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The Enemies of God's People-A Comparison of Pauline and Jewish Exegesis

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THE ENEMIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE

A comparison of

Pauline and Jewish Exegesis

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by

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INTRODUCTION

In light of the current re-evaluation of points of identity and divergence between Pauline Christianity and Judaism, this thesis presents a study of how each religion applied a single motif from the Psalter: the enemies of God's people. We start from the obvious common ground, the Old Testament shared by both Paul and the Jew as their sacred text. The work focuses on the unique opportunity afforded by the text of Romans 3:9-20, where Paul cites the Old Testament depiction of the wicked enemies. Next, we survey how apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism developed and employed the enemy theme. Our conclusion then distinguishes between Paul and Judaism on the basis of their application of the Scriptures to describe those outside "the Israel of God."

In Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul indicts mankind "under sin." He defends what his opening thesis (1:17) presupposes, that all are in need of a righteousness from God. Paul makes his case particularly against the Jews, who trusted that their place "in the law" kept them safe from condemnation. This opening argument reaches its climax in 3:9-20, where Paul cites Jewish Scripture itself against the Jewish claim of exemption from judgment. Yet, this clinching summary is not without its own difficulties. In addressing Jews, Paul primarily cites Psalm texts that describe Gentile unrighteousness. How can he apply them to the contemporary Jew? The original referent doesn't seem to fit. The citations describe the most heinous of sins and sinners. Again, how could Paul conclude that all, especially God-fearing Jews, were

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guilty of such sins? The original accusations don't seem to fit. By examining these questions, we hope to shed light on Paul's understanding of and contention with Judaism.

The central task of understanding Paul's use of the enemy theme involves several interrelated questions. What are the rhetorical purpose and method of Romans 3:9-20? What evaluation of Judaism would lead Paul to believe that this rhetoric would be effective? And how does this compare to contempory Jewish rhetoric? To answer these questions, the thesis employs the following method. The first chapter traces citations from Romans 3 to their context in the Old Testament and fleshes out ancient Israel's theological assessment of her enemies. In the second chapter, we examine the context of Romans to show why Paul here so thoroughly addresses the relationship between the people of God in Christ and the Jews. The third chapter demonstrates how and why Paul applies the enemy theme to the Jews. For the purpose of comparison, the fourth chapter studies how this same theme came to be used by two branches of Judaism. The thesis concludes by juxtaposing Pauline and Jewish identification of the enemies and stating what this reveals about their own differences in faith.

CHAPTER 1

THE ENEMY MOTIF IN ITS ORIGINAL LITERARY CONTEXT

Before we juxtapose Pauline and Jewish application of the enemy motif, we must establish how it functions in its original literary setting. This proves all the more important once it is understood that Paul's citations also invoke and apply the literary context in which he found them. This was the thesis of C. H. Dodd,[1] which has subsequently shed a great deal of light on how New Testament authors use the Old Testament.

The Enemies: The Narrower Context

Psalm 14

Romans 3:10-12 loosely paraphrases Psalm 14:1-3 (MT, 13:1-3 LXX). Ecclesiastes 7:20 parallels Paul's opening phrase and appears to have affected his final word choice. The texts are as follows, with common vocables underlined:

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[1]C. H. Dodd first proposed that New Testament writers refer to entire contexts. Dodd, Charles Harold, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

Rom. 3:10b-12	Eccl. 7:20	Ps. 13:1b-3
		διέφθειραν καὶ ἐβδελύχθησαν ἐν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν,
Οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,	ὅτι ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος ἐν τῇ γῇ, ὃς ποιήσει ἀγαθὸν καὶ οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται.	οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός. ²κύριος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ διέκυψεν ἐπὶ
11οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν. ¹²πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, ἕως ἑνός.		τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ ἰδεῖν εἰ ἔστιν συνίων ἢ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν. 3πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν, οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός.

Paul begins with Ecclesiastes. The choice of δίκαιος from this text well matches the theme of Romans, the righteousness of God which unites Jew and Gentile in one people of God through faith in Christ. The verse (7:20) is located within the collection of wisdom sayings at the center of the book (Eccl. 5-11).[2] This section presents miscellaneous aphorisms largely disconnected from one another.[3] As Franz Delitzsch noted: "Each one of these moral proverbs and aphorisms is in itself a little whole."[4] Nevertheless, a connection can be seen between verses 19 and 20, which "serve to affirm and then to denigrate human possibility."[5]

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[2]Horace D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 531.

[3]Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*, 532.

[4]Keil, Johann Friedrich Karl and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 6, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, trans. M. G. Easton (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 326.

[5]Longman describes the relation between vs. 19 and 20 as a typical pattern in Qohelet, contrasting statements which limit each other. Longman, Tremper III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes, New International Critical Commentary on the Old Testament*, ed. by R. K. Harrison and Robert Hubbard,

Eccl. 7:20, "there is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins," speaks from the earthly perspective which pervades wisdom literature. Ecclesiastes does not reflect the unique revelation of the God of Israel, but a common store of knowledge which had many parallels throughout the ancient Near East.[6] Delitzsch observes that this verse refers to "the common sinfulness from which even the most righteous cannot free himself."[7] This suggestion approaches Ecclesiastes from within its canonical context and utilizes a concept of sin developed from other books. Yet, Ecclesiastes itself works with general observations from experience about the nature of life. Horace Hummel's comment is more apropos: "[Qoheleth] presents a clear, cold picture of man's life without the covenant relationship with God."[8] Eccl. 7:20, then, expresses a common sense proposition similar to the phrase, "to err is human."[9] In the context of Ecclesiastes, the verse describes the natural human condition. This description, however, does not touch the people of the covenant with respect to their standing before God.[10]

Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 198.

[6]Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*, 394.

[7]Keil-Delitzsch, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon*, 327. Similarly, Longman writes, "There are righteous people, but these righteous people are not consistently good." Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, 199.

[8]Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*, 535.

[9]Michael Fox rephrases this verse with the maxim "To be human is to be flawed." Michael V. Fox, Michael V., *Qohelet and his Contradictions*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, no. 71 (Decatur, Georgia: The Almond Press, 1989), 236.

[10]Ronald E. Murphey notes the parallel with 1 Kings 8:46, part of the prayer of Solomon at the consecration of the temple. Murphey, Ronald E., *Ecclesiastes*, vol. 23A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 71. There, Solomon explains why he presumes that God will chastize his people: "כי אין אדם אשר לא-יחטא." Here, exactly in the theological context of the covenant and the covenant people, this verse demonstrates the complete palatability of the thesis that all sin. This, however, is not Paul's point. In quoting Ecclesiastes, Paul leaves off the limitation of the relative

Rom. 3:11-12 shows that Paul is following Psalm 14 (LXX: 13), not Psalm 53, as Fernand Prat has pointed out from the use of χρηστότης over ἀγαθός.[11] Apparently, an editor of Codex Alexandrinus came to the same conclusion, since he added Rom. 3:13-18 to its "missing" place after Psalm 14:3 in the Septuagint. Psalm 14, a psalm of lament and praise with roots in the wisdom tradition,[12] describes the depravity and foolishness of the enemies of God's people (verses 1-3), the futility of their opposition to the righteous (verses 4-6) and the ultimate salvation of Israel (verse 7).

It opens, "The fool (ἄφρων; נָבָל) says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good." Already the first referent of the psalm is ambiguous. *He* is "the fool"; *they* act ruinously and abominably. The wicked share a common false presupposition and can thus be represented as a single "fool." They are apparently *everyone*. However, the mention of the oppressed people of God ("my people," verse 4, MT) as a separate group (verses 4-7), corrects this impression. The psalmist speaks as a prophet who depicts the wickedness of his society as a whole, without indicting every individual.[13]

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clause ("There is no righteous man *who does good and never sins*", LXX: ὃς ποιήσει ἀγαθὸν καὶ οὐκ ἁμαρτήσεται) and altogether denies the existence of the righteous. This so sharpens his accusation that the Jews of his day could no longer agree that the verse applies to them.

[11]Prat, Fernand, *The Theology of Saint Paul*, trans. by John L. Stoddard (London: Burns & Oates Ltd, 1964), 202.

[12]Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 202.

[13]Mays, James Luther, *Psalms*, Interpretation Series (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994,) 82. Prat simply states that the psalm's condemnation is "wholly general." (Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 202) These statements do not contradict the presupposition that a remnant people of God escapes the title "fool." Stöckhardt, however, comments: "The first Scripture quote . . . witnesses to the universality of human corruption . . . " Stöckhardt, Karl Georg, *Commentar über den Breif Pauli an die Römer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), 124. While this reading of the psalm can

Therefore, the initial overstatement ("there is none that does good") applies to the company of the wicked. None *of them* does any good.

The fools say there is no God (אֵין אֱלֹהִים). Certainly, this was not atheism. Patrick Miller summarizes the fool's stance as one which denies the relevance of God for the human situation. All agreed that God existed; many, however, had concluded that his existence need not impact how they chose to live.[14] Certainly the motto, "There is no God," directly opposes the covenant confession, "Yahweh is my God" (e.g., Ps. 22:10; Ps. 31:14; Ps. 89:26; 118:28). The unbelief of the enemy is the negation of *fides qua creditur*, not *fides quae creditur*. The psalm itself proceeds from the counsel of the heart to the deeds of the wicked as they persecute the righteous. Thus, the psalm speaks from the divine perspective, which sees both thoughts and deeds and observes the causal connection between the two. Hans-Joachim Kraus observes that the wicked deeds have a revelatory function, as they disclose the nature of the heart.[15]

The next three verses of Psalm 14 set the evildoers over against the righteous whom they oppose. That opposition is spelled out in verse 4: they eat up "my

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be supported by the generalizing statements of vs. 1 and 3, it fails to allow the second half of the psalm to shed light on what precedes.

[14]Miller, Patrick D., Jr., *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadephia: Fortress Press, 1986), 97. Mays likewise denies any reference to atheism. Pointing to Psalm 10:13, he notes that the fool lives as if he were not accountable to God (Mays, *Psalms*, 82). His deeds contradict the revelation of God in the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the covenant and the voices of the prophets. With respect to the covenant, Craigie focuses on foolishness as demonstrated in lack of the covenant virture lovingkindness (חֶסֶד) and consequent opposition to the covenant which God made with his people. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, vol. 19, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 147.

[15]Kraus, Hans-Joachim, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. by Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 129.

people" like bread.[16] By definition, the wicked survive on and live for the destruction of the righteous. But it is soon clear that those who do not know God also do not know the consequences of ignoring him and oppressing his people. Verses 5 and 6 confess that God provides safety for his people, even against their more powerful enemies.[17]

Finally, Ps. 14:7 prays for the day in which "salvation will come from Zion" and details the exultation that will follow. As Craigie notes, בְּשׁוּב שְׁבוּת need not point to a return from exile.[18] Understood as a "restoration of one's fortunes" it easily applies to the repeated favor and renewal which God has granted his people since the exodus and the days of the judges. In this light, the final verse need not seek its sole fulfillment in an end-time deliverance. The psalmist simply envisions a time when the fools in society will no longer enjoy the majority or the upper hand. At the same time, he does not diminish the significance of divine aid. That the deliverance originates from Zion shows that it is God's presence which will finally turn the situation around.[19] Then the people of God, finally named as Jacob and

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[16]On this verse, Kraus suggests that a reference might be made here to a kind of cursing ritual, similar to the writing and smashing of Egyptian execration texts. In this case, the enemy, in league with demonic forces, would consume bread with the name of his opponent (Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 135). Without other evidence for such a practice, this reconstruction appears unnecessarily speculative for what can be explained as a simple simile.

[17]Mays suggests that God will show himself to be on the side of the oppressed in the "there" of their humility and debasement. He points to the martyrs and the cross as such an epiphany (Mays, *Psalms*, 83). Similarly, Miller points to vv. 5-6 as an affirmation that "God is indeed present with the innocent sufferers and victims" but, more positively, the oppressors will "find themselves shattered" (Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 98).

[18]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 147.

[19]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 148.

Israel, will exult. At the revelation of God's saving deeds for the oppressed, the whole nation will turn from its foolishness and again rejoice in the works of God.

Ecclesiastes 7 depicts the character of human life apart from revelation. It calls mankind flawed and erring, though in that context the verse speaks little about humanity *coram deo*. Psalm 14, on the other hand, depicts the enemies as those outside of and directly opposed to the covenant of God. It builds upon the themes of wisdom literature and directly applies them to Israel's faith. The imperfection which characterizes natural humanity is equated with a lack of righteousness. The fool, then, is he who lives contrary to righteousness available in God's covenant with Israel.

Psalm 5

Paul quotes Psalm 5:10b directly from the LXX. This psalm is a prayer for help against the psalmist's enemies. The dichotomy of the righteous and the wicked provides its very structure. It is organized as alternative descriptions of the activities and lots of the two camps (the righteous including the psalmist: 5:2-4,8-9,12-13; the wicked 5:5-7,10-11).[20]

The first mention of the wicked (verses 5-7) makes them a foil for the righteous one who can stand in the presence of God. The psalmist thus demonstrates his own confidence before God and certainty of being heard, a common motif in the Psalms.[21] The later verses (5:10-11) show that the impious indeed threaten the psalmist, who in turn prays for their destruction (5:9,11). If the use of בְּפִיהוּ in

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[20]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 85.

