieth century it was not at all uncommon to read the New Testament from a rhetorical perspective. Particularly in the sixteenth century interpreters like Philip Melanchthon, John Calvin, among others, interpreted the Bible in the light of the so-called studia humanitatis.

Of the interpreters from the time of the Reformation, nobody surpassed Melanchthon in the application of the principles of classical rhetoric and dialectics to Biblical interpretation. He wrote at least three books on the subject of rhetoric,[18] and his 1532 commentary on Romans is based on the assumption that Paul penned that letter following the rules of rhetoric.[19]

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[18]De Rhetorica libri tres (1519), Institutiones Rhetoricae (1521), and Elementorum Rhetorices libri duo (1531). Carl Joachim Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 82 (1991), 1.

[19]Rolf Schaefer, "Melanchthons Hermeneutik im Roemerbrief-Kommentar von 1532," Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche 60 (1963), 217. Melanchthon broke the Epistle to the Romans up into four sections or "books," of which the first one (Rom. 1:8-5:11) was considered by him as the most

Noteworthy in Melanchthon is that he did not stick to the rules laid down in the ancient manuals on rhetoric, but rather supplemented and expanded them as he saw fit.[20] The ancient manuals acknowledged only three species of rhetoric, namely, judicial, deliberative, and epideictic.[21] Since the Epistle to the Romans did not fit neatly into any of these categories, Melanchthon came up with a fourth species of rhetoric, namely, the genus didaskalikon, an offshoot of epideictic or demonstrative rhetoric which is used for didactic purposes. Melanchthon placed the Letter to the Romans into this category.

With regard to 2 Corinthians, the last and probably

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important. See Schaefer, 220-221.

[20] In the words of Carl Joachim Classen, wie sich die Regeln der Theorie in der Antike zunaechst aus der Praxis entwickelten und von den grossen Praktikern souveraen variiert wurden . . . . , so bedient sich Melanchthon der Vorschriften nicht nur mit grosszuegiger Ueberlegenheit, sondern **ergaenzt und erweitert sie**, soweit es ihm hilfreich und nuetzlich erscheint." Classen, 26 (emphasis added).

[21] As Aristotle explains, in Rhetoric 1.3, the elements of judicial or forensic speaking were accusation and defence, and the aim of judicial pleaders concerned justice and injustice. As for the deliberative species, the elements were exhortation and dissuasion, and the aim of the deliberative speaker concerned advantage and injury. The elements of an epideictic speech were praise and blame, and the aim of those who praised and blamed concerned honor and dishonor. Lane Cooper, The Rhetoric of Aristotle: An Expanded Translation with Supplementary Examples for Students of Composition and Public Speaking (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 18-19. In practice, however, "a given speech might contain all six forms of argumentation at given junctures, depending on the circumstances." Burton L. Mack, Rhetoric and the New Testament (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 34.

major investigation of its rhetorical dimension was done by
Carl Friedrich Georg Heinrici in his commentary published in
1887.[22]

Shortly after the turn of the century the interest in
rhetorical analysis faded out, to be revived only in the
latter part of the twentieth century.[23] In Old Testament
studies the rise of the rhetorical-critical perspective is
associated with James Muilenburg, whose 1968 presidential
address to the Society of Biblical Literature opened up a
whole new field of investigation.[24] In the area of the New

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[22]Carl Friedrich Georg Heinrici, Das zweite
Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus an die Korinther (Berlin:
Wilhelm Hertz, 1887).

[23]To no surprise, this decline of concern for the
rhetorical dimension of New Testament texts was bound up
with the depreciation of rhetoric in general. In an essay
written in 1963 ["Language is Sermonic," in Language is
Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric, ed.
Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T.
Eubanks (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,
1970), 201-225] Richard M. Weaver explains what happened.
He points out that in the nineteenth century rhetoric had
been regarded as the most important humanistic discipline
taught in the universities. Yet, with the rise of
scientific or positivistic thinking it came to be believed
that to think validly was to think scientifically, and that
science had nothing to do with emotional and subjective
components. After all, science must be objective, faithful
to what is out there in the public domain and conformable to
the processes of reason. Since rhetoric appeals not only to
man's reason but also to his emotions, and since "a speech
intended to persuade achieves little unless it takes into
account how men are reacting subjectively to their hopes and
fears and their special circumstances," rhetoric passed
"from a status in which it was regarded as of questionable
worth to a still lower one in which it was positively
condemned." (Ibid., 205)

[24]James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," Journal
of Biblical Literature 88 (1969): 1-18.

Testament studies, the new perspective is associated with names like those of George A. Kennedy, Hans-Dieter Betz and others.[25]

This renewed interest in rhetorical studies in New Testament circles is due to several factors. In Bernard C. Lategan's view, it was and still is stimulated from at least two sources, namely, the rediscovery and re-evaluation of the rhetoric of classical antiquity, and developments in modern literary theory and especially work relating to the pragmatic dimension of texts.[26]

Some Distinctions and Clarifications

Before moving into a rhetorical analysis of 2 Corinthians 3, it is important to establish some distinctions and to clarify some concepts.

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between rhetoric, especially classical rhetoric, and rhetorical criticism. In the ancient world, rhetoric was understood broadly as the art of persuasion. Or, put in different words, "rhetoric has to do with the way in which language is

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[25]Kennedy published a series of books on classical rhetoric in the 1960s. He is best known for his New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Hans-Dieter Betz is acclaimed for his commentary on Galatians in the Hermeneia Series published in 1979.

[26]Bernard C. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending his Apostleship in Galatians? The Function of Galatians 1.11-12 and 2.19-20 in the Development of Paul's Argument." New Testament Studies 34 (1988): 412.

used to be persuasive."[27] The goal of ancient rhetoric was
to teach how to convince and to persuade. It was designed
to help the speaker/writer to produce a persuasive
discourse. As for rhetorical criticism, its purpose is
descriptive and analytical. It is the hearer/reader's
attempt to discover the persuasive dimension of a text as a
finished product. In other words, rhetorical criticism is
analysis carried out from the viewpoint of the reader. It
is a reading strategy.

Another important observation is that rhetorical
criticism is not a monolithic system, for there are
different brands or versions of rhetorical criticism.[28]
While some critics, like Kennedy, are more interested in
classifying texts according to the different species

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[27]Ibid., 415.