[21]Brown, Raymond E., and others, eds., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *The Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 577.

verse 10 is anything more than a scribal error,[22] the singular ending demonstrates again that the wicked can be referred to in the singular or the plural, since plural possessive endings follow in the rest of the verse. With respect to the characterization "boasters" (verse 5), Craigie observes that although "boasting" can be positive or negative in Hebrew, this depiction of the wicked may suggest their involvement in paganism.[23] The wicked boast of the virtues and aid of foreign gods. The psalmist for his part speaks as an individual throughout the psalm ("my words," "my murmuring," "my plea," "my king," "my God") and his prayer has usually been categorized as an individual lament.[24] In the final verses, however, the psalmist reveals that he knows of others, namely those who trust in God (כָל־חֹוסֵי בָךְ), who love his name (אֹהֲבֵי שְׁמֶךָ). These are not categorized with the wicked. Devoted to the name of God, they trust in his self-revelation, his mighty acts, and his covenant.[25] Finally, the name of God brings his presence and his blessing to his chosen people.[26]

From this psalm, Paul cites two accusations against the throat and the tongue. Although גָּרוֹן in verse 10 can mean throat, windpipe or neck, ὁ λάρυγξ (LXX) clearly refers to the throat. Also the open passage at the back of the mouth comes to expression in the metaphorical phrase "open grave." A grave, as the home of the dead, reflects the corruption of the wicked as well as the devastation they bring on

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[22]The apparatus of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia shows that the LXX, Syriac and Targum manuscripts all contain the easier reading in the plural.

[23]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 84.

[24]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 85.

[25]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 88.

[26]*The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *The Old Testament*, 577.

their targets.[27] Craigie observes that in the climate of Palestine, an open grave would especially carry the connotation of an "abominable stench."[28] He oversimplifies these sins of speech, however, when he likens ancient Hebrew society with the modern world and its "sophisticated sins of speech."[29] Truthful speech carried much more import in Hebrew culture, with its theology of the Word of God, vows and covenants. A person's words were part of his self; self-expression could not be separated from one's identity.

With respect to the tongue, the Hebrew reads לְשׁוֹנָם יַחֲלִיקוּן, "they use a smooth tongue", i.e., they flatter. The Qal form includes the meaning "to be false," which is retained here in the Hiphil. The LXX renders this ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν, "with their tongues they deceived/dealt treacherously." The imagery of the Hebrew is lost, but the Greek makes the same point. The general condemnation of flattery in the Old Testament, as well as the immediate context in Psalm 5, implies the evil intent of the speakers. As Stöckhardt notes, "Actually according to the original text . . . they flatter the simple to more easily pull them into their trap."[30] At the same time, the smooth tongue can destroy the righteous in yet another way. Flattering those in power and accusing the innocent, the wicked aim to remove the righteous from his rightful place in the community of God's people.[31]

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[27]Othmar Keel relates the psalmic images of pit, grave and prison because of their structural similiarity both to each other and to Sheol. All are associated with death. Keel, Othmar, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. by Timothy J. Hallett (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 70.

[28]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 88.

[29]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 89.

[30]Stöckhardt, 125, translation mine.

[31]Mays, *Psalms*, 58.

In both structure and message, this psalm presents an absolute antithesis of the righteous and the wicked, those who can approach God in confidence and those who live in contradiction to God. God loves the former and will protect them with his presence (verses 12-13). He hates the latter and will not bear their approach (verses 5-6). Craigie rightly notes that in this psalm, "the enemies of the psalmist may symbolize all persons without God."[32] The lament particularly emphasizes the distinction between the righteous and the wicked in terms of their speech, as typified in the words Paul cites. The psalmist opens his mouth in prayer to God (verses 1-3); the wicked, in idolatry (verse 5). The wicked speak lies to destroy the righteous (verse 6); the righteous shouts for joy in God's deliverance (verse 11). In short, those in and those outside the people of God can be identified by what they say.

Psalm 140

Rom. 3:13b quotes the LXX exactly, this time Psalm 140 (139 LXX), yet another individual lament. Once again, the psalmist beseeches God to deliver him from his enemies. The various vocables that describe the foes include אָדָם רָע (ἄνθρωπος πονηρός), אִישׁ חֲמָסִים (ἀνήρ ἄδικος), רָשָׁע (ἁμαρτωλός), אִישׁ חֲמָסִים (ἄνθρωπος ἄδικος). These men think unrighteous thoughts (140:3, חָשְׁבוּ רָעוֹת). The word ἄδικος particularly resonates with Paul's point about the necessary righteousness of God.

The psalmist speaks of his enemy and his enemies, both singular and plural, even within the same sentence.[33] An individual characterizes a type. The group is

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[32]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 89.

[33]"Rescue me, Yahweh, from an evil man, from a man of sins save me; they think evil thoughts in the heart, all day they stir up battles" (140:2-3).

all alike in its wickedness.[34] They are as one. Opposed to them, the psalmist

speaks of himself, the poor and needy (verse 13: πτωχός, πένης; עָנִי, אֶבְיֹנִים),

and, most significantly for Paul's purpose, the righteous (verse 14: δίκαιοι,

צַדִּיקִים). We find that the psalm speaks of particular enemies from which Paul

generalizes to make an indictment of all outside of God's people.

In further portraying sins of speech, Paul quotes verse 4b (MT, LXX), "poison

of asps is upon their lips." ἰός, poison, translates חֵמָת, which has the added

denotations of heat and anger. ἀσπίς, an asp or a venomous snake, renders עַכְשׁוּב,

a hapax, sometimes identified as a horned adder.[35] The "lips" are mentioned again

in verse 10 (MT, LXX), "the trouble (κόπος, עָמָל) of their lips will cover them."

עָמָל describes what the wicked planned for the righteous--trouble, distress,

misfortune, disaster. Their words of slander and persecution are powerful enough to

bring about these evils, but through the intervention of God's justice, the catastrophes

fall back on their own heads. Thus, the Hebrew verson of the Psalm includes the pun

that the "heat" of their poison (verse 4) returns to them as fire and burning coals

(verse 11).[36]

Praying this psalm of individual complaint, the psalmist is sure to emphasize

his own right standing with Yahweh, a sharp contrast to the wickedness of his

enemies. While they are like deadly serpents with their false accusations, the psalmist

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[34]Allen, Leslie C., *Psalms 101-150*, vol. 21, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 264.

[35]Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 264. Allen observes that Jewish tradition as reflected in Qumran and in the targums, understood this vocable to refer to a spider. Considering this optional reading, Paul's selection of the snake imagery is all the more significant.

[36]Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 268.

uses his own mouth to cry out to his God. He confesses his commitment to the covenant relationship when he says "You are my God" (verse 7). The promises of the covenant again surface in verse 11 with the reference to the land.[37] The wicked can make no claims on the covenant; the righteous fully enjoy its benefits. Although lamenting his own situation, the psalmist by no means imagines himself estranged from all humankind. In verses 13-14, in which he exults in the Lord's final salvation (as in the final verse of Psalm 14), the psalmist identifies others--the afflicted, the needy, the righteous, and the upright--with whom he stands before God.[38] God's act of deliverance will rescue the community of the righteous and grant them victory over their oppressors.

Psalm 140 continues the same themes we have observed so far. The psalmist belongs to the community of the righteous in covenant relationship with God. He turns to God for help in the midst of oppression. The wicked are viewed *en masse* as deadly slanderers, violent schemers. The righteous, trusting in God, wait for the day when God will eliminate them by bringing their evil down upon them.

Psalm 10

As the last description of verbal sins, Paul cites Psalm 10:7 (MT, 9:28 LXX) "Their mouth is full of curse and bitterness." For poetic purposes to be discussed in Chapter 3, Paul totally changes the word order. Also, where the LXX has the singular in agreement with the MT, Paul uses the plural for the sake of his plural referent (Rom. 3:9, "all" people, which is picked up again in verse 13 with "their

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[37]Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 268.

[38]Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 268.

throat"). Also, the LXX adds trickery (δόλος) to curse and bitterness (ἀρά, πικρία); Paul doesn't follow the LXX here, probably for the sake of brevity.[39]

The LXX unites Psalms 9 and 10, so the citation is found in 9:28 (LXX). The alphabetic acrostic structure of the Psalm 9 is loosely carried through Psalm 10 and argues for its original unity.[40] On the other hand, the latter 18 verses have a different tone than the first section.[41] In Psalm 9 the psalmist is joyful in Yahweh's manifest victory over the wicked. Psalm 10 complains that Yahweh is apparently distant and that the wicked are succeeding.[42] Echoing Psalm 9:19-20, the psalmist then calls on God to defend the afflicted and the oppressed. This difference in tone indicates that Psalm 10 of the MT was indeed a later addition to Psalm 9, which once had a different conclusion, now lost. Psalm 10 was composed to conclude Psalm 9 in order to draw from its resources to address a new theological issue--the apparent victory of the wicked in this world. To heighten the significance of the quandary, the psalmist contrasts his world with Psalm 9. From the exultant triumph of Psalm 9, the psalmist also finds strength to continue to hope in God in spite of the apparent victory of unrighteousness (MT, Psalm 10:12-18).

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[39]In the second half of the catena in which Paul details the sinful body of the wicked, he manages to maintain an almost constant number of syllables per line through the first five lines. Vs. 13b has 10 syllables; vv. 13a, 13c, 14 and 15 all have 12.

[40]Hence, the New Interpreter's Bible concludes that the two were originally a single acrostic poem. *The New interpreter's Bible*, vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 716. That they were so conceived at one time is beyond doubt.

[41]Delitzsch compiles the evidence for the original unity of the two psalms and finds it wanting due to the differences in tone, circumstance and style. He concludes that the author of Psalm 9 later added Psalm 10 as a "pendant." Keil, Johann Friedrich Karl and Franz Delitzsch, *Psalms*, vol. 5, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Henderickson Publishers, 1989), 174-176.

[42]Mays observes the difference between Psalms 9 and 10: Psalm 9 gives thanks, while Psalm 10 is an individual prayer for help which restates the presupposed contradiction "between the reign of the Lord and conduct the nations." Mays, *Psalms*, 72.

Paul cites 9:28 (LXX). The mouth of the wicked is full of curse (ἡ ἀρά, מִרְמוֹת - betrayals, deceits) and bitterness (ἡ πικρία, תֹּךְ - oppression), to which the LXX adds deception (δόλος).[43] The first half is paralleled by "upon his tongue is trouble (κόπος) and affliction (πόνος)." Trouble (κόπος) has already been seen to be the natural consequence of a wicked tongue (LXX, Ps. 139:4b). Another recurring motif of this section is that the sinner does not have God before him (ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, LXX Ps. 9:25, MT 10:4, cf. Rom. 3:18). The text of the MT is unclear at this point, but it too indicates that for the sinner, "there is no God" (אֵין אֱלֹהִים). This hearkens back to Ps. 14, quoted in Rom. 3:11. The core of the sinner's character is his lack of faith toward God.

Two camps are again set in opposition, as we have noted in all the previous psalms. The wicked evildoers (רָשָׁע, רָע) are hostilely arrayed against the poor, the innocent, the orphan, and the oppressed (עָנִי, נָקִי, יָתוֹם, דָּךְ). Verses 3-4 depict the wicked as one who boasts in his heart's desire (cf. boasting in Ps. 5), who does not seek or consider God. The thoughts of his heart reveal his self-reliance (verse 6) and he employs his tongue to achieve his schemes (verse 7). Verses 8-10 tell how the wicked lie in ambush like a lion. Verse 11 again summarizes his disregard for God and his judgments. The last three verses name the wicked even more specifically. They are the nations, the Gentiles (ἔθνη, גּוֹיִם), who will be destroyed from the land

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[43]Liddon asserts that the LXX mistranslates each of the Hebrew words here (Liddon, Henry Parry, *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893], 67); Stöckhardt agrees that δόλος is a mistranslation of שׁ, but argues that πικρία includes the meaning of מרמה (Stöckhardt, *Commentar über den Breif Pauli an die Römer*, 125).

of Israel. Whether "nations" is employed literally or metaphorically[44] there is no other term which carries such strong connotations of opposition to God's people Israel. The final verse strikes a particularly Pauline chord in the silencing of enemy boasting: May God enter into judgment "so that man (ἄνθρωπος, אֱנוֹשׁ) may no longer boast (μεγαλαυχέω[45]) upon the earth." The rejection of any self-centered grounds of boasting for man is indeed a central tenant of Paul's Gospel, both in the book of Romans (cf., 2:23, 3:27, 4:2) and elsewhere (e.g., Eph. 2:8).

Isaiah 59

As the following comparison demonstrates, Paul selects his next verses from Isaiah 59:7-8.

Romans 3:15-17

ὀξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν
    ἐκχέαι αἷμα,
[16]σύντριμμα
καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
[17]καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.

Isaiah 59:7-8a

οἱ δὲ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐπὶ πονηρίαν τρέχουσιν
ταχινοὶ ἐκχέαι αἷμα· καὶ οἱ διαλογισμοὶ
αὐτῶν διαλογισμοὶ ἀφρόνων, σύντριμμα
καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν.
[8]καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ οἴδασιν

Every word except the first and the last can be found in the LXX text in the same order. Paul introduces this section with ὀξεῖς (swift, quick), an addition which emphasizes the hasty readiness of the sinners' actions. It also is synonymous with ταχινός from the LXX text. Paul removes the reference to the foolish thoughts of the

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[44]Delitzsch takes the primary enemy of the psalm to be "apostates and persecutors" within the nation of Israel (Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 175). He maintains that only at the end of the psalm "the heathen in Israel and the heathen world outside of Israel are blended together into one in his mind" (Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 184).