[28]This should come as no surprise, given the fact that
there were also different versions of rhetorical theory in
the ancient world. For ancient Greek an Roman theorists,
rhetoric was a very flexible art. Quintilian, for instance,
claims that an orator must be very flexible when adapting
rhetorical rules to different situations. In his Institutio
Oratoria, Book II.xiii.1-2 [The Institutio Oratoria of
Quintilian, The Loeb Classical Library, 4 volumes,
translated by H. E. Butler (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons,
1933), volume 1, p. 289-91] he writes:

> Let no one however demand from me a rigid code of rules
> such as most authors of textbooks have laid down . . . .
> which some speakers follow as though they had no choice
> but to regard them as orders and as if it were a crime
> to take any other line. If the whole of rhetoric could
> be thus embodied in one compact code, it would be an
> easy task of little compass: but most rules are liable
> to be altered by the nature of the case, circumstances
> of time and place, and by hard necessity itself.
> Consequently the all-important gift for an orator is a
> wise adaptability . . . .

(judicial, deliberative, epideictic), others, like Burton
Mack, focus on the analysis of patterns of argumentation.
These different versions or emphases are not necessarily at
odds with each other, but may be described as complementary.
After all, texts are complex phenomena, and not every text
will lend itself to the same type of analysis. As C.
Clifton Black II has it, "while rhetorical models may
function as heuristic guides, particular texts often resist
preset patterns."[29] The corollary of this is that the text
is king, and that "rhetorical criticism should not be made
into a new kind of form-critical strait jacket into which
letters should be forced."[30]

The Rhetorical Situation

An important move in rhetorical criticism,
particularly in the so-called new rhetoric,[31] is the attempt
to determine the rhetorical situation. Rhetorical
situation, in the classical definition of Lloyd F. Bitzer,

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[29]C. Clifton Black II, "Keeping up with Recent Studies -
XVI. Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," The
Expository Times 100 (1988-89): 255.

[30]Frank Witt Hughes, "The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians,"
in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. Raymond F. Collins
(Leuven: University Press, 1990), 108.

[31]The New Rhetoric is closely connected with the names
of Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. In their book,
The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame,
IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), originally
written in French, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca "were
relentless in their definition and discussion of rhetorical
strategies argumentation." Mack, 14. (Emphasis added.)

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a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations
presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be
completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced
into the situation, can so constrain human decision or
action as to bring about the significant modification
of the exigence.[32]

Simply put, the rhetorical situation is the situation
in which the hearer/reader finds himself and which calls for
the intervention of the speaker/writer. The situation
controls the rhetorical response in the same sense that the
question controls the answer. This notion that there can be
no rhetorical analysis without at least an implicit analysis
of the rhetorical situation goes back to Aristotle.
Aristotle states that the three kinds of rhetoric, namely,
forensic, deliberative, and epideictic correspond to the
three kinds of hearers to which speeches are addressed.[33]
In other words, the rhetorical situation determines the form
and content of the discourse.

Rhetorical situation is roughly equivalent to extra-
textual context of the discourse. Yet, the two are not
identical. The rhetorical situation, as understood in
rhetorical criticism, is not something to be found behind
the text, but is the situation revealed by the text. While
a purely historical analysis, which envisages the text as a
window into historical realities, raises the question of the

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[32]Quoted in Kennedy, _New Testament Interpretation
Through Rhetorical Criticism_, 35.

[33]_Rhetoric_ 1.3. Cooper, 16-17.

original, historical, real readers of the real author,
rhetorical criticism pays attention to the rhetorical
situation revealed by the text. It focuses on "the text as
a more or less independent argumentative entity. It is
interested in the situation of the text for the sake of
argumentation."[34] In other words, rhetorical criticism
gives precedence to the information which the text as such
lets the reader assume about the author's view of the
addressees.

This may sound strange, yet it follows from the
recognition that "the reader, or audience, is a construction
of the author and must be recognized as such."[35] The
contemporary reader has no access to the ancient author's
audience, or, for that matter, to the historical situation,
except for what he is able find in the text. The rhetorical
situation is always the situation as the author perceived it
and which is now encoded in the text.[36] This does not mean
that the Corinthians were a figment of Paul's imagination

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[34]Lauri Thuren, _The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions_ (Abo: Academy Press, 1990), 55.

[35]Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship?," 414.

[36]Elisabeth Shuessler Fiorenza ("Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," _New Testament Studies_ 33 [1987]: 388) indicates that
rhetorical criticism must distinguish between the
historical argumentative situation, the implied or
inscribed rhetorical situation as well as the rhetorical
situation of contemporary interpretations.
What concerns us here is primarily the implied or
inscribed rhetorical situation.

and not persons of flesh and blood, or that the apostle was not faced with a real problem at Corinth. What it means is that, as Lategan explains,

> the exegete should always be aware that such an historical identification depends on an intermediate step, that is, on a reconstruction of Paul's construct of his audience.[37]

It also means that the transition from the world of the text to the real world demands a separate move. The world of the text, of which the rhetorical situation is a part, may coincide with the real world, although it is not always easy to determine that this is the case.[38]

Is 2 Corinthians 3 aimed at Paul's Opponents?

This whole discussion has its bearing on the vexing question of Paul's so-called 'opponents' in Corinth. It is no secret that scholars have spent much effort in trying to reconstruct the historical situation that prompted Paul to write 2 Corinthians 3. The identity of Paul's opponents in particular has always haunted interpreters.[39] There are

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[37] Ibid.

[38] It is interesting to observe that, while scholarly readers of the Gospels are prone to point out that "the world of the text" does not coincide with "the world of Jesus," scholarly readers of Paul's epistles tend to muddle the difference between "the world of the text" and "the real world out there."

[39] Some of the different opinions are listed in John J. Gunther, St. Paul's Opponents and their Background (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 1. These are some of the suggestions: Wandering Jewish Preachers (H. Windisch), Jewish Christian Gnostics (R. Bultmann), Pneumatic-libertine Gnostics (A. Schlatter), Gnostics (J. Schniewind), Hellenistic Jewish

even those who go as far as Mathias Rissi in asserting that

it is impossible to understand 2 Corinthians 3 unless it can

be established what kind of opposition Paul was facing in

Corinth.[40] Should this be true, then nobody could have

properly read 2 Corinthians 3 before the rise of historical

criticism in modern times. And since there is no agreement

on the identity of Paul's 'opponents' this would make it

almost impossible to understand that chapter. The fact is

that 2 Corinthians 3 has had its impact on readers who never

had a single clue of the identity of Paul's opponents. This

is so because there is no need to move beyond or behind the

text, for the rhetorical situation is embedded in the text

itself. The text reveals its context, and it is the purpose

of rhetorical criticism to determine how the text functions

Christians (G. Bornkamm, D. Georgi, H. D. Betz), Palestinian
Jewish Christian Gnostics (W. G. Kuemmel), Jerusalem
Judaizers (F. C. Baur, E. Kaesemann, C. K. Barrett). As
Carol K. Stockhausen observes, "there are nearly as many
theories about the identity of Paul's opponents as there are
books and articles on the subject." Carol Kern Stockhausen,
Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The
Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3,1-4,6 (Rome: Pontificio
Istituto Biblico, 1989) 7, note 17. The proposals fall into
two major categories: Jewish or Gnostic.