[45]This is a significant change from the MT עָרַץ, "to terrify," but one which better fits Paul's own theological point.

wicked. This would ruin the poetic pattern he seeks to establish, since he here intends only to focus on sinful deeds. The replacement of the last word, οἴδασιν with ἔγνωσαν is of little consequence.[46]

The LXX follows the MT closely in these verses. It only neglects to translate one word, נָקִי; it is the blood of the innocent that is shed. "Thoughts of sin" (אָוֶן מַחְשְׁבוֹת) is rendered "thoughts of fools" (διαλογισμοὶ ἀφρόνων), again showing the inseparability of sin and foolishness as noted from Psalm 14. σύντριμμα (destruction, ruin) and ταλαιπωρία (wretchedness, misery, trouble) translate שֹׁד (destruction, violence) and שֶׁבֶר (crushing). Isaiah employs the common metaphor which likens life to a road, common in proverbial expressions and wisdom literature (e.g., Ps. 1).[47] The wicked forsake the singular way of peace in favor of the crooked ways of their own devising (verse 8). The description and a few of the vocables (οἱ δὲ πόδες αὐτῶν, ἐκχέαι αἷμα) are reminiscent of Prov. 1:16. In that passage (Prov. 1:8-19), the wise father warns his son to refuse all invitations to join the wicked in their ways. Much of the description there also echoes the characterization of the wicked we have observed in the Psalms: they ambush the innocent (verse 11), they align themselves with Sheol and the forces of death (verse 12), they are motivated by greed (verse 13), and finally their own evil destroys them (verses 18-19).

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[46]Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), trans. and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, s.v. "oida," by H. Seesemann. The words are "more or less synonymous." Both can be used for personal objects, for example. Also in the TDNT, Bultmann argues that γιγνώσκω directly invokes the OT meaning of ידע in contexts of acknowledgment of God's will. If this is the case, Paul's choice better translates the Hebrew (*ibid.*, s.v. "ginosko," by R. Bultmann).

[47]Keil, Johann Friedrich Karl, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 7, *Isaiah*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 398.

Within Paul's catena of citations, only Is. 59:7-8 has no connection with the Psalter. Nevertheless, Isaiah 59 is definitely psalm-like in character. As a poetic indictment of Israel which turns to penitential confession, it accuses the whole nation. Especially in the LXX where the reference to the innocent has been removed, the speaker knows of no one who is sinless, not even himself. Verses 1-3 are accusatory and in the second person; verses 4-8 describe the depth of wickedness in the third person; verses 9-15 offer a public form of confession in first person plural. Only in verse 15 does one encounter "the one who shuns evil" and who becomes a prey for the others. Paul cleverly included Is. 59:7-8 which prophesy against the wickedness of Israel and assert the desperate need for an alien righteousness (Is. 59:16-20).

Isaiah 59 lacks the stark contrast between the righteous community and the wicked which we have noted in the previous passages. The prophesy indicts Israel with total corruption ("No one calls for justice," verse 4). The only righteous one remaining is God himself ("He saw that there was no one . . . no one to intervene," verse 16). Delitzsch observes that the opening verses emphasize the consequence of this sinfulness. Sin forms a wall that cuts the people off from God's saving hand (verse 2).[48] Wickedness among the people of God results in their removal from his saving activity. By the end of the chapter, only a remnant, those who repent of their sins, enjoy the benefits of the Redeemer to come to Zion (verse 20).

Psalm 36

Paul's final reference in his citation chain is a quotation of Psalm 36 (LXX 35:2). In Paul's structure, it moves beyond the description of sinful feet to a note

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[48]Keil-Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 395.

about sinful eyes--eyes that lack the fear (פַּחַד; φόβος) of God. פַּחַד signifies dread, religious awe.[49] Originally meaning "quake, tremble," it was taken up as a covenant name of God, "the fear of Isaac" (Gen. 31:42,53).[50] Thus, while the enemy's lack of fear could refer to his careless disregard for God's retribution, it more likely indicates his lack of faith, his disregard for God's covenant.[51]

The Hebrew text opens with the word נְאֻם and so identifies itself as a prophetic oracle. In the Hebrew Bible this is the singular occurance of this word without a construct connection to the divine name (usually יהוה).[52] Nevertheless, the word itself implies the divine origin of the psalm. Only with the help of God can the psalmist portray the heart of the wicked, which only God can see. At the same time, the first five verses can be characterized as wisdom literature.[53]

Paul's citation comes from the opening verse of Psalm 36, where the sinner (פֶּשַׁע; ὁ παράνομος) is characterized as one who thinks wrongly, as in Psalm 14. Psalm 36 finds him speaking sinfully "in his heart." The eyes, then, are a metaphor for the perspective of the mind.[54] As a consequence, the wicked are not even aware

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[49]*The Brown-Drver Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1906 ed., s.v. "פחד."

[50]*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s. v. "phobeo," by H. Balz.

[51]Lenski remarks about the virtue of fear: "It goes hand in hand with love: love is the positive side, fear the negative; love prompts one to do what pleases God, fear prompts one to refrain from what displeases God." Lenski, Richard Charles Henry, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), 1092-1093. The fear of God is a distinguishing characteristic of His people (Lenski, *The Interpretation*, 1017-1018). Mays concurs in the equation of "the faithful," "those who fear the Lord" and "the righteous" (Mays, *Psalms*, 35).

[52]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 291.

[53]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 290.

[54]As Craigie observes, the problem is "deep-seated in the mind." Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 291.

of their own condition, that their speech and action have been thoroughly corrupted.[55] As we have noted before, the wicked are not socially neutral, but they take their stand against the righteous. In verse 12, the psalmist prays that God not let them shake (נוּד, σαλεύω) him. The righteous, on the other hand, belong to the community that hopes in God's salvation (3rd person plural in verse 8: חָסוּ, ἐλπιοῦσιν; 1st person plural in verse 10: נִרְאָה, ὀψόμεθα). The object of their hope is the mercy (verse 11: חַסְדְּךָ; ἔλεος) of Yahweh. Toward the end of the psalm (verse 11), the righteous are identified with those who know (יָרַע) the Lord. They stand with God in a personal relationship of love and commitment. This knowledge of (relationship with) the Lord contrasts sharply with the opening depiction of the wicked, who do not even know themselves well enough to realize they are sinners, that they stand condemned before God (verse 3). In verses 6-10, the faithfulness of the Lord upon which the righteous rely is described largely in covenant terms (חֶסֶד, מִשְׁפָּט, צְדָקָה). Thus the righteous enjoy a right relationship with God, one based on his terms and his promises. They know God, trust and fear Him. The wicked person does not know God; hence, he does not even know himself.

The Enemies: The Broader Context

Since we have observed so many recurrent themes in the study of the particular psalms cited, it seems prudent to relate our understanding of the enemies with their general depiction throughout the Psalter. This exercise appears all the more necessary in our study of Romans 3, since most of the Pauline catena originates from the Psalter. Paul may well intend to invoke the image of the enemies portrayed

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[55]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 292.

by the entire Psalter.[56] Drawing on psalm studies made by James Luther Mays, Patrick D. Miller, Othmar Keel, and Hans-Joachim Kraus, we gain a fuller understanding of the theological function of this characterization. As we summarize their conclusions, we will note verses from the Psalms Paul cites (5, 10, 14, 36, 140) which reflect and support this composite sketch of the enemy.

Godless

The first thing that is apparent from the description of the opponents of the psalmist is that they are not merely his personal enemies. They are thoroughly wicked, thoroughly opposed to God and all that is good. Several factors join together to explain this equation. As perpetrators of injustice, the enemies oppose not only the poor and the weak (Ps. 14:6), but God himself, who defends the oppressed (Ps. 5:4-6,10; 10:14,17-18; 140:12).[57] Second, as much as the psalmist believes the promises that God sides with his people, he must likewise believe that God stands with him against his enemies.[58] Every righteous Israelite knows that he belongs to God's chosen people and that, based on God's election, the enemies of God's people are the enemies of God himself (Ps. 14:4).[59] Morever, the psalmist identifies with God's own cause. He exults in the rule of God over every evil. In praying against their enemies, the people of God thus pray for God's justice, for the fulfillment of his

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[56]Mays observes, "There is not a psalm that does not in some way or other reflect some dimension of this fundamental conflict" between the reign of the Lord and the opposing nations with their gods. Mays, *Psalms*, 34.

[57]Miller, Patrick D., *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 303. Mays, *Psalms*, 35.

[58]This comes into play most obviously in the prayers of the king (e.g., Psalm 2), whose royal status has been established by divine authority (Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 126).

[59]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 127.

own promises (Ps. 140:12).[60] Keel observes that the characterization of a common enemy plays a key role in the identity of any community and, consequently, the depiction of this nemesis as the antipole of the community reveals a great deal about the character of the community itself.[61] The just Israelite identifies his opposite as brutally violent (Ps. 5:6, 9; 10:7-10; 14:4; 140:1), covetous of riches and power (Ps. 10:3), confident in his own schemes (Ps. 5:5; 10:2-6,11,13; 14:1; 140:5).[62] The wicked reject the covenant; the center of their godlessness is their faithless heart. On the other hand, the righteous "found their ideal in the preservation of Yahweh's order and in community of faith with him" (Ps. 5:11-12; 10:16; 14:7; 36:5-12; 140:13).[63]

Demonic

Since the enemies oppose God and his people, they prove themselves allies of sinister powers and take on demonic attributes. The details of this imagery arose from the interaction between the monotheistic theology of Israel and the polytheism of her ancient Near Eastern neighbors. From the mythology of her pagan neighbors, Israel borrowed symbols and images to confess her own faith in the sovereign activity of Yahweh.[64]

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[60]Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*, 302.

[61]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 78.

[62]Mays writes, "The wicked are the polar opposite. Their conduct is depicted as autonomous, arrogant, deceitful, violent." Mays, *Psalms*, 35. Mays includes Ps. 5, 10 and 14 among the most paradigmatic descriptions of the opposition between the righteous and the wicked. Mays, *Psalms*, 35.

[63]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 85. So also Mays: "Those who say the psalms are called servants of the Lord . . . a servant is one whose identity and conduct are defined by relationship to a lord." Mays, *Psalms*, 34.

[64]Hence, Keel speaks of a demythologization of the world presented in the Old Testament and Kraus observes "fragmentary elements" of myth in Israel's religion. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 54; Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 128.

Israelite monotheism rearranged polytheistic pagan images with the result that a dualism emerged. Since the Israelites confessed Yahweh alone to be the origin of creation, life, and every earthly good (e.g., Ps. 5:12; 36:5-9), the wicked forces of this world were naturally seen to coalesce into a unified opposition. This process may be responsible for the fact that the wicked can be described in the singular or the plural in the same psalm and even the same verse.[65] In a kind of unequal dualism, wickedness was thus given an independent status apart from God, while it was yet restrained and confined by his almighty power.[66] Keel points out the general tendency in the ancient Near East toward "clear-cut standards--for seeing things in black and white." This is particularly apparent in the Psalms and wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the primary sources for Paul's catena.

This unequal dualism molded the presentation of God's activity in creation and redemption. Leviathan, the primeval monster of chaos, is reduced to "an object of divine amusement" in God's world.[67] In psalmic depictions of creation, Yahweh is pictured as the one who triumphed over the forces of chaos and brought order and life to the world.[68] Creation is thus categorized as the first act of salvation against wicked enemies.[69] God likewise demonstrates his covenant faithfulness by preserving the world in the face of continuing threats of disintegration; in turn,

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[65]Thus, Psalm 10 generally speaks of the wicked as a singular individual; psalm 14 begins with "the fool" but refers to "them" from 1b-6; Psalm 36 likewise begins in the singular with only the final verse resorting to the plural.

[66]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 49.

[67]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 49.

[68]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 128.

[69]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 53.

mighty acts of deliverance in the history of Israel can be described in terms of new creation (e.g., Psalm 36:5-9).

The unity of God against evil and of God's activity in creation and deliverance are mirrored by a unity of the alliance formed by the demonic forces of chaos, the nations who oppose Israel and the enemy who opposes the psalmist. Hence, the enemy is commonly designated פֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן (Ps. 5:5; 6:8; 14:4; 28:3; 36:12; 59:2; 92:7,9; 94:4,14; 101:8; 141:4,9); "אָוֶן is the (abyss of) viciousness, the dark counter pole of צֶדֶק."[70] Likewise, the designation רְשָׁעִים ("wicked") denotes linkage with demonic forces.[71] Those who oppose the rule of God and the life of his people join primordial evil under the banner of Sheol and death.[72]

Without a doubt, the enemy is fully human (Ps. 10:18); the psalmist does not pray against evil spirits or foreign gods.[73] Yet, the alliance of the enemy with wickedness enables the psalmist to depict him with demonic characteristics. The activities of the enemies are detailed in animal imagery, which in ancient Near Eastern culture had been associated with the night wanderings of demons.[74] Even the specific animals to which the psalmist refers--lion (7:2; 10:9; 17:12; 22:13), dog (22:16,20; 59:6,14), serpent (58:4; 140:3)--were considered to be "particularly

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[70]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 131.

[71]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 131.

[72]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 134.

[73]Keel finds one exception to this rule in Psalm 91:5-6; Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 85.

[74]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 54.

susceptible to demons."[75] On the other hand, it is important to note the degree to which the ancient Isrealites transferred the idea of evil from the realm of spirits to the realm of anthropology and ethics.[76] For this reason, the enemies in the psalter can be quickly sketched by reference to their wicked deeds.

Persecutors

The nature of the enemies' opposition to God becomes most concrete in their efforts to destroy the righteous. To accomplish this goal, they attempt to separate the righteous one from his God who protects and blesses him (Ps. 36:11).[77] They especially seize those moments when they perceive their intended victim is weak (Ps. 10:2,8). When the righteous suffers from a disease, the wicked accuse him, telling him his sickness shows that he has lost God's favor, that God has abandoned him forever.[78] Perhaps the pious Israelite will forsake the confidence which binds him to God. If the righteous one enjoys good health, the wicked can take him to court and present charges against him.[79] Perhaps he will be found guilty and forever banished from the cultus and the community of the faithful.

The primary weapon of the wicked is his own tongue by which he presents his slander and false accusations (Ps. 5:6,9; 10:7; 36:3; 140:3,11).[80] In the instance of

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[75]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 79. Keel maintains that as Mesopotamian prayers had been directed against magicians and wicked spiritual forces, the pious Israelite prayed against his enemies in the same way (Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 85).

[76]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 49.

[77]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 135.

[78]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 132.

[79]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 132.

[80]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 130.

a court case, they assert that the righteous has broken the law of God, while they themselves bear false witness and bring false witnesses to testify.[81] At the same time, the wicked do not hesitate to employ violence, if it furthers their purpose (Ps. 5:6; 10:2,8-10; 36:11; 140:4).

The deceptions of the wicked eventually prove to be their own undoing (Ps. 5:10; 140:9-11). Since Yahweh was invoked as witness in promises and vows, the deceit of the wicked earned them a powerful enemy who would eventually destroy them.[82] That the wicked never reflects on these consequences reveals his conclusion that for day-to-day life, "There is no God," i.e., there is no one who will call him to account (Ps. 10:4; 14:1; 36:1).[83] So the wicked one lives in the brazen confidence of his own deceitful words and schemes.[84]

Conclusion

We have observed several consistent characteristics of the wicked in the passages which Paul cites and in the Psalter in general. The enemies take the role of a nemesis in their opposition to the psalmist and God's people. They represent the exact opposite in values, life and confidence. While the people of God stand for truth and faithfulness and life with God, the enemies live by deceit, lies and murder. As the people of God are primarily marked by their trust in God, so the chief characteristic of the enemy is his unbelief. The enemies are human, but their

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[81]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 131.

[82]Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 96.

[83]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 129.

[84]Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 129.

collusion with Sheol lends them demonic characteristics. In the end, God will conquer and destroy them together with all the other enemies of his rule. Thus, the psalmist does not describe the character and activities of his enemies from an unbiased sociological perspective. He speaks from the perspective of his God, who sees and judges the heart and mind. From that vantage point, the figure of the enemy takes the shape of utter evil.

CHAPTER 2

ROMANS: CONTEXT, PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

Compared to many other books of the New Testament, Romans enjoys a great deal of scholarly consensus with respect to its isagogics. As a universally accepted Pauline epistle, no significant arguments have been made against its authorship. It can be dated to the spring of the tenth year of Paul's missionary activity, probably A.D. 57.[1] The letter itself witnesses to that time when the apostle concluded that his efforts in the east were completed and, after a visit to Jerusalem, he was ready to enter new fields in the far west of the Roman empire (Rom. 15:28). We may now reconstruct with some confidence what motivated Paul to address the status of the Jewish people in his epistle to the Romans.

Paul

The life and work of the Apostle Paul centered in his divine call to be the apostle to the Gentiles, to present the nations as an acceptable offering through Christ (Rom. 15:16). As an apostle, he was eager to go to Spain, where he could be confident that he would be breaking new ground for the Church. He also anticipated that the Roman congregation could provide a good base for operations for his travels further west (Rom. 15:24).[2] Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul was nevertheless a

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[1]Bruce, F. F., "The Romans Debate--Continued," *The Romans Debate*, 2d ed., ed. by Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 177.

[2]Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 188.

Hebrew and an Israelite (2 Cor. 11:22) who performed his ministry among the nations

with a keen awareness to the relationship between his work and the status of Israel

before God. In practically every new city, he began his mission with the synagogue,

presenting the gospel to the Jews first and whatever God-fearing Gentiles could be

found in their midst.[3] Only after he was no longer welcome there did Paul turn his

attention fully to the Gentiles in a forum outside the synagogue. For the one who

wrote that the gospel is the power of God "first for the Jew, then for the Gentile"

(Rom. 1:16), the priority given to the Jews by God in salvation-history could not be

overlooked.

As a first century Christian, Paul was very conscious of the tension in the

Church between Jew and Gentile. He together with all the apostles proclaimed the

Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of promises to the patriarchs as recorded in the

Hebrew Scriptures. Paul repeatedly turned to the Scriptures to demonstrate that Jesus

was this Christ. As the Church expanded, Jerusalem remained its center.[4] Yet, that

very expansion, accomplished through the inclusion of the Gentiles, brought questions

about the status of the Jews to the fore. Most Jews had rejected the message that

Jesus was the Christ. They continued to practice their religion as they understood it

from the Scriptures, some of them with an apparently blameless obedience to the

Torah. In the generation before the Messiah had arrived, such obedience would have

served as conclusive verification of membership in the people of God. Now, where

were the boundary lines of God's people? In view of God's ancient promises to

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[3]Dunn, James D. G., *Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 38A, ed. by Ralph P. Martin (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), xlvii.

[4]Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 190.

Israel, Jewish and Gentile Christians alike had difficulty assessing the current status of both the Gentile Christian who did not keep Torah and the non-Christian Jew who did.

Paul could claim intimate knowledge of the mindset of his unbelieving countrymen, faithful Jews who rejected Jesus as the Christ. He himself had been among their number in his previous opposition to "the Way" (Acts 9:2). His many conflicts with Jews made the question of their standing before God very personal for Paul. His practice of starting his missionary activity in the synagogue naturally resulted in many vehement arguments about the character of the ancestral faith which both parties claimed.

Ready to leave Greece for Jerusalem, Paul felt the tension that the Jew-Gentile issue brought to the Church. As we have seen, several factors heightened this tension in his own mind: his own double identity as a Jew and as the apostle to the Gentiles, the very character of his gospel, foretold by the Hebrew Scripture but open to the Gentiles without the requirements of the law, and finally his own experience of argumentative and sometimes violent conflict with Jews who didn't accept his message.

Rome

Christianity arrived in Rome before any apostle. Many scholars reconstruct three phases of the history of the Roman Christian community before the penning of the letter to the Romans: an initial period in the 40's when the nascent Christian community was connected with the synagogue; a period after the expulsion of the Jews from Rome (probably 49 to 54 A.D.) during which time the Gentiles took over

the leadership and the self-understanding of the community; and a time after the Jewish Christians returned (54-57 A.D.) marked by strained relations in the congregations.[5]

Christianity arrived in Rome within a few years of the Pentecost event. Luke even records that pilgrims from Rome were present in Jerusalem on that very day (Acts 2:10). Furthermore, Christian traders and missionaries would carry the message with them on their visits to Rome. As a Jewish sect, Christianity grew in the context of the Jewish community, which James D. G. Dunn estimates between 40,000 and 50,000 at the middle of the first century.[6]

Since the early Christian community found itself within or attached to the synagogue, it maintained a continuity with Judaism and a strong affiliation with the Christians in Jerusalem. F. F. Bruce cites Ambriosiaster as affirming his own conclusions about the origins of Christianity in Rome: "The Romans had embraced the faith of Christ, albeit according to the Jewish rite, although they saw no sign of

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[5]The following summary represents the conclusions of Joseph A. Fitzmyer (Fitzmyer, Joseph A., *Romans*, vol. 33, *The Anchor Bible*, New York: Doubleday, 1964, 25-36), James D. G. Dunn (Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlv-liv), Jeffrey A. Crafton (Crafton, Jeffrey A. "Paul's Rhetorical Vision and the Purpose of Romans: toward a New Understanding," *Novum Testamentum* 32,4 [1990]: 317-339), F. F. Bruce (Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 175-194) who present the same reconstruction of the situation of the Roman church at the writing of Romans. Peter Stuhmacher (Stuhlmacher, Peter, "The Purpose of Romans," *The Romans Debate*, ed. by Karl P. Donfried, 2d ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, 231-242) also appears to support this reconstruction, although his identification of the purpose of Romans focuses less on the specific history. Neil Elliot summarizes the consensus: "In recent scholarship, the hypothesis has found wide support that tensions between Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome in the wake of the return of Jews exiled under Claudius constitute at least part of the letter's historical context, although the extent to which those tensions can explain the letter's content is a matter of question." Neil Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 45 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 43.

[6]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlvi.

mighty works nor any of the apostles."[7] Yet the claims Christians made about the

Christ were sufficient to disturb the communal life of the synagogue. Acts records

the arguments, even violence, which could arise from the clash of the two faiths.

Riots apparently broke out in Rome also. The famous quotation from Suetonius

observes that Claudius, in an attempt to keep the peace, expelled the Jews who were

in an uproar at the instigation of "Chrestus," a common early Latin spelling of

Christ.[8] Many Jewish Christians, as members of the Jewish sect at the center of the

controversy, were forced to leave. The Roman community found herself gutted of

her leadership and deprived of many of her members.

The reconstruction of the next phase of early Roman Christianity interpolates

between the expulsion edict and the situation reflected in Romans in which most of

the community are Gentile Christians. The remaining members of the community,

not willing to risk their very existence by continued and often confrontational

association with the synagogue, withdrew to form their own private house-churches.

By A.D. 57 these had grown to such an extent that Gentiles found themselves in the

majority. They developed a practice of Christianity which did not limit itself to the

piety and customs of the synagogue. Crafton suggests from evidence in Romans that

the new developments included charismatic spirituality and leadership, libertine ethics

and even anti-Semitism picked up from the prevailing attitudes of the Romans.[9]

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[7]*Ad Romanos*, cited by Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 178.

[8]Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 179. Dunn also remarks that there is "general agreement" that "Chrestus" must mean Christ. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlviii.

[9]Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision," 324.

Upon the death of Claudius, either his edict automatically became a dead letter or Nero rescinded the order.[10] The now Gentile churches found the return of their Jewish brethren troublesome.[11] They did not want a repetition of the previous disturbances. Their new attitudes toward Judaism reinforced a tendency to look down on the "new comers" who could claim senior status in the community. The Jewish Christians, likely returning in high hopes of reestablishing the life and community they had previously known, were disheartened by the changes which had taken place in their absence. Sensing the rejection of the majority, they held even tighter to their Jewish identity and heritage.[12]

The situation in Rome to which Paul writes is marked by a division between Jewish and Gentile Christianity. Yet, the issue cannot be reduced to a question of race. The lines were drawn more by perspective and practice. Some Jews may have been persuaded to the more liberal side. Romans, too, were sometimes enamored by Jewish piety and may have gladly submitted to it.[13] The problem was essentially theological, not racial. What was the relationship of Christianity to Judaism? Paul addresses this issue by presenting his own theology, specifically how believing Jews and Gentiles compose one people of God through faith in Jesus Christ. To do this, he must take a path between the two Roman camps by both affirming and limiting the status of Israel before God.

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[10]Fitzmyer points to Nero's wife, Poppaea Sabina, and her reputation for favoring Jews, as a likely motivator in the latter case. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 77.

[11]Elliot observes, "In recent scholarship, the hypothesis has found wide support that tensions between Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome in the wake of the return of Jews exiled under Claudius constitute at least part of the letter's historical context." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 43.

[12]Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision," 325.

[13]Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 186.

Purpose

While various other purposes have been found for the book of Romans relating
it to the offering of the Gentiles in Jerusalem and the future mission to Spain, scholars
who accept the previous summary of the situation in Rome emphasize Paul's intention
to unite the Roman communities. He addresses the concrete problem of the division
in the church.[14] As Dunn notes, he seeks to lay out an answer to essential questions
of identity, "Who is a Jew?" and "Who are the elect of God?"[15] Paul answers these
in reference to God's revelation in Jesus Christ, foretold by "the law and the
prophets" (Rom. 3:21). F. F. Bruce likewise identifies the aim of the letter as
unifying the Roman Christians in partnership with Paul in mission to the Gentiles.[16]
Crafton agrees with this conclusion.[17] He further emphasizes the rhetorical nature of
the work as it sets before the community a vision of itself which it should accept as
its own redefinition.[18] Jews and Gentiles both belong to the people of God in Jesus
Christ, and this does not signify the abrogation of God's promises to Israel but their
fulfillment.[19]

Structure

Paul clearly identifies the central theme by which he intends to settle the
tensions among Roman Christians: The righteousness of God has been revealed--the

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[14]Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 79.

[15]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, xlv.

[16]Bruce, "The Romans Debate--Continued," 193.

[17]Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision," 328.

[18]Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision," 339.

[19]Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision," 331.

just will live by faith (1:17).[20] The broad outline of his development presents itself easily enough, since each section deals with a primary subject, is sufficiently unified and marked by opening and closing statements. Cranfield notes the common recognition that 1:1-17 serves as an epistolatory opening and climaxes with a thematic statement; 1:18-8:39 contains two large sections which are variously divided; chapters 9 through 11 and 12 through 15:13 compose two further divisions; finally, 15:14 and following continues the remarks of 1:8-15 and concludes the book.[21]

Despite other disagreements that have arisen about the book of Romans (e.g., its unity, the role of chapters 9 through 11, the authenticity of chapter 16 and the relationship between the doctrinal and paranetic sections), scholars largely agree about the place of Romans 3:9-20 in Paul's presentation of his gospel. These verses summarize the first major point of the letter, as Paul himself states, that "Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin" (Ro. 3:9).[22] Romans 3:9-20 can be divided into three sections. Verse 9 offers the conclusion for 1:18-3:8; 3:10-18 provides a Scriptural

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[20]Moo identifies the theme as "The gospel," which Paul variously relates to the tensions between Jews and Gentiles, justifcation by faith, and individual transformation. Moo, Douglas J., *The Epistle to the Romans*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. by Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 27-30.