[40]Rissi says that "es unmoeglich ist, den Brief zu
verstehen ohne den Charakter der Gegnerschaft des Apostels
in Korinth zu kennen." Mathias Rissi, Studien zum zweiten
Korintherbrief (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1969), 7. Rissi's
project founders not only because all we have is the text,
but also because, as G. B. Caird observes, we cannot solve
the problem of whether Paul is being descriptive, that is,
reproducing his opponents' views, or evaluative, that is,
mainly depicting his reactions to their views. G. B. Caird,
The Language and Imagery of the Bible (Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1980), 8.

as such, for any reader in any age.

Closely related to the quest for the identity of Paul's opponents in Corinth is the view that in 2 Corinthians 3 Paul is carrying on a polemic with those opponents. The traditional view on this topic is voiced by Ralph P. Martin in his gloss on ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor. 3:5):

> We cannot avoid concluding that this remark is polemically slanted and <u>addressed to Paul's adversaries</u> who made it their boast that they were the 'well-endowed ones', with pneumatic gifts and imposing credentials to support their claim.[41]

Others are more careful, as is the case with Victor P. Furnish and Richard B. Hays. Furnish states that "these paragraphs [3:7-18] are most accurately described as theological exposition with a polemical edge."[42] Hays declares that "the third chapter of 2 Corinthians is framed by Paul's thinly veiled counteraccusations that his opponents are 'hucksters' (2:17) who 'adulterate the word of God.'"[43]

The opposite view is maintained by G. Dautzenberg, who disputes the view that it is possible to explain 2 Cor. 2:14-

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[41]Ralph P. Martin, <u>2 Corinthians</u>, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986), 53. (Emphasis added.)

[42]Victor Paul Furnish, <u>II Corinthians</u>, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 243.

[43]Richard B. Hays, <u>Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul</u> (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 126.

7:4 on the basis of an alleged polemic with

opponents.[44] He acknowledges that the text presents some

allusions to other missionaries or opponents and their

behavior (2 Cor. 2:17a; 3:1b), but he concludes that this

evidence is insufficient to allow one to postulate a

situation of fierce polemics, let alone to delineate the

historical and theological profile of the 'opponents.' G.

Dautzenberg winds up saying that

> Recht betrachtet stehen diese Anspielungen nur im Dienst
> der positiven Abgrenzung des Paulus und seiner
> ικανότης von allen moeglichen Konkurrenten.[45]

Similar to this is Thomas R. Schreiner's view:

> To read Paul's defense of his ministry as a response to
> opponents is to practice what is called mirror reading.
> In this case one could argue that since Paul was
> defending his integrity, some opponents must have
> been questioning it; . . . . Paul's sustained defense of
> himself was intended to amplify his argument, and it
> does not necessarily suggest that he was responding to
> opponents.[46]

It appears that Hays is on the right track when he

hints at the possibility that "Paul's juxtaposition of

himself and Moses is of his own devising, spontaneously

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[44]G. Dautzenberg, "Motive der Selbstdarstellung des
Paulus in 2 Kor 2,14-7,4," in L'Apotre Paul: Personnalite,
Style et Conception du Ministere, ed. A. Vanhoye (Leuven:
University Press, 1986), 158.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 44-45.

generated out of rhetorical momentum."[47] Hays adds, though,
that we lack evidence that this is so. In fact, there is no
evidence either way, that is, one cannot be one hundred per
cent sure that Paul is deliberately engaging in polemics
with opponents that are active in the Corinthian church nor
that his discourse is spontaneously generated out of
rhetorical momentum and nothing else. The only way to
overcome this dilemma is to focus on the rhetorical
situation encoded in the text, which allows the conclusion
that polemics is part of the picture but not the whole
picture.

What scholars concerned about the polemical edge of 2
Corinthians 3 tend to miss is precisely that aspect which
rhetorical criticism helps to reveal, namely, that Paul is
addressing the Corinthian church and that the so-called
opponents, whoever they are, are only part of the
background. Much more important than the identity of Paul's
opponents, which entails stepping beyond or behind the text,
is the investigation of the force of the text. In other
words, our primary task should be to explore, on the basis
of the structure and content of the text, where Paul is
leading his readers, what kind of new perspective he is
trying to open up for them, and not to attempt to establish

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[47]Hays, "Echoes of Scripture," 126. Hays' observation
is important in view of Georgi's thesis that 2 Cor. 3:7-18
is the opponents' interpretation of Exodus 34, into which
Paul has interpolated his own critical remarks.

against what kind of opponents he was reacting, if at all.

Rhetorical Analysis and 2 Corinthians

As we approach the task of analyzing the rhetorical
dimension of the text as such, we have to point out first of
all that it lies beyond the scope of this investigation to
come up with a complete and detailed rhetorical description
of 2 Corinthians as a whole. The purpose of this study is
to probe the rhetorical dimension of chapter three. Yet,
since chapter three is only a part of a larger whole, one
cannot simply evade the question of the letter as a whole.

The first aspect to be determined is the species of
the epistle. It could be judicial, deliberative, or
epideictic.[48] According to Kennedy, "second Corinthians . .
. . provides the most extended piece of judicial rhetoric in
the New Testament."[49] This conclusion is corroborated by
countless scholars who, like Stephen B. Heiny, describe 2
Corinthians, in particular chapters 1-7, as "an apologia, a
defense not so much of Paul the person but of Paul the

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[48]George A. Kennedy explains that
the species is judicial when the author is seeking to
persuade the audience to make a judgment about events
occurring in the past; it is deliberative when he seeks
to persuade them to take some action in the future; it
is epideictic when he seeks to persuade them to hold or
reaffirm some point of view in the present, as when he
celebrates or denounces some person or some quality.
(Kennedy,19)

[49]Kennedy, 86. "Second Corinthians . . . . is largely
judicial except for chapters 8 and 9, which are
deliberative." Ibid., 87.

apostle and an interpretation of apostleship that supports
this defense."[50]

Having defined 2 Corinthians 1-7 as judicial, Kennedy
outlines this part of the letter as follows:

1:1-2   - a relatively simple salutation;

1:3-8   - a proem which is intended to reveal his
          (Paul's) goodwill toward them (the
          Corinthians) and secure their goodwill toward
          him;

1:8-2:13 - a narration;

2:14-17 - the proposition and a partition of the
          elements which will provide his proof;

3:1-6:13 - the proof, the "working out" of the
          headings of 2:17;

6:14-7:1 - an apparent interpolation;

7:2-16   - an epilogue.[51]

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[50]Stephen B. Heiny, "2 Corinthians 2:14-4:6: The Motive
for Metaphor," in SBL 1987 Seminar Papers, ed. Kent Harold
Richards (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 17.