[21]Cranfield, C.E.B., *The Epsitle to the Romans*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII, International Critical Commentary*, 6th edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Limited, 1975), 27.

[22]With reference to 1:18-3:20, the following headings have been suggested: "The world's need of God's saving act in Christ" (Knox, John, *Acts, Romans*, vol. 9, *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. by Georg Arthur Buttrick [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954]); "In the light of the gospel there is no question of men's being righteous before God otherwise than by faith" (Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*); "The Theme Negatively Explained: Without the Gospel God's Wrath is Manifested toward All Human Beings" (Fitzmyer, Joseph A., "The Letter to the Romans," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy, [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990]); "Universal Sinfulness" (Morris, Leon, *The Epistle to the Romans*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988; reprint, 1995]).

proof preceded by a typical introduction; verses 19-20 explain and defend the link between the conclusion of 3:9 and the citation.

Conclusion

Paul's situation and that of the Roman community underline the significance of Romans 3:9-20 in the entire argument of the letter. In the conclusion of his first point, that all people, including the Jews, are under sin, Paul seeks to establish a common foundation upon which to present his theology of a united people of God in Jesus Christ, a people declared righteous by faith in him. In addressing the situation of the Jews before God, Paul addresses a central question of his theology and his mission. Paul also speaks directly to the crisis of the Roman community, confused by the new relation of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. In this first section, as Paul addresses the pro-Jewish faction of the community, he urges them to re-evaluate their countrymen and join Paul in concluding that they are "under sin." Jewish Christians must complete the break with their previous identity as the people of God and fully join the new vision of God's people in Christ.

CHAPTER 3

THE VERSES IN THEIR PAULINE CONTEXT

From our study of the Psalter, we have detailed the enemy motif which Paul applies to both the Jews and Gentiles in Romans 3:10-18. This chapter first reviews Rom. 1:18-3:9 in order to determine the scope and basis of this conclusion with respect to the Jew. The aim is to see which Jews Paul excludes from the people of God and why. Then it will return to the specific description of the catena to explain how these verses support and develop the analysis of the status of Jew before God. Through integrating what may be safely presumed about the difficulties in the Christian community in Rome (chapter 2) with the theology of the enemy which Paul invokes (chapter 1), we gain a clear understanding of the effect Paul intended for his catena.

Paul's Argument against the Jews

Romans 1:18-32

While not specifically directed against the Jews, Paul's opening salvo against sinners does not finally leave them unscathed.[1] As Leon Morris observes, Paul indicts all sinfulness of mankind and does not limit his remarks to the Gentiles,

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[1]Cranfield remarks, ". . . Paul himself reckoned that, in describing . . . the sinfulness of the heathen, he was also, as a matter of fact, thereby describing the basic sinfulness of fallen man as such, the inner reality of the life of Jews no less than of that of the Gentiles." C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 28.

although these are his primary targets.[2] This characterization of the sinfulness of the Gentiles, borrowed from standard Hellenistic Jewish polemics,[3] is significant for our purposes, since Paul eventually concludes that Jews who reject Christ are equally subject to the wrath of God.

Romans 1:18 serves as a title for the entire section (1:18-3:20): "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Like the enemy motif in the Psalter, this verse reflects the cosmic opposition between God and evil. On the one hand, God is wrathful toward his enemies; on the other, they actively oppose him in their attempt to suppress the truth (truth is from God, verse 19; about God, verse 20; and of God, verse 25). The "all" of this opening verse already intimates the eventual scope of Paul's condemnation of both Jews and Gentiles.[4]

Reasoning in accord with Psalm 14, Paul immediately links sinfulness with foolishness (verses 21-22). Those opposed to truth cannot be wise. Their hearts are ἀσύνετος, a word which foreshadows Rom. 3:11, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων.[5] The heart becomes darkened (ἐσκοτίσθη), a term which invokes the dualistic light/dark

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[2]Morris, Leon, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, reprinted 1995), 74. Morris observes that "some of the things [Paul] says had certainly been applied to the Jews (cf. verse 23 with Ps. 106:20; Jer. 2:11)."

[3]Tobin, Thomas H., "Controversy and Continuity in Romans 1:18-3:20," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993), 304. Cf. also, Elliot, Neil, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, vol. 45, ed. by David E. Orton (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 173.

[4]Tobin highlights the usefulness and originality of the "all": "Emphasis on *all* human ungodliness and wickedness was not part of this kind of Jewish apologetic, but it did serve Paul's purposes very well . . . by implication, Jewish misconduct must also be included." Tobin, *Controversy and Continuity*, 305.

[5]Morris reminds us that heart is not here used as the center of emotions, but the center of the whole inner life. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 85.

dichotomy so frequent in the New Testament. As another dualistic feature, one may note that the wicked exchange the truth of God for *the* lie (verse 25, τῷ ψεύδει).[6] The definite article reflects the unity of evil. Here the reference is to idolatry, which Paul connects to all the sins of mankind.[7]

In chapter 1, Paul mentions the relationship between the body and sin, but differently than he will in chapter 3 where sin of different members is detailed. The punishment for sin includes the degradation of the body by that very sin (1:24,27). Also the emphasis on sexual sin (verses 26-27) finds no parallel in the catena. The rest of the chapter (verses 26-32) catalogues the behavior resulting from the inner corruption of humankind. Particularly the sins of verse 29b ("they are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice") and verse 31 (senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless) reflect the character of the enemies in the Psalter.[8] The first set depicts their violent activities, while the second portrays the wicked mind--נָבָל neglecting their own accountability, without חָסֵר. Since idolatry is the lie, the idolater's deceit becomes a natural outgrowth of his own religion (verses 29-30).

In all, Paul achieves several purposes in 1:18-32. Condemning wickedness in the terms of the Hellenistic synagogue, Paul feels the need to affirm his common

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[6]Likewise, Cranfield understands the unified nature of sin by asserting, "Sin is always an assault on the truth, that is, the fundamental truth of God as Creator, Redeemer and Judge." Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 30.

[7]Morris points to Wis. 14:27 as an explanation of the connection between idolatry and sin: the worship of idols is "the beginning and cause and end of every evil." Morris, *Romans*, 87.

[8]On the basis of the thematic parallels between 1:18-32 and the catena, Keck suggests that Paul already has the catena in mind and is preparing a Gentile audience to accept its verdict. Keck, Leander A., "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," in *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. by Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1977), 153.

ground with Judaism.[9] On the one hand, Paul knew that many charged him with preaching a Gospel that led to liscentiousness. On the other hand, some in Rome may have misused the Pauline Gospel as an excuse for wickedness (cf. Rom. 6:1). To both Paul proves that he squarely opposes such behavior. Likewise, those Jewish elements who suspected that Paul had "sold out" to the Gentiles would welcome his condemnation of paganism. Little did they suspect that he was about to turn the same rhetoric against Jews as well.[10] He has established the foundation of God's wrath against unrighteousness, so that he can now go on to his main concern in this section, how the Jew stands before God.[11]

Romans 2:1-29

All of 1:18-3:20 relates to Paul's purpose of presenting the righteousness available in Christ by first showing the need for such righteousness, the wrath of God

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[9]E. P. Sanders even suggests that all of 1:18-2:29 is wholly based on the style of a typical synagogue sermon. E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 129. Elliot agrees, "There is little doubt that the indictment of human impiety and immorality in Rom. 1.18-32 is aimed particularly at the Gentile world in terms developed in the propaganda literature of the Hellenistic synagogue." Neil Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 45, ed. by David E. Orton (Sheffield: Sheffild Academic Press, 1990), 173.

[10]Schmeller points out that the expected Jewish discourse would have continued with the fortune of Israel in distancing itself from the heathen. Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribe,"* vol. 19 in *Neuentestamentlische Abhandlungen* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1987), 282.

[11]Moo writes, "While, then, 1:18-3:20 brings charges against all humanity, the structure and relative weight of Paul's indictment reveal that the Jew is his main 'target.' After all, few people would have to be convinced that Gentiles were in need of God's righteousness." Moo, Douglas J., *The Epistle to the Romans*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. by Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 93. So also Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribe,"* 285.

against all wickedness.[12] Within this antithesis, Paul makes an obvious transition at

2:1, where his accusation moves from third person plural to second person singular,

"You are without excuse, O man." Paul does not yet turn to his Christian audience in

Rome, or even the pro-Jewish faction. Paul rather employs the diatribe style in which

he plays out a conversation with a Jew, as a teacher to a pupil.[13] If 1:18-32 can be

viewed as a typical synagogue sermon, 2:1 turns to the Jewish audience in that

synagogue.[14] Paul's point of contention with the interlocutor is his flagrant sins and

his misplaced confidence that he will escape condemnation.[15]

The first 11 or 16 verses of Romans 2 have been variously understood to

address the righteous Gentile, Jews and Gentiles,[16] or just the Jew.[17] Dunn,

Morris, Cranfield, Fitzmyer and Moo conclude that the Jew is wholly or primarily in

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[12]Joseph Fitzmyer fittingly titles this section, "The theme negatively explained: Without the gospel God's wrath is manifested toward all human beings." Fitzmyer, Joseph A., "The Letter to the Romans," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 835.

[13]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 125-6. Schmeller suggests that the diatribe is based on several missionary conversations Paul had with Jews and Gentiles (Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribe,"* 285). After an exacting comparison between classical and Pauline use of the Diatribe, he concludes that they work with "stark unterschiedlichen Begriffen von 'Diatribenstil,'" (Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribe,"* 430).

[14]By rhetorical analysis, Schmeller concludes that Paul addresses the Jew who speaks the indictment of 1:18-32. Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribe."* 280.

[15]Hence, Elliot rightly identifies the interlocutor as a hypocrite, not a "pious person." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 185. Stowers calls him "pretentious." Stowers, Stanley Kent, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, in SBL Dissertation Series 57, ed. by William Baird (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 111.

[16]Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 112.

[17]Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 41. Also, Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 107.

mind throughout;[18] Thomas H. Tobin, on the other hand, argues for a change in interlocutors between 2:1-11 and 2:17-29. This decision is not particularly crucial to this thesis, since the accusations against the named Jew (2:17-29) are not substantially different from Paul's accusations in the beginning of the chapter. Still, the parallel between the Jewish attitude expressed in Wisdom 12-15 and the vocabulary of verse 4 shifts the evidence to favor a Jewish interlocutor from the beginning of the chapter.[19]

In the first 11 verses, Paul accuses the interlocutor who rejoices in the condemnation of others but neglects to note that he himself is caught in the same sins. Since God judges by works (verse 6) and is impartial (verse 11), only those who do good can hope to gain his favor (verses 7,10). The interlocutor, however, sins in the same way as the Gentiles.[20] Verses 12-13 draw the line between those "in" (who shall be justified) and those "out" on the basis of doing the law or having sinned (aorist, ἥμαρτον). With a significance which we shall observe later, Paul reminds his hearers that the final judgment will be made by Jesus Christ "in accordance with my Gospel."

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[18]Fitzmyer reports that the majority of modern commentators agree that the interlocutor is "a Jew who judges himself superior to the pagan because of his people's privileges." Fitzmyer, Joseph, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 297.

[19]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 128. "Several of the words Paul uses in verse 4a are found in OT and Jewish descriptions of God's goodness and mercy toward Israel" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 133).

[20]"Above all, the ὦ ἄνθρωπε in 2:1-5 is pretentious (ἀλαζών) because he sets himself up as a judge of others while he does the same things for which he condemns them. He is someone who pretends to be better than others." Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 111.

In verses 17-20 Paul calls the Jew by name and depicts the interlocutor's self-understanding.[21] This Jew knows the treasure with which he has been entrusted in the special revelation of God. He boasts in this status and sets himself up as a teacher of those in the darkness of paganism.[22] In the next verses (verses 21-24) Paul points out that possession of the law alone is an insufficient basis for security before God if one blatantly transgresses that law. Significantly, his interrogation only asks about gross sins: stealing, adultery, idolatry. With this approach, Paul suggests again that the doers will be justified.[23] In his final attack on hypocritical security, Paul asserts that even circumcision presents no benefit (ὠφελεῖ) to those who fail to keep the law (νόμον πράσσῃς, verse 25), who break the law (παραβάτης νόμου, verses 25,27).

Charles H. Cosgrove concludes that Paul has thus far failed to make the full indictment he claims to have accomplished in 3:9. "The *Torah-faithful* are not vulnerable to Paul's assault on the Jewish hypocrite in 2:17-29."[24] Others argue for a broader scope of Paul's attack by various interpretations of the start of the chapter. Commenting on 2:1, Cranfield points to the Sermon on the Mount as evidence that

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[21]According to Thompson, "Paul links three concepts: calling oneself a Jew, relying on the law, and boasting before God. These three elements of v. 17--Jewish identity, the law, God--are sometimes connected in the self-awareness of the Jew as it is expressed in contemporary Jewish literature. . . . None of this is necessarily bad." Thompson, Richard W., "Paul's double Critique of Jewish Boasting: A Study of Rom 3, 27 in Its Context," *Biblica* 67 (1986), 524.

[22]Thompson points out that boasting would be proper and laudable, but only for those who both had and kept the law. It could even be identified with true worship. Thompson, "Paul's double Critique of Jewish Boasting," 523.

[23]"In making the point that doing is what counts, not merely knowing the law, Paul is using a point common to Judaism, i.e., using an acknowledged point against the self-understanding of the Jew." Keck, Leander A., "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 157.