[51]Kennedy, 87-89. In Kennedy's view the letter is
rhetorically complete at this point. What follows in
chapters 8 and 9 appears to be "a complete rhetorical unit
of the deliberative species." Ibid., 91. As for 2
Corinthians 10-13, its rhetorical species is "clearly
judicial." Ibid., 93. Kennedy's outline of 2 Cor. 1-7
matches with his description of a judicial speech:
    A judicial speech usually begins with a proem or
    exordium which seeks to obtain the attention of the
    audience and goodwill or sympathy toward the speaker.
    It then proceeds to a narration of the facts, or
    background information, and states the proposition which
    the speaker wishes to prove, often with a partition of
    it into separate headings. The speaker then presents
    his arguments in the proof, followed by a refutation of

Such an outline is certainly debatable. For instance, not everybody would agree that the whole section from 1:8 to 2:13 qualifies as a narration. Yet, some paragraphs of this section, in particular verses 12-21, can be described as a narration of the facts, for they provide background information the purpose of which is to justify Paul's course of action. For our purposes, however, it is important to notice that, in Kennedy's outline, chapter 3 is part of the probatio or proof. In other words, in this section Paul is working out his proposition of 2 Cor. 2:14-17.

A different outline can be found in Heinrici's 1887 commentary on 2 Corinthians. Oddly enough, Heinrici does not subject the whole letter to a rhetorical investigation. His rhetorical analysis proper sets in only with chapter 3. He describes the first seven chapters as "Paul's experiences and resolutions; the new covenant and the apostolate." The first two chapters comprise "Paul's experiences and resolutions." "The new covenant and the apostolate" is the subject of chapter 3 and the following, a section which is also titled "how Paul appraises, substantiates, and carries out his ministry."

Heinrici takes his clue from Mosheim who had remarked

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opposing views; here he may incorporate what was called a digression, often a relevant examination of motivations or attendant circumstances. Finally comes an epilogue or peroration, which summarizes the argument and seeks to arouse the emotions of the audience to take action or make judgment. (Ibid., 23-24. Emphasis by the author)

that in the arrangement of chapters 3-5 Paul imitates the
orators.[52] He does not use language like "judicial
species," but he describes 3:1-7:4 as "the apologetic
section."[53] He outlines chapters 3-7 as follows:

  3:1-6 - the introduction (προοίμιον, principium or

    insinuatio);

  3:6 - the theme or subject matter (πρόθεσις);

  3:7-18 - the proof (πίστις, ἀπόδειξις,

    argumentatio or confirmatio);

  4:1-15 - the refutation (λύσις, ἀνασκευή,

    refutatio);

  4:16-5:21 - the digression (egressus in causa);

  6:1-7:4 - the epilogue.[54]

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[52]Heinrici quotes Mosheim:
Er faengt in einem Eingange an, worin er sich Gunst
bei seinen Lesern zu verschaffen sucht. Er traegt den
Hauptsatz vor und fuehrt ihn mit seinen Gruenden aus.
Er wendet sich zu den Einwuerfen und giebt durch deren
Widerlegung der erwiesenen Wahrheit mehr Gewicht. Er
haengt endlich den ganzen Nutzen an und zeigt, was
fuer Trost und Pflicht in der ausgefuehrten Lehre
liegen. So pflegen es die Redner zu machen. (152)

[53]Ibid., 152.

[54]Heinrici's text, in our own translation, runs as
follows:
The introduction (προοίμιον, principium or
insinuatio) has to do with the apostle as a person,
inasmuch as it describes him vis-a-vis his opponents as
the bearer of the saving message of the new covenant
commissioned by God (3:1-6). The axiomatic description
of the essence of the covenant furnishes the theme (the
πρόθεσις) for the proof (πίστις, ἀπόδειξις,
argumentatio or confirmatio) which substantiates the
truth he has just introduced (3:7-18). This, in turn,
is followed by the rejection of rival interpretations of
the value of his teaching and the scope of his authority
(λύσις, ἀνασκευή, refutatio). On top of this he

Also in this analysis chapter 3 is mainly part of the
probatio or proof.

It is readily apparent that both Heinrici and Kennedy
assume that Paul was in some sense familiar with the
rhetorical principles formulated by the Greeks and then
taken over and further developed by the Romans. This was
probably the case, for Greek education, which consisted of
three successive stages: grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy,
had become universal in the Roman empire.[55] Yet, even if it
could be established that Paul had not been formally trained
in what we know as classical Rhetoric, this would not yet
mean that rhetorical theory is of no avail in reading Paul.
For, as Kennedy explains, rhetoric is "a universal
phenomenon which is conditioned by basic workings of the
human mind and heart and by the nature of all human
society."[56] On the other hand, the suspicion that Paul was
not as familiar with rhetorical rules as it is often assumed

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points to the inner power of the saving message
proclaimed by him, which, compared to the topics he had
presented before, is done in a summarizing fashion
(4:16-5:21. Egressus in causa. Quintil. inst. 3,9).
He closes with a very affectionate epilogue, in which
the worth and the moral ἦθος of the writer are
forcefully and emphatically highlighted (6:1-7:4). (152-
153)

[55]Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New
Testament," 239.

[56]Kennedy, 10. This opinion is shared by Classen,
"Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," 2-3: "Das Instrumentarium
der griechisch-roemischen Rhetorik kann mit Gewinn zur
Analyse jedes geschriebenen oder gesprochenen Textes
verwendet werden."

should serve as a reminder that one should proceed with caution, lest by trying to force Paul's letters into a preset pattern one end up overinterpreting him. Outlines like those of Heinrici and Kennedy come close to such an overinterpretation. As Carl Joachim Classen observes, the fact that different parts of the text fit into the pattern outlined in this or that Greek or Roman manual of rhetoric does not warrant the conclusion that all the elements of the outline will be found in that particular text. In other words, "wo ein exordium, eine confirmatio und eine peroratio vorkommen, muss nicht auch eine narratio zu finden sein."[57] This is the more so if one keeps in mind these three factors: a. Paul writes letters and not speeches; b. there was flexibility both in the formulation of the rules of rhetoric as well as in their application; c. one of the key rhetorical principles was the dissimulatio artis, namely, the challenge to camouflage the fact that the praecepta were being followed at all, particularly in the area of the dispositio and the elocutio.[58]

The Rhetoric of 2 Corinthians 3

The use of the first person plural

In analyzing the rhetoric of 2 Corinthians, one aspect

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[57]Classen, 28.