[24]Cosgrove, Charles H., "What If Some have Not Believed? The Occasion and Thrust of Romans 3:1-8," *Zeitschrift für die Neuentestamentliche Wissenschaft* 78 (1987), 91.

there are more subtle ways to break the commandments.[25] Various other authors

also resort to an "apocalyptic" understanding of the law, which could apply Paul's

accusations to all but the perfect human being. In this case, Paul would have

confidently presumed that his audience would accept and automatically apply such

exacting standards, even without any clues in the text. Furthermore Paul could not

depend on his audience to follow such a move, since those with Judaistic tendencies

typically have very positive perspectives toward the law. Also, Paul's description of

the gross and blatant sinfulness of the Gentiles hardly lends itself to a suddenly more

subtle application.[26]

Leon Morris identifies the sin of the interlocutor in his judgmental

condemnation of others.[27] This solution, however, requires the initial clause in

Rom. 2:1 to serve double duty and in two different senses: "*When you judge the*

other, you judge yourself, for you do the same things *by judging the other*."

Certainly Paul could have explicated this meaning more clearly, if he had intended it.

Also, none of Paul's later accusation (2:17-24) focuses on the act of judging.

Fitzmyer maintains that the Jew sins like the Gentile by failing to live up to the

standards of his own conscience, not by doing the same sins.[28] This then stretches

Paul's clear accusation that his interlocutor "does the same things." According to

Dunn, the Jewish interlocutor has joined too quickly in condemning the gross sins of

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[25]Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 44.

[26]Elliot doubts that "a 'radical understanding' of the law could be expressed by the questions phrased in Rom. 2:21-23." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 194.

[27]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 109: "He is addressing anyone who judges and addressing him because he judges."

[28]Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 299: "The Jew is just as guilty as the pagan for another reason: he does not do what his superior moral understanding bids him to do."

others, but has missed "the wider relevance of the final and broader list of anti-social vices."[29] He points to the order of the sins in 1:18-32 for support. Moo agrees with this solution by saying that "many of these sins" were also prevalent in the Jewish world.[30] While this explanation appears plausible, one would yet expect Paul to make some kind of limitation ("you do *some of* the same things") in order to be credible to his hearers. In the end, it is quite difficult to imagine that Paul directs chapter 2 against all Jews.[31] As Morris admits, "This would be a startling charge to a Jew."[32] We must conclude that Paul's interlocutor is not every Jew but only the Jewish hypocrite as Cosgrove suggests.

After establishing the impartial judgment of God against sin, Paul again illustrates the character of the interlocutor's sins (2:21-24). He asks rhetorically whether he does not commit theft, adultery, and sacrilege. In short, the interlocutor does not teach himself what he teaches others (verse 21). One must again note that Paul cannot seriously indict all Jews on such charges. He fails to give any indication that the law is an impossibly high standard which no one can meet.[33] On the contrary, he repeatedly suggests that some, even some Gentiles, can keep the law

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[29]Dunn, James D. G., *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 90.

[30]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 131.

[31]Sanders concludes that his argument here "is not convincing: it is internally inconsistent and it rests on gross exaggeration." Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 125. Elliot says it is weak, since it relies on "the 'exceptional' case (the Jew who steals, commits adultery, robs temples)." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 192.

[32]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 110.

[33]*Contra* Cranfield, who writes, "He is thinking, rather, in terms of a radical understanding of the law (compare, for example, Mt 5:21-48)." Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 56.

(2:7,10,13-15,23).[34] Paul's interlocutor in chapter 2 is a flagrant hypocrite, who condemns others while openly engaging in the same sins. He is a straw man, but one which Paul intentionally constructs in order to make a point about the viability of relying solely on the outward marks of Judaism for salvation. In an analysis of the theme of boasting in 2:17-31, Richard W. Thompson first sees Paul arguing against Jewish boasting on terms consistent with Jewish presuppositions.[35] Even within a purely Jewish framework, boasting before God while transgressing the law proves vain.

Paul's primary purpose in chapter 2, then, is not to demonstrate that no Jew keeps Torah. Rather, he aims to show that mere association with the God of the covenant through knowledge of the law (17-20) and circumcision (25) will not acquit one before judgment. Possession of the law and circumcision prove efficacious only in conjunction with keeping Torah.[36] Paul seeks to clarify his analysis of Judaism by distinguishing the issues involved. Thus, he first shows that the righteous and impartial judgment of God means that the Jew cannot merely put his trust in the possession of the law, but he must keep the terms of the covenant, keep Torah, if he expects acquittal on the day of judgment. Jews have no prerogative over Gentiles with reference to judgment but all will be measured by the same standard, the law.

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[34]This "keeping the law" can be resolved with Paul's soteriology by asserting that here he only speaks hypothetically or that he here foreshadows the "fulfillment" of the law in the Christian life, which he later develops (e.g., 3:31, 8:4). Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 170-173.

[35]Richard W. Thompson, "Paul's Double Critique of Jewish Boasting," 525. Similarly, Gundry (Gundry, Robert H., "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Biblica* 66 [1985], 20) writes: "He takes unbelieving Jews and Christian Judaizers on their own terms and argues also that trying to keep the law never turns out to be successful."

[36]Thomas H. Tobin, "Controversy and Continuity in Rom. 1:18-3:20," 313: "Both Rom 2:25-27 and Rom 2:12-16 compare Jews and Gentiles and claim that observance of the 'Law' (whether by Jews or by Gentiles) is what is important."

Romans 3:1-8

Having characterized the depravity of sin (1:18-32) and God's impartial judgment against all who sin, Jew and Gentile (chapter 2), Paul turns to the objections he expects from his audience (3:1-9). Just as a change in addressee is implied in 2:1 by the ὦ ἄνθρωπε set over against the ἕτερον of chapter 1, so at 3:1 Paul addresses his actual audience in Rome by referring back to the Jew of chapter 2.[37] He has spoken about the Gentile without Christ; he has spoken to the Jew without Christ;[38] he now speaks with the Jewish Christian.[39] Here he finally specifies the damning sin of the "Torah faithful," but unbelieving Jew: he does not believe in Christ.

Paul has already hinted in chapter 2 that his argument would make this turn, where, for example, he states that God will judge the secrets of men's hearts κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (verse 16).[40] Although in chapter 2 Paul is careful to build his argument with his interlocutor on common ground,[41] at Rom. 2:16 Paul makes an aside (perhaps since verse 12) to the Roman Christians which

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[37]*Contra* Elliot, who believes Paul "maintains the [same] diatribal fiction throughout this pericope." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 141.

[38]Commenting about Romans 2, Melanchthon write, "And although a few among the Jews were holy, Paul nevertheless speaks of the Jews insofar as they have nothing except the Law, and are not sanctified by faith and knowledge of the promise of Christ." Melanchthon, Philip, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 90.

[39]Tobin, "Controversy and Continuity in Romans 1:18-3:20," 314: "Paul's fictional interlocutor is the Christian who is skeptical or suspicious of the consequences of Paul's controversial arguments."

[40]Morris interprets διά to mean that Christ himself will judge and observes that this teaching has no parallel among Jews, who always taught that God alone would judge the world. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 129.

[41]Cf. Stowers' comment on οἴδαμεν of Rom. 2:2. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 94.

reminds them of their uniquely Christian perspective. That Jesus Christ will judge the world naturally implies that the position one takes toward Christ will bear consequences on the last day.[42] With Morris and Cranfield, Moo interprets the prepositional phrases of verse 16 to mean: "It is through Jesus Christ that God will judge, as my gospel teaches." While Moo reports that some have also suggested that κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου makes the gospel the standard for judgment, he ultimately rejects this. If, however, κατά is taken to mean according to "the norm which governs something,"[43] then Paul has already introduced the gospel of Jesus Christ as the ultimate basis for distinguishing between God's people and his enemies on the Last Judgment. In the end, both Morris and Cranfield resolve the apparent "judgment by works" in this passage in a way which affirms the centrality of the Gospel in judgment: works are evidence of faith in the Gospel.[44]

Further evidence that Paul finally rejects the Jew on account of unbelief appears at the end of chapter 2. The picture of the true, "secret" Jew (κρυπτῷ, verse 29) is depicted in terms which the Christian community consciously applied to itself. Leon Morris, with a reference to 2 Cor. 3:6, concludes that the evidence suggests the "circumcision of the heart in the Spirit" (περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι, 2:29) should be understood as a sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit.[45] In Col. 2:11, Paul

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[42]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 155.

[43]Bauer, Walter, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. "κατά," II.5.a.

[44]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 148. With a different view, James Dunn does not hesitate to assert that the gospel will be the final standard on judgment day, though he does not describe this in terms of faith but in terms of revealing inner motivation. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 106.

[45]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 142.

directly equates "spiritual circumcision" ("made without hands," KJV) with Christian baptism. Dunn, too, finds here a reference to Christian fulfillment of the law, which will be further developed in 7:6, 8:4 and 12:1-15:6.[46] Thus Moo states, "For the first time, then, in Rom. 2, Paul alludes to Christians."[47] And when he does so, he calls them "the true Jews." Old Israel has been fulfilled in the Church.

As chapter 3 opens, Paul must defend his thesis that the non-Christian Jew has no grounds of exemption from God's judgment. Certainly, "the faithful (but unbelieving) Jew" offers the most difficult test case for Paul's position that salvation is only available in Christ, a position he has directly stated in his theme (1:16-17) and reinforced in 2:16, 28-29. Also, the faithful Jew provides the strongest objection to Paul's intended conclusion, that all apart from Christ are "under sin." Since this is the case, Paul has, in good rhetorical style, saved the most subtle and most difficult part of his argument for last.

Cosgrove proposes that the force behind 3:1-8 can only be explained by equating ἀπιστία in verse 3 with unbelief in Jesus.[48] He points out that Paul has not yet addressed the case of the Torah-faithful Jew. Also, while the logic of 3:1-8 is otherwise so thoroughly Jewish as to be completely unobjectionable, Paul writes as though he expects his audience to balk at his conclusions. Cosgrove's solution identifies the premise in Paul's argument as the basis of verse 5: unbelief in Jesus is tantamount to ἀδικία before God.[49] Elliot rejects Cosgrove's explanation on the

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[46]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 127.

[47]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 175.

[48]Cosgrove, "What if Some have not Believed?," 97.

[49]Cosgrove, "What if Some have not Believed?," 97.

grounds that the context does not warrant equating "unbelief" with the rejection of the gospel and that no Jew would have granted such a premise.[50] We have already demonstrated, however, that Paul does indeed prepare the reader for a discussion of the significance of faith in Christ. Also, Elliot does not take into account the fact that Paul has already turned to his Christian audience (3:1), who would have shared Paul's faith that Jesus is the Christ. Morris defends Cosgrove's position and notes that in Paul ἀπιστία "seems always to mean unbelief."[51] Thus, Paul leads his audience to accept his conclusion that the Torah-faithful Jew is *not* "faithful," since he has rejected the faith in the Messiah foretold in the very λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ entrusted to him (3:2).

While Rom. 3:1-2 affirm that Jews have some advantage in the possession of the words of God, verses 3-8 prove the culpability of those who reject the Christ. Rom. 3:3-4 shows that God is right in judging his people when they sin against him. First, Paul appeals to the faithfulness of God, an axiomatic truth which remains true even in judgment.[52] Second Paul cites two psalms for support. God's judgment is just, even if he stands against the whole world (LXX, Ps. 115:2). Furthermore, David, a paradigmatic hero of Judaism, confessed that God was right to judge him (LXX, Ps. 50:6). In 3:5-8 Paul anticipates a further objection based on his citation of the second psalm, that God is unfair to condemn sin which has given occasion for the demonstration of his justice. To prove God is right to judge sin, Paul resorts to

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[50]Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 196.

[51]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 154.

[52]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 155: "We must, of course, bear in mind that faithfulness means faithfulness in keeping his promises to judge the wicked, as well as those to bless those who love him."

another axiom, that God will judge the world. Finally, Paul, together with his audience, simply dismisses the objection as preposterous, since sin without judgment would lead to rampant immorality (3:7-8).

As we come to 3:9, we see that Paul has already made his complete case against both Jews and Gentiles.[53] While he could summarily indict the Gentiles, he has only very gradually made his case against the Jews who reject the Christ. He has stressed that Jewish confidence can only be based on obedience to the law, possession of the law and circumcision notwithstanding. Finally Paul clinches his argument by pointing out what no Christian could deny, that the "disobedience" of rejecting the Christ (cf., 1:5) is contrary to "keeping the law" *lata dicta*.[54] As Paul wishes to show, refusal to believe in the Christ removes from the Jew any hope of escaping God's judgment.

Romans 3:9

The first words of 3:9 are subject to various interpretations. The difficulty lies in the reading of προεχόμεθα which can be taken as either middle or passive in form and has been understood as active,[55] middle[56] or passive[57] in meaning. The

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[53]*Contra* Elliot, who maintains that Paul presents his conclusion in 3:9 without proof, as a common Christian presupposition. Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 197.

[54]תּוֹרָה understood broadly signifies all the divine instruction, including the promises of the coming Messiah.

[55]So the Vulgate, "quid igitur praecellimus (excel, surpass) eos nequaquam." Morris favors the active meaning. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 163. Likewise Otto Michel translates, "etwas vorausheben," i.e., to have an advantage, be superior. Michel, Otto, *Der Brief an die Römer*, vol. 13, *Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), 98.