[58]Classen points out that "die deutlich erkennbare Verwendung der Regeln [wirkte] als Zeichen mangelnder Erfahrung oder Faehigkeit." Classen, 31.

that needs to be considered is the use of the first person
plural throughout the pericope. Here what matters is not so
much the meaning and referent of "we", but rather the
presumable reason and the effect of this use.

The first person plural in 2 Corinthians 3 is
particularly significant in view of the fact that 2 Cor.
1:23-2:13 is phrased for the most part in the first person
singular.

How is this switch to the plural to be interpreted?
One way of taking it is to regard it as an attempt by the
author to focus attention away from himself toward himself
and his associates, or toward apostles in general, or even
toward the apostolic office. It could no doubt be argued
that this switching back and forth from singular to plural
is nothing but a stylistic variation. It certainly is a
stylistic variation. Yet, instead of simply registering the
fact, rhetorical criticism tries to come up with a reason
for this, and the reason that is being proposed here is that
Paul is making an effort to point away from his person.
This view seems to be corroborated by the fact that
"practically every statement concerning Paul's work is
qualified by a phrase which sets it in the context of God's
activity."[59] In other words, he has or, rather, they have
such a confidence διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν
(2 Cor. 3:4). Their ἱκανότης is ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ (2 Cor.

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[59]Crafton, 69.

3:5). The veil is removed ἐν Χριστῷ (2 Cor. 3:14). The transformation from glory to glory is ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος (2 Cor. 3:18). It is not a matter of what or who we are, but what God does.

The switch from διάκονος to διακονία

Part of the same picture is the switch from διάκονος to διακονία, from minister or messenger to office, at the beginning of verse 7. This switch helps to create the impression, shared by most commentators, that 2 Corinthians, in particular chapter 3, is marked by an abstract theological nature. As Jeffrey A. Crafton observes, "large portions of the argument seem comparatively abstract, not tied directly to congregational or personal situations."[60] Yet, this abstract character is not necessarily indicative of formulation apart from a particular congregational setting. On the contrary, "it is fundamental to Paul's rhetorical response designed specifically for that setting."[61]

The rhetorical situation

This leads us directly into the question of the contours of that setting. What kind of actual or potential exigence called for a discourse like that? In other words, what is the rhetorical situation of the text?

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[60]Crafton, 68. 2 Corinthians 3 is sometimes called a 'digression.'

[61]Ibid., 68, note 1.

According to Heinrici, it was the suspicion that Paul
was commending himself, that he was being impelled, not by
the gospel or by his sense of apostolic mission, but rather
by a pursuit of personal gain at the expense of the church.
This comes through in 2 Cor. 2:17, where Paul distinguishes
himself and his companions from οἱ πολλοὶ
καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. To this one
should add the suspicion that Paul was unreliable (2 Cor.
1:15-22), and the impression that he was a troubled apostle
(2 Cor. 1:6 - θλιβόμεθα).[62] In rhetorical-critical
jargon, what was at stake was Paul's ethos or character.[63]

Paul responds to this situation by explaining what
actually drives him (2 Cor. 2:17) and what or who recommends
him as an apostle, namely, the church (2 Cor. 3:1-3) and God
himself (2 Cor. 10:18). But above all

Paul brushes aside and counters all reproaches leveled

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[62]It is important to notice that this was not
necessarily how the Christian church at Corinth felt about
Paul, but it certainly indicates how Paul thought they would
feel. The rhetorical situation embedded in the text is the
author's construction. As indicated above, it may match
with "the world out there," but this is not necessarily the
case.

[63]In ancient rhetoric, there were three important
factors in the communication equation from the point of view
of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos had to do
with the character of the speaker. He "had to be perceived
as trustworthy and knowledgeable just to get a hearing."
Mack, 36. Pathos, "affection," had to do with knowing the
audience. The speaker had to know "how to play the
audience." Ibid. Logos had to do with the content of the
speech. It "referred to the ideas, structure, and logic of
a speech evaluated in terms of their persuasive force."
Ibid.

against him and his cause by pointing to the _freedom_ and _glory_ of the gospel, which has its source in the Spirit, and is accompanied and laid bare by the same Spirit.[64]

Paul points away from himself to the freedom and glory of the gospel. That is his rhetorical strategy. Jeffrey A. Crafton explains this strategy in terms of a shift from agent to agency.[65] An agent is one who acts. An agency is a means through which another acts. To direct attention to the apostle himself as actor is to emphasize the role of the agent. To focus on the means by which God works through the apostle is to stress the role of agency. It is obvious that Paul sees his ministry in terms of agency, while the Corinthians, at least in Paul's perception of the situation, saw it in terms of the role of the agent. That is why, according to Crafton, Paul establishes

> his own distinctive agency-ethos . . . . by consistently diverting attention away from his own individuality and person, toward the one acting through him, toward the results of and the reason for his apostolic ministry.[66]

In Paul's agency orientation God is the agent. God is the source of Paul's sufficiency and God is the purpose and goal of Paul's ministry. Adequacy belongs to God and can only be attributed to the apostle by association (2.16b-17;

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[64]Heinrici, 153. (My own translation. Emphasis by the author.)

[65]Crafton derived the concepts of "agent" and "agency" from Kenneth Burke, whose rhetorical-critical method known as 'dramatism' furnished the theoretical foundation for his analysis.

[66]Crafton, 66.

3.5-6).

The Argumentation in 2 Cor. 3:7-11

When it comes to the second section (verses 7-11), one gets the distinct impression that it is argumentative through and through. The opening εἰ may even be dubbed as argumentative. What needs to be investigated is the nature of the argument in this section.

According to both Heinrici and Kennedy, 2 Cor. 3:7-11 is part of the proof (probatio or confirmatio). In Classical rhetoric, this part of the speech was meant to present the supporting arguments, or to supply the data for constructing the rhetorical argument. There were two major forms of proof: example and analogy or comparison.[67] In 2 Cor. 3:7-11 Paul is clearly drawing such a comparison, a comparison between two διακονίαι, one marked by death and the other determined by the Spirit.[68]

In drawing a comparison, the author can have one of three purposes in mind: to demonstrate equality, or superiority, or inferiority between two parties or things.

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[67]Mack, 41-43.