[56]"Do we have a defense?" or, "Do we raise a counterplea against God?" Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 132. Morris claims that the middle would require an object. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 163.

referent has also been debated. Yet, it appears that the "we" of 9a must be the same as the "we" of 9b who have concluded Jew and Greek alike are sinful. As such, it would refer to Paul, perhaps together with his Christian audience.[58] Others have concluded that Paul is speaking for himself, but only with respect to his Jewishness, and that the referent is "we Jews." All together, Moo presents four viable possibilities for 9a: "Am I [Paul] making an excuse for the Jews?," "are we Jews trying to excuse ourselves?," "Are we Jews at a disadvantage?," and "Do we Jews have an advantage?"[59] The last option fits well into the context of Romans as outlined above. The question of the prerogatives of Judaism was the divisive topic in the Roman community. Since Rom. 2:1, Paul has attempted to set those prerogatives in the proper perspective. But in chapter 2, Paul risks the appearance of having completely stripped Judaism of any claim to a unique standing before God. At Rom. 3:1, he then shifts to affirm the central treasure of Judaism, the possession of the Word of God. But lest his primary point be lost, he asks again if there is anything profitable in Judaism, this time answering negatively. Apart from hope in Christ, Judaism cannot effect salvation.

With that, Paul leads into the catena with a summary statement of his reasoning thus far.[60] "For we have already indicted all--both Jews and Greeks--to be

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[57]This possibility is noted in Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon*, with the translation "are we excelled? are we in a worse position?" S.v. "προεχω."

[58]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 165.

[59]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 199-200.

[60]Elliot argues that προητιασάμεθα would more naturally have been perfect, not aorist, if Paul intended it to be taken as a summary. Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 202. Yet, in Hellenistic Greek, aorists commonly have a perfect force. Cf. Smyth, Herbert Weir, *Greek Grammar* (Harvard University Press, 1920), §1940. Elliot claims that Paul refers to the previous understanding of the

under sin." Hence, Paul reorganizes humanity. In the light of the general rejection

of Christ by the Jews, the old titles "Jew" and "Greek" no longer reflect positive and

negative standing before God. Both are guilty. Our reading of Romans does not

allow us to propose that Paul includes his Christian audience in this condemned

πάντας. In fact, Paul has been careful to dissociate his hearers from the accused.

The sinner of chapter 1:18-32 is spoken of only in the third person. The Jewish

sinner of chapter 2, while directly addressed, cannot be a Christian, since Paul argues

with him solely on Jewish presuppositions. In fact, the Jew is accused only insofar as

he is not a Christian, that is, he does not have the "inner" circumcision of Christian

baptism. As chapter 3 opens, he further distances his audience from the previous

interlocutor by speaking about *him* in the third person. In short, Paul nowhere in

1:18-3:8 accuses the Christian of sin. Consequently, the conclusion of 3:9 pertains

only to unbelievers.[61] It would be quite unimaginable for Paul to describe

Christians, those in Christ, as "under sin," with all of its connotations of total

domination.[62] Furthermore, the stress of 3:9 lies in the status of the Jew, now made

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Roman Christians, not to any specific conclusion in the letter. Yet the sustained demolition of Jewish prerogatives which Paul accomplishes in chapter 2 allows him to reference back to this charge, even if it has not yet been explicitly verbalized.

[61]Thus, Moo, NICNT, 201: "All people *who have not experienced the righteousness of God by faith* are 'under sin'" (emphasis mine).

[62]Romans 7 notwithstanding, for there the struggle itself testifies that Paul is not "under sin," i.e., completely dominated by sin. In fact, he serves God "in his mind" (7:25, τῷ νοΐ). If 3:9 refers at all to Christians (and I don't believe it does) then it only views them apart from Christ. Gundry does not believe Paul has yet developed the image of the lordship of sin, and only means to say that all are guilty. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 29. Michel, who does believe that sin is personified here, translates, ". . . sie all unter der Herrschaft der Sünde stehen" (Michel, *Die Brief an die Römer*, 99).

equal to the Gentile.[63] After the catena closes, this stress again finds expression in Paul's defense of his application of Scripture by affirming that it indeed applies to Jews, those "in the law" (3:19).[64] Michel points out that the Pauline addition of ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (3:20) and the clarification of the proper role of the law both demonstrate that Paul directs his remarks "against Israel."[65] Paul's chief aim throughout has been to place unbelieving Jews on equal footing with unbelieving Gentiles before the judgment of God.[66] By setting the Christian on one side over against all non-believers on the other, Paul has thus set the stage to introduce the enemy motif from the Psalter, a motif which presupposes two groups, diametrically opposed to each other.

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[63]Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary, Romans 1-8*, 147: "The Jew is still very much in mind, *not* in his distinctiveness, but precisely in his solidarity with human failure" (emphasis original). So also Thompson, "Paul's double Critique of Jewish Boasting," 527; and Moo remarks about the following catena, "he underscores the argument of 2:1-3:8 that, in fact, not even faithful Jews can claim to be 'righteous.'" Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 203. Hanson reads Rom. 3:5-9 as a "transition from this general condemnation of all men implied in Ps. 51:4 to the specific condemnation of the Jews which is contained in the catena." Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 20.

[64]*Contra* Elliot's ingenious reading which forces a universal interpretation. "What the Law (Scripture) says to those who are 'in the Law' it says, not only with regard to them, but in order to shut *every* mouth and make *all* the word [sic] accountable to God." Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 203. Harmon agrees with a universal interpretation, but bases his argument on the fact that Jew and Greek are both "under the law" (3:19). The Greek however, only speaks of those "in" the law. Harmon, Allan M., "Aspects of Paul's Use of the Psalms," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 32 (1969), 19.

[65]Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 101.

[66]Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 28. Gundry likewise observes that the focus in 2:1-3:23 is on the unbelieving Jew's inability to keep the law. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 20. That the charge is unbelief is affirmed by Michel: "Both accused groups stand in the same situation before the authority of the gospel" (Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 99).

Paul's Application of the Enemy Motif

Apart from commentaries which systematically discuss every verse of a Biblical book, until recently little has been written about the catena of Romans 3:10-18.[67] Our purpose here is limited to two aspects of Paul's use of the Old Testament in these verses: how can Paul justify changing their referent from the enemies of the psalmist to the contemporary Jew? and, what are the implications of the description he pieces together? First, however, a brief discussion of the structure and the source of the catena are in order.

Structure of the Catena

In a thorough comparison of the Pauline and LXX manuscripts, Christopher D. Stanley examines the poetic and theological concerns which led the compiler to the catena's final formulation.[68] Several lines have been shortened to make the whole more concise and to avoid redundancy.[69] In verse 14, the γέμει has been moved to the end to match the final position of the other finite verbs. In 18, the singular αὐτοῦ was changed to αὐτῶν to agree with the plurals from verse 13 on. Stanley observes a chief theological concern in the selection of the verses from their original contexts:

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[67]Keck explains that the dearth is caused by the apparent self-evident nature of the catena, i.e., that "Paul appends a string of OT quotations in order to buttress his argument with 'proof from Scripture.'" Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 141.

[68]Stanley, Christopher D., *Paul and the Language of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 89-99.

[69]Verse 10 substitutes οὐδὲ εἷς for οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός to avoid repetition with 12c; καὶ δόλου in 14 was removed as unnecessary after ἐδολιοῦσαν; a connective dropped out in 15; also in 15, two clauses were reduced to one.

Paul removes the particularity of the enemy in order to generalize his indictment.[70]

Finally, Stanley points to the use of δίκαιος in 10b (which he does not relate to Eccl. 7) as particularly important for Paul's point, that all lack true righteousness before God.[71]

Several have attempted to isolate the poetic patterns of the catena. Hanson reports that A. Feuillet has suggested a scheme whereby the catena is intended to cover the whole human frame, throat, tongue, lips, mouth and feet, while others see a threefold scheme: (1) corruption in relation to God (verses 10-12); (b) corruption in the human personality itself (verses 13-14); (c) corruption in human relations (verses 15-17).[72] Hanson objects that verse 13ab would be more appropriate in section (c); and that the citation in verse 18 is about relation to God. A popular solution has been presented by O. Michel who organizes the whole into three strophes, the first with two sets of three lines (10-12) and the second and third with two sets of two lines each (13-14; 15-18).[73] Dunn, however, objects that this structure is "hardly self-evident."[74] Dietrich-Alex Koch concurs, "Doch sind . . . keine Gliederungssignale erkennbar."[75]

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[70]For this reason, Psalm 13:1 and 2a (LXX) were skipped; the article is added to the participles of 11b and 12c to "further absolutize" the condemnation. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 92.

[71]Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 90.

[72]Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 21.

[73]Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 99.

[74]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 145.

[75]Koch, Dietrich-Alex, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, ed. Johannes Wallmann, vol. 69 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), 180.

Keck gives a detailed analysis of the highly poetic structure of the catena.[76] Verses 10b and 18 serve as a framework which announces the theme of the whole; 11-12 drums a fourfold οὐκ ἔστιν, with a πάντες placed in the center to break the monotony while stating the same idea in an opposite way. Verses 13-14 not only mention parts of the body associated with speech, but use singular and plural forms in a chiastic pattern. Verse 15 picks up the body imagery with πόδες, but turns to characterize the "way" the wicked travel, the new theme of this subsection. Verse 17, not knowing the way of peace, offers an obverse of 15, the way of bloodshed. Finally, verses 15-17 also balance 12a ("turned aside") with the image of lost path. While the relationship between the accusations is not stated explicitly, Keck suggests that there may be a loose progression from lack of understanding and absence of seeking after God to deception and violence.[77]

Following the Nestle-Aland text, a quick look at the number of syllables and accents per line highlights the rhythmic nature of the work. The heading (10b) contains 9 syllables or 4 accents. The first section (11-12) reveals a chiastic structure of syllables per line: 7-10-13-10-7.[78] The longest line, the one with the greatest emphasis, corresponds to the change from οὐκ ἔστιν to πάντες. This section contains few accents per line, corresponding to the tone of a summary judgment: 2-4-4-3-3. Again, a roughly chiastic pattern can be observed in verses 13-17, though this time in the accents: 4-4-6-7-5-6-4. The repetition of lines with 4 accents at the beginning and the middle lines of 7 and 5 accents show that only loose patterns are being

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[76]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 143-145.

[77]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 145.

[78]The οὐκ ἔστιν, with the weight of manuscript support, is considered original to the final line.

followed in the structure. The number of syllables per line in this section shows some effort to maintain consistency (they all have 12 syllables, with the exception of verse 13b with 10), especially since verses 14 and 15 deviate from the LXX to accomplish this. In general, the longer lines of this section correspond to the content, a more detailed indictment of the wicked. Verse 18 echoes the οὐκ ἔστιν of the first section and the first 7 syllables (3 accents) also match it in brevity and theme. θεός last appeared in verse 11, and the fear of God is theologically equivalent to δίκαιος, ὁ συνίων, and ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν. The second half of verse 18 extends the line to 17 syllables (7 accents) as a reflection of the longer lines of 13-18. The reference to "eyes" also picks up the body imagery of the second main section. In fact, with 17 syllables it is the longest line of the catena and so gives the final word on the wicked. The catena demonstrates a hymnic character, with acute attention to rhythm and poetic style. No wonder that various scholars have suggested that it was written as an early Christian song.[79]

Source of the Catena

Keck concludes that the divergence from the LXX demonstrates careful considerations of form. This suggests "bookishness" rather than an *ad hoc* recollection of OT texts.[80] In fact, none of the scholars examined posit an *ad hoc* composition of the catena in spite of their disagreement about its origin. It has been variously suggested that it reflects an early Christian liturgical or

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[79]Michel calls it an early Christian psalm from a liturgical setting. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 100.

[80]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 145.

catechetical/apologetic setting.[81] The parallel with rabbinic "pearl-stringing" of thematically related verses has been noted.[82] Harris used this passage as evidence of the existence of an early Christian testimony book, a collection of Old Testament verses drawn together to make a specific theological point.[83] While still drawing some adherents, especially after the discovery of a similar practice in the Dead Sea community,[84] Michel, Hanson, Stanley and Koch reject this theory in favor of Pauline authorship.[85] Koch has considerably strengthened the case for Pauline authorship by suggesting Paul wrote it before its incorporation into Romans, thus showing the weakness of the assumption that Pauline authorship necessitates an *ad hoc* composition.[86] Harris' testimony book theory also depended largely on the parallel found in the *Dialogue with Trypho* by Justin (*Dial.* 27:3), since he argued that it evidences a separate tradition.[87] Koch, however, has sufficiently shown that

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[81]Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 180. Noting that structure lends itself to memorization, van der Minde leans toward an original catechetical function. van der Minde, Hans-Jürgen *Schrift und Tradition bei Paulus*, Paderborner Theologische Studien, vol. 3 (München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh), 58. Michel argues that the artistic form suggests a liturgical origin. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 100.

[82]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 202. Michel, *Die Brief an die Römer*, 100. Ellis attributes this practice to the application of rules 2 and 6 of rabbinic interpretation (the association of biblical texts containing similar ideas or common words and phrases). He notes that string quotations are infrequent outside the New Testament. Ellis, E. Earle, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 91.

[83]Harris, J. Rendel, "St. Paul's Use of Testimonies in the Epistle to the Romans," *Expos* 8.17 (1919): 401-414.

[84]Harmon, "Aspects of Paul's Use of the Psalms," 2.

[85]Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 21; Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 184; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*; 88.

[86]For example, van der Minde appears to make this assumption in his decision to favor Paul's dependence on a florilegium. van der Minde, *Schrift und Tradition bei Paulus*, 55.

[87]Harris, "St. Paul's Use of Testimonies in the Epistle to the Romans," 411.