[68]This kind of comparison between persons or things was a widespread feature of the hellenistic world, and was technically known as synkrisis. As C. F. Evans explains, "it was connected with the encomiastic tradition in oratory and literature in praise of those who excelled." C. F. Evans, The Theology of Rhetoric: The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1988), 5. George A. Kennedy describes verses 7-18 as "a synkrisis, a comparison between the dispensation of Moses and that of Christ." Kennedy, 89.

Equality is demonstrated by praising both, thus indicating that they are equal in all respects. The author can also praise both, but place one ahead of the other, or praise the inferior so that the superior will seem to be even greater. Another way of indicating superiority and/or inferiority is to praise one and blame the other.[69]

In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul is clearly demonstrating the superiority of the διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος over against the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου by praising both, yes, but at the same time by placing the former ahead of the latter. Paul moves from what is glorious to what is yet more glorious. He asserts that what is true of the inferior member of the comparison must be true also of the superior, and that to a superior degree. In the end, as Frances Young and David F. Ford observe, Paul "produces not so much a contrast as a 'capping'."[70]

It is important to notice that the force of the comparison stands or falls on the truth of the premise, taken to be common ground between the parties in the

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[69]Peter Marshall, "Invective: Paul and his Enemies in Corinth," in Perspectives on Language and Text: Essays and Poems in Honor of Francis I. Andersen, ed. Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 368.

[70]Frances Young and David F. Ford, Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 105. Young and Ford point out that "any exegesis which attempts to suggest that Paul is simply doing Moses down, is not true to his form of argument." Ibid. In fact, Paul acknowledges the glory of the old covenant, and he has to do that for his comparison to work.

discussion. In 2 Corinthians 3, this common ground is expressed in the first half of verse 7. Paul assumes the glory of Moses' ministry and he takes for granted his readers' agreement to this proposition. Thus, Paul's comparison, as any other comparison, is a neat example of how "rhetorical discourse is a joint endeavor involving speaker and audience as together they arrive at conclusions."[71] It necessarily involves the active participation of a speaker and an audience in the communal creation of meaning and interpretation; there are no passive parties.

The awareness that in 2 Corinthians 3, particularly in verses 7-11, Paul is drawing a comparison mostly for rhetorical purposes helps the reader to understand why the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου is brought into the picture at this point. This probably has nothing to do with a particularly Pauline interest in the old covenant as such, nor is it prompted by the need to respond to the theological viewpoint of some alleged opponents who were active in the Corinthian church. Seen from a rhetorical perspective, Paul's reference to the διακονία τοῦ θανάτου is necessary for the sake of the comparison. His real concern

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[71]Crafton, 18. A comparison is, therefore, a kind of enthymeme, which is the rhetorical counterpart to the syllogism in logic. An enthymeme is "fundamentally a form of logical argumentation in which the audience provides some, if not all, of the premises, as well as helps to reach conclusions." Ibid.

is the **διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος** and its surpassing

glory. Yet, in order to make his point, he decides to draw

a comparison. To draw a comparison, he has to have two

elements. What he needs is an example of ministry which is

glorious, and nothing could be more handy than the episode

narrated in Exodus 34.

Is Paul's way of arguing typically rabbinic?

Paul's way of arguing, particularly in verses 7-11, is

commonly described as an <u>a minore ad maiorem</u> argument.

Actually it is a set of three arguments from the lesser to

the greater, each one beginning with an **εἰ** statement and

ending with the **πῶς** or the **πολλῷ μᾶλλον**

conclusion.[72] It is also said that Paul's way of arguing,

which is found also in Romans 5:9,10,15,17 and in Romans

11:12,24, betrays a Rabbinic background and training. Some

go as far as suggesting that Paul's reasoning is indebted to

the exegetical method established by Rabbi Hillel,

particularly to one of his seven <u>middot</u>, namely, the drawing

of conclusions <u>qal wahomer</u>.[73]

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[72]The first argument is introduced by **εἰ δέ**, while the
two following are appended by means of **εἰ γάρ**. It appears
the the purpose of **εἰ δέ** in verse 7 is to indicate a major
break with the context, while the subsequent pair of **εἰ γάρ**
signals that the author's reasoning is carried over to the
next sentences.

[73]Tradition has it that the rabbinic exegetical method
was established by Rabbi Hillel in the first century A.D.
Yet, as C. F. Evans observes, quoting 'an expert in the
field,' "the problems attending the recovery of the
historical Hillel are such as to leave the problems of the

Qal wahomer literally means "the light and the heavy,"
but it refers to an argument based on the inference from the
lesser to the greater. The argument functions according to
the following pattern:

> If A, which lacks y, has x, then B, which has y,
> certainly must have x as well. If the inferior member
> of a pair possesses a characteristic, then its superior
> partner must necessarily possess it as well.[74]

The big question at this point is whether and, if so,
to what extent this type of argumentation is peculiarly
rabbinic. Many scholars simply assume that here Paul is
reflecting one of Hillel's seven middot. Yet, the fact of
the matter is that, as Carol K. Stockhausen observes, "this
rule of syllogism is familiar in Greek rhetoric of the New
Testament period as an argument a minore ad majus."[75] There
is nothing peculiarly rabbinic about this way of reasoning.
As Philip S. Alexander explains,

> the fact that some of the middot of Rabbi Ishmael are
> found in the NT is no evidence that the NT writers
> engaged in Rabbinic-style midrash, nor is the fact that
> some of Hillel's middot are apparently used by Paul
> evidence that Paul knew Hillel's list, or was in any
> sense a Hillelite, unless it can be shown that the
> middot are peculiar to Hillel or to Ishmael, and
> exclusive to Rabbinic midrash. . . . From their
> very nature the rules in question may be "natural" to
> human discourse or argument, or typical in general of

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historical Jesus standing." Evans, 15.

[74]Stockhausen, 110.

[75]Stockhausen, 28.

early rhetoric.[76]

Thus, to say the least, great caution is necessary in using Hillel to explain Paul. Richard B. Hays may well be right when he says the "it is more valid methodologically to use Paul as a background source for the study of rabbinic traditions than vice versa."[77]

The Force of the Text in New Contexts

2 Corinthians 3 was originally a part of an ongoing communication between Paul and the church at Corinth. Although Paul and the Corinthians did not agree on a series of issues, it must also be said that they shared a more or less common background of culture, knowledge, and belief. Whenever communication occurs between persons who have such a common background, an author does not always have to spell out explicitly all that he intends the reader to understand by the message. He selects some of the information and makes it explicit; the rest he leaves implicit, trusting the reader to supply it to complete the message.[78] In other words, vital things 'said' in conversation are often left

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[76]Philip S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 74 (1983): 246.

[77]Hays, 11. C. F. Evans makes the same assertion with regard to the author of Hebrews: "he derived his method more directly from the original hellenistic rhetorical tradition rather than from any rabbinic adaptation of it." Evans, 15.

[78]C. R. Taber, "Semantics," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 806.

'unspoken.' Besides the explicit text there is an <u>invisible</u> text. To understand properly one must be able to read and understand the <u>invisible</u> text properly.[79] This <u>invisible</u> text can be conceived of as <u>Leerstellen</u> or open spaces. It is up to the reader to fill them in, reconstructing the non-verbal situation.[80]

Only the original readers, the Christians at Corinth, were fully aware of the communicative setting of Paul's correpondence. They were in a privileged position to fill in the blanks. Any other reader will always be to a large extent an outsider that overhears another's conversation. Nobody, not even a person fully at home in the history of Corinth, will be able to hear or read the text of 2 Corinthians as if he were a first century member of the church at Corinth. He can read the text, but he will be reading it in a new context, a context different from the original one. With respect to the original context, the text has become decontextualized. In fact, as J. G. Davies explains,

> every text in course of time becomes decontextualized. It assumes the character of an atemporal object which has broken free from its moorings in the period of history when it originated. It achieves a measure of

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[79] Du Plessis, 133.

[80] In oral communication, facial expressions and vocal intonations are part of the non-verbal situation. Much of the illocutionary force of a discourse depends on these factors, which cannot be inscribed in the text.

autonomy; it can be read by anyone at any time.[81]

Like it or not, the fact is that this applies also to

Biblical texts. Biblical texts have been decontextualized

and read by anyone at any time. Paul's letters in

particular were by and large addressed to specific

situations and are, therefore, sometimes referred to as

"occasional documents." They have an intrinsic

particularity, which was felt as a problem in the early

church. As Nils A. Dahl explains,

> the theological problem raised by the Pauline epistles
> was not their plurality [as in the case of the Gospels],
> but their particularity.[82]

Yet, in reading Paul's letters as part of the canon,

the church through the ages has not simply read them as

historical documents, addressed to a specific situation.

They were and are still read as Scriptures relevant to the

whole church. This has led to a tendecy towards

generalizing them.

At first glance this may seem to be a bad move. Yet,

it is unavoidable. Besides being unavoidable, it is also

legitimate, for "there is an implicit catholicity of the

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[81] J. G. Davies, "Subjectivity and Objectivity in Biblical Exegesis," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 66 (1983): 45.

[82] Nils A. Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church," in Neotestamentica et Patristica (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 261.

Pauline letters."[83] Second Corinthians, for instance, was written to the church of God in Corinth as well as to all the saints in Achaia (2 Cor 1:1). This is not always taken at face value, but Paul clearly envisions a wider readership. Besides this explicit statement, there are other indications that Paul had a wider readership in mind than is usually assumed. One such indication is "Paul's tendency to develop a broad theological argument, even when he is dealing with a comparatively small or trivial matter."[84] Thus, the text was addressed to more than one situation right from the beginning, namely, a specific occasion, which accounts for the particular or "occasional" character of the letter, and a more general occasion. Afterwards Paul's letters were read all over the world in new and different contexts. Believers read it in the context of the church. Scholars read it in the context of the Pauline corpus, and so on.

Being read in new and different contexts, the text of 2 Corinthians has had and is still having its impact on its readers. This is no doubt due to the operation of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the Spirit operates in and through the text. Though we tend to think only of the content of the text, it is nonetheless true that the rhetorical situation embedded

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[83]Ibid., 271.

[84]Lars Hartman, "On Reading Others' Letters," Harvard Theological Review 79 (1986):137-146.

in the text as well as the way in which the text is couched
to meet the exigence of that rhetorical situation (form, if
you will) contributes significantly to the impact of the
text. In other words, the Holy Spirit avails himself not
only of the content of the text, but rather he makes use of
the text as a whole, both form and content.

Having been read throughout history, and having had
its impact, Second Corinthians, like any other Biblical
book, has a long and rich reading history. It is a
history - to come back to concepts of speech-act theory - of
illocutionary and perlocutionary uptake, as well as the lack
thereof. In other words, it has a Wirkungsgeschichte, a
history of how readers have reacted and still react to the
illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of the text. That
history can and perhaps should be investigated.[85] Part and
parcel of this is the history of textual transmission.
Variant readings are not just what they are, but they also
"reflect broad interpretive frameworks and specific
exegetical traditions."[86] Many variant readings reflect
what the scribes believed was the meaning of the text.
Essays, commentaries, and dissertations fall into the same

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[85]On the history of the interpretation of 2 Cor. 3:6 in
particular, see Bernardin Schneider, "The Meaning of St.
Paul's Antithesis 'The Letter and the Spirit'," The Catholic
Biblical Quarterly 15 (1953):163-207, and Mario Alberto
Molina, "La Remocion del Velo o el Acceso a la Libertad:
Ensayo Hemeneutico," Estudios Biblicos 41 (1983):285-324.

[86]Moises Silva, God, Language and Scripture (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan, 1983),133.

category: they are recorded readings of particular readers

reading in the context of their own interpretive

communities.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to approach the text of
2 Corinthians 3 from the viewpoint of a reader, a "critical
reader." My reading can be summarized as follows:

1. My stance as a "critical" reader was to a large
extent shaped by concepts derived from modern semantics, and
from pragmatics, in particular rhetorical criticism. As it
turned out, semantics helped me to perceive, among other
things, that words are never used in isolation; that
synonymity is context-dependent; and that awareness of the
semantic domain of a sign is helpful in describing its range
of meaning. Semantics helped me, further, to realize that
most signs or words, even the "little words," such as οὖν,
δέ, and γάρ, are polysemous, and that signs or clusters of
signs that are phonetically and morphologically different
may be closely related from a semantic viewpoint. On the
other hand, pragmatics, in particular rhetorical criticism,
called my attention to the fact that 2 Corinthians 3 is not
only loaded with "content," but has a pragmatic dimension.
It was written not only to convey important information, but
also to affect its readers. It is a discourse structured in
a meaningful way in order to accomplish some end.

Furthermore, rhetorical criticism increased my awareness of the importance of aspects such as the rhetorical situation, and the argumentation embedded in the text.