Justin could well depend on Paul, since the catena appears to have been abbreviated according to Justin's own purpose, to concentrate on the most concrete accusations.[88] Another approach to the origin question examines whether it fits well in Romans 3 or reflects concerns which the Apostle does not raise. Keck claims that "it was not composed for this place in the letter, but has integrity of its own,"[89] but then he himself demonstrates its several connections to Rom. 1:18-3:9.[90] Far from suggesting a discontinuity between the catena and its context, Keck argues that Paul has had the catena in mind from the beginning and has been proving the applicability of its "case against the world."[91] Since the catena is entirely composed of citations of Old Testament passages, it yields little information about its compiler. Nevertheless, it is so thoroughly harmonious with Paul's purpose in Romans that we may conclude that he intends its every line to present his image of man under sin.

Application to the Jews

Paul bases his use of the enemy theme on his Christian understanding of the people of God. His conversion to Christianity has led to a radical reassessment of Judaism, which he now views as apostate from the Christ-centered faith of Abraham (Rom. 4, Gal. 3:6-29).[92] In spite of the fact that the Jews claim the Scriptures--

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[88]Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 182. Also Michel believes that Justin is quoting Paul (Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 100).

[89]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 146.

[90]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 151. Koch also emphasizes the suitability of the catena for Paul's purpose. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 183.

[91]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 152.

[92]"Can we therefore conclude that according to Paul Abraham believed in Christ? Very nearly, if not exactly." Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 66.

including the Psalter--as their own, Paul has already demonstrated that possession of the word is insufficient for membership in the covenant people. He faults the Jew for departing from his ancestral faith (Rom. 3:3) and placing his trust in the law (Rom. 2:13,17-20).[93] On the basis of Old Testament anthropology, Paul concludes that the Jews have joined forces with the enemies of God.

<u>The people of God marked by faith in Christ</u>. In accordance with the Psalter's own depiction of the people of God as those who confide in the Lord, Paul identifies faith in Christ as the determinative characteristic of God's people. Some scholars interpret Paul to mean that a dispensational shift has taken place so that faith in the law must now be transferred to faith in Christ as the fulfillment of the law.[94] On the contrary, Paul presents a much more radical position. He claims to stand in line with the true, ancient faith of Israel, a faith which the non-Christian Jews have abandoned.[95] For Paul, Abraham was the paradigm for justification by faith (Rom. 4, Gal. 3).[96] As Gundry remarks, Paul "gets out" of Judaism without departing from his ancestral religion.[97] The proper way to understand the Pauline view of the

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[93]"Judaism in all her branches rests upon the fact that the Torah is the source of salvation and life." Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 102.

[94]E.g., Klyne Snodgrass writes, "Circumstances are different for Paul now that Christ has appeared . . . accordingly one must turn to Christ . . . a salvation-historical shift." Snodgrass, Klyne, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 (1988), 97. Similarly, E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, 140.

[95]Melanchthon also holds that the Jewish prerogative (3:2) consisted in the promises of the coming Christ, not the possession of a law by which to merit justification. Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans*, 93.

[96]"Hence the main line of argument in the second half of Romans 4: that Abraham's 'believing' should be understood *not* as (covenant) faithfulness, but as sheer, naked faith." Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46 (1992), 112

[97]Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 38.

salvation B.C. and A.D. is not "law" then "gospel," but "promise" then "fulfillment."[98]

In light of Paul's focus on faith, it comes as no surprise that his criticism of the non-believing Jew is his misplaced trust (Rom. 2:13,17-20, 3:3, 9:32, 10:2-3). As J. D. G. Dunn contends, it is not that the Jews were attempting to merit God's favor through the law, but that they trusted that their status in the covenant would protect them from God's wrath.[99] Others, however, gather that Paul was fighting against Jewish works-righteousness, the attempt to earn God's favor by doing good.[100] In general, one may note that rabbinic literature demonstrates a more positive anthropology and a preoccupation with living in accordance with the law.[101] Philip S. Alexander reminds us that the diversity of first century Judaism was also reflected in different understandings of the role of the law, which functioned as a loose national symbol recognized by all.[102] The image of the Jew which Paul presents, however, is one who relies (ἐπαναπαύομαι) on his possession of the law (2:17) and particularly his status in the covenant as demonstrated by circumcision (2:25).

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[98]Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 16.

[99]Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response," 107.

[100]Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 37; Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans*, 89.

[101]Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 6, 37.

[102]Alexander, Philip S., "Jewish Law in the time of Jesus: Towards a Clarification of the Problem," in *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity*, ed. by Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1988), 46.

As Dunn has argued, the Jew who believed that he was already in the covenant felt no need to earn God's favor.[103] Yet, obedience to the requirements of the covenant (including making proper atonement for one's sins) maintained one's righteous standing before God. Particularly circumcision, food laws and sabbath restrictions provided the litmus test that one was practicing his religion faithfully.[104] This theology presupposed that Gentiles were *ipso facto* sinners, "ignorant of and outside the law, and therefore outside the realm of righteousness."[105] Thus, uniquely Jewish behavior (circumcision, food laws) became the "identity markers" of God's people, markers which reflected one's status before God and in society.[106] Dunn concludes that such a trust, from a Pauline perspective, amounts to "trusting in the flesh."[107] Thus, in this analysis, the difference between Paul and the Jew was not justification by faith, but to what that faith was directed.[108] This accords well with our observation that Paul's final charge against the Jew was ἀπιστία, failure to believe in Christ.

A quick survey of Acts verifies the fact that Paul thought not only Gentiles but also Jews needed salvation in Christ. Jews were included in the scope of his divine mission (Acts 9:15). To them Paul proclaimed forgiveness of sins in Christ and a justification which the law of Moses could not bring (Acts 13:38-39, 20:21). At the

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[103]Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response" 133.

[104]Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response," 100.

[105]Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response," 102

[106]Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," 102

[107]Dunn, "Yet Once More--'The Works of the Law': A Response," 115.

[108]Getty, Mary Ann, "Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17,3 (July, 1987), 94.

same time, Paul demonstrates that his message is based on the law and the prophets, that he announces the fulfillment of the ancient hope of Israel (Acts 9:22, 24:14, 26:6-7, 26:22-23, 28:20, 28:23). Those who reject this Word exclude themselves from eternal life (Acts 13:46).

Since faith in Christ now constitutes the people of God, they are not marked by old signs of Judaism. Whereas the Torah had been an unifying symbol for the Jew, in Paul's theology Christ truly identifies the people of God.[109] Only those "in Christ" are justified, righteous before God.[110] Consequently, also the Jews "must repent and enter through faith."[111] The old covenant had its power and meaning only as it directed faith to the Christ who was to come; the non-Christian Jew Paul has in mind wrongly puts his confidence in covenant status itself. Paul maintains that Christian faith was the same as that of Abraham, and that the Church is now the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

Humanity composed of two opposing "men." In light of Old Testament anthropology, the conclusion that the non-Christian Jew no longer belonged to the people of God implicates the Jew in Gentile wickedness. This conclusion rests upon the Old Testament concept of corporate personality, that the identity of the male

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[109]Sanders, James A., "Torah and Paul," In *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. by Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1977), 137.

[110]Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 66.

[111]Segal, Alan F., "Universalism in Judaism and Christianity. In *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1995), 21. Also Snodgrass, "For Paul, 'getting in' was relevant for Jews as well. No one is 'saved' merely because of nationality. Both Jew and Gentile entered the same way and stayed in the same way--by faith." Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence," 102.

extended beyond himself to his family.[112] From this perspective, all mankind was bound together "in Adam."[113] Even certain rabbis would apparently agree that this creation "in Adam" had been corrupted through his fall and that the true image of humanity would be restored in the messianic age.[114] Certainly for Paul, mankind in Adam lacked the glory of God and righteousness (Rom. 3:23).[115] Mankind in Adam is "under sin." Sin pervades the human creature, lives in him as he lives in sin.[116] For Paul, the ultimate proof of this assertion is the universality of death, the wage of sin (Rom. 5:14).

In contrast to the old humanity, God creates mankind anew in Christ. Christ initiates and constitutes in himself the true, perfect and eschatological humanity, a "new race" which supersedes the old categories of Jew and Gentile.[117] Baptism accomplishes the transfer from the old to the new, from "in Adam" to "in Christ" (Rom. 6:3-13; Gal. 3:26-27).[118] Paul frequently juxtaposes the two states of mankind. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul contrasts Adam and Christ as typological antitheses. He

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[112]Ellis, E. Earle, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 110. Paul echoes the Jewish idea of the solidarity between the *Stammvater* and the *Stamm*. Kim, Seyoon, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 263.

[113]Ellis, E. Earle, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 111.

[114]Kim, "The Origin of Paul's Gospel," 260-261.

[115]Kim, "The Origin of Paul's Gospel," 319. Also, Anders Nygren writes, "[Paul] sees mankind as an organic unity, a single body under a single head. . . . Adam is significant as the head of the 'old' humanity. . . . Humanity's fate was determined in Adam." Nygren, Anders, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 209.

[116]Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 190.

[117]Kim, "The Origin of Paul's Gospel," 266.

[118]Meeks, Wayne A., "In one Body: The Unity of Humankind in Colossians and Ephesians." In *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. by Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1977), 210.

antitheses. He develops the place of each in salvation history "in terms of transgression and obedience, sin and grace, the law and grace, condemnation and justification, and death and life."[119] According to Anders Nygren, Paul here reaches the climax of the epistle, toward which all the previous chapters aim and from which all the later chapters follow.[120] In 1 Cor. 15:42-49 he contrasts the perishability, dishonor, and weakness of life in Adam with the imperishability, glory and power of resurrection life in Christ. The 1 Corinthians passage demonstrates the tension within the Christian, already joined to Christ in his resurrection and yet still not clothed with "the likeness of the man from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49).[121] Further developments of a theology of corporate personality are found in temple/house imagery as well as the image of the Church as the body of Christ.[122]

Paul divides the world into two groups, just as the Psalmist opposes the people of God to their enemies. The dualism inherent in the Old Testament depiction of creation since the fall is thus applied to all of humanity. For Paul, the people of God are those "in Christ." Those who don't believe in him are "in Adam." They belong to the wicked enemy camp. The concept of corporate personality means that this "membership" is more than a mere association, it demonstrates the identity and nature

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[119]Kim, "The Origin of Paul's Gospel," 264.

[120]Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, 209.

[121]"Just as Paul's Christian form of apocalyptic thought is characterized by a historical or eschatological dualism consisting of the juxtaposition of the old age and the new age, so his view of human nature can similarly reflect a homologous dualistic structure." Aune, David E., "Human Nature and Ethics in Hellenistic Philosophical Traditions and Paul: Some Issues and Problems," in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1995), 304.

[122]Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 112. Kim relates Paul's theology of the Church as the Body of Christ to a Jewish tradition in which the new *Stammvater* of the "ideal Israel" appears in a heavenly vision. Kim, "The Origin of Paul's Gospel," 256.

of the unbeliever. Thus the depiction of the catena is a realistic, theological appraisal of man without Christ.[123] With its own detail of wicked body parts, it provides a depiction of the body of Adam. Those who are "under sin" and "in Adam" fully share all of the guilt of the most wicked and damnable sins.

<u>Implications of the Description</u>

Keck compares Paul's catena with similar passages in the *Assumption of Moses* and the *Damascus Document*. He concludes that in all three the connection between the catena and the context is not established by vocabulary but by theology. "The applicability . . . does not lie on the surface, but beneath it, and is intelligible only if there is already an exegetical tradition which understands these metaphors in a particular way."[124] The argument of this thesis is that the primary metaphor which Paul invokes is the enemy who opposes God and his people. Reading the verses from this vantage point, a perspective fully supported by their original contexts, yields further understanding of the sinfulness and guilt of the unbelieving Jew as "man under sin."[125]

The δίκαιος of Rom. 3:10b, originally from Wisdom literature (Eccl. 7:20), is redefined in the context of Paul's letter as the righteous standing of a person before God, granted through faith in Christ. As much as the original context adds to this

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[123]This conclusion is much more satisfying than Gundry's assessment that Paul employs hyperbole in order to emphasize the need for justification by faith. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," 21.

[124]Keck, "The Function of Rom. 3:10-18," 151.

[125]The following understanding of catena diverges from Hanson's similar analysis, which claims the catena as the Messiah's indictment against his enemies, the Jews who killed him (Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 22-26). His analysis, which focuses on the theme of righteous suffering in the original contexts, falters because that theme finds no direct expression in the verses Paul cites. Also such a narrow indictment would hardly further Paul's general indictment.

meaning, it indicts man's natural condition. Even as Paul redefines the key term, he must cut the verse short. By clipping off the second half, he makes the statement an absolute denial that any natural man is righteous at all. His concern is not that Christians sin ("there is not one righteous . . . who will not sin") but to deny that anyone outside of Christ can have any standing before God at all ("there is no one righteous"). He reaffirms this point by adding his own words, οὐδὲ εἷς, which reveal his emphasis on the universal corruption of man "in Adam."[126] With respect to the status of the Jews, Paul immediately forces his audience to assess them now stripped of special covenant status, in the common lot of humanity.

In citing Psalm 14, Paul suggests a number of implications about those "under sin." They are "fools" who reject God's covenant and ignore their own accountability to him (Rom. 3:11). Since this psalm is also based on the Wisdom tradition, the foolishness can be identified with the absence of the "fear of the Lord," with which wisdom begins. As this psalm employs covenant themes, that same fear is closely connected with, if not identical to, covenant trust. The fool is an unbeliever who says, "There is no God (for me)." This psalm also immediately draws into the catena the opposition between the enemy and the people of God. This opposition is rooted in the enemy's opposition to God himself. In a dualistic worldview, the enemy is consequently bound up with evil and thoroughly corrupt (ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν, 3:12). Outside of Christ, there is no one who does any good (Rom. 3:12