2. 2 Corinthians 3 is, indeed, a text that is not easily read. It demands a great amount of effort on the part of the reader. All the way through the reader is faced with problems such as vagueness, ambiguity due to polysemy and uncertainty as to what goes with what else, difficulty in describing the components of meaning and in determining the referent of signs, and so on. Yet, it is not utterly impenetrable. My rendering of it runs as follows:
"And we (that is, Paul and Timothy) are actively engaged in holding such a view of confidence in our qualification for ministry before God through the agency of Christ. Not that on our own we are in a position to hold such a view of confidence, as if we were trying to give the impression that it derives from ourselves, but our qualification for ministry comes from God. It is God who qualified us to be ministers who deliver the new covenant, ministers not of the 'written thing,' that is, the law of God in its written form, made up of concrete demands, but of the Holy Spirit. (The 'written thing' kills, but the Spirit makes alive.) And - to come back to the topic on the ministry - if the ministry that dispenses death, which was engraved on stones in the form of letters, showed itself to be in glory, so that, because of the glory of Moses' face (a glory which, by

the way, is being abolished), the children of Israel could
not gaze upon Moses' face, is it not so that the ministry
which delivers the Spirit is even more glorious? Of course,
it is. And if there is glory for the ministry which brings
condemnation, how much more will the ministry which brings
righteousness abound in glory! (And, by the way, in this
matter which I am referring to the thing that was glorified,
namely, the ministry of death, was not glorified on account
of the surpassing glory of the ministry of the Spirit.) And
if that which is being abolished came in glory, then that
which endures will be much more glorious! But since we have
such a hope, we conduct ourselves with great boldness toward
you, and we do not act like Moses who put a veil over his
face, so that the children of Israel could not look at the
cessation of the thing that was being rendered ineffective.
Yet, their minds were hardened. I am saying this because up
to this very day the same veil remains at the reading of the
old covenant. It is not lifted, because only in Christ is
it done away with. Yes, even more! To this day, whenever
the writings of Moses are being read, a veil lies on their
hearts. But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is
removed from the heart of the reader. (Now the Lord
referred to in the preceding verse is the Spirit. And where
the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the freedom that comes
from the Lord.) But we and you, while we are engaged in
gazing on the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, we all

are being transformed into the same exceedingly glorious
image, precisely as one would expect from the Lord, that is,
the Spirit."

3. In terms of "content," these are some of the
conclusions that can be drawn from reading 2 Corinthians 3
intratextually and intertextually:

3.1. The new covenant of the Spirit is, indeed, a
covenant different from the old covenant of death. There is
no smooth transition from one covenant to another, and the
new covenant is not simply the renewal of the old covenant.
In the light of 1 Corinthians 11, which may be the source
and interpretive key to what Paul has to say about the new
covenant, the death of Christ brings the old covenant to a
conclusion, and marks the beginning of the new covenant.
This newness is witnessed to by Christian worship, in
particular by the Eucharist. In the light of Gal. 3:15-18,
the new covenant is actually the oldest, for it coincides
with the promise spoken to Abraham.

3.2. In 2 Corinthians 3, πνεῦμα is always the Holy
Spirit, and this element helps to describe and define
γράμμα. The same applies to the passages of Rom. 2:27-29
and Rom. 7:6, where the γράμμα // πνεῦμα opposition
occurs in basically the same sense as in 2 Corinthians 3.
The "written thing" is neither the Old Testament as
Scripture, nor a distortion of the law. It is the law of
God in its written form, made up of concrete demands.

4. Read from a rhetorical viewpoint, 2 Corinthians 3 yields the following conclusions:

4.1. In 2 Corinthians 3, polemics is part of the picture, but it is not the whole picture. Rather than arguing with so-called "opponents," Paul is addressing the Corinthian church. He is trying to open up for them a new, or, at least, more accurate, perspective on what his apostolic ministry is all about.

4.2. In terms of species-analysis, 2 Corinthians 3 is part of a discourse that may be described as primarily judicial. Put in more traditional terms, it is part of Paul's _apologia_. Paul is apparently reacting against the suspicion that his motivation for ministry was the pursuit of personal gain, and that he was an unreliable apostle. At stake was Paul's _ethos_ or character. Paul responds to this by pointing away from himself to God, and by indicating that what really mattered was what God was accomplishing through the apostolic office (agency), and not so much the person of the minister (agent). The use of the first person plural throughout the pericope, as well as the switch from ministers to ministry, in verse 7, are part of this rhetorical strategy.

4.3. 2 Corinthians can be viewed as mainly judicial rhetoric. If this is so, then 2 Corinthians 3 is part of the _probatio_ or _confirmatio_ (proof). The _probatio_ is the presentation of the supporting arguments for a case. Paul's

major argument in 2 Cor. 3:7-11 is couched in the form of a synkrisis, that is, a comparison. Paul compares two διακονίαι in order to demonstrate the superiority of the διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος. This explains why the ministry of death is brought into the picture to begin with, namely, it is necessary for the sake of the comparison.

4.4. Paul's argumentation in verse 7-11 does not necessarily betray any Rabbinic background and training. Although his technique may be described as the application of Rabbi Hillel's qal wahomer principle, it is more likely that both Paul and Rabi Hillel were influenced by the cultural context in which they lived. In other words, both Paul's practice and Hillel's principle may derive from what in rhetorical circles was known as the a minore ad maiorem argument.

4.5. Although part of an "occasional document," that is, a letter addressed to a specific situation, 2 Corinthians 3, being part of the church's canon, has had an impact on readers other than the original addressees. This decontextualization, or, rather, this reading in new contexts, had been originally envisioned by Paul himself, for he addressed the letter to a wider readership than the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 1:1). Yet, the impact of the letter on new readers is certainly due to the fact that the rhetorical situation, that is, the situation in which, according to Paul's perception, the readers find themselves,

and which calls for the intervention of Paul, is embedded in the text itself.

5. From a hermeneutical viewpoint, 2 Corinthians 3 allows the following conclusions:

5.1. The γράμμα // πνεῦμα opposition in verse 6 can be taken as a basis for the Lutheran emphasis on Law-Gospel hermeneutics.

5.2. 2 Cor. 3:14-16 calls attention to the importance of being the right kind of reader, that is, the implied reader called for by the text. The old covenant can be read properly only by readers who, in Christ, have the veil of unbelief removed from their eyes.

5.3. The veil that hinders the proper reading of the old covenant is removed in Christ, that is, through conversion by the Holy Spirit, in the Christian community.

5.4. An unveiled reader finds Christ in the book of Moses. The best example of such a reader is Paul himself. He interprets Exodus 34 "in Christ," and then uses it to substantiate his view on the apostolic ministry.

5.5. The Holy Spirit is the unveiler. He is not a substitute for knowledge of grammar and reading. His role is to form the implied reader, that is, the reader that is "congenial" to the text.

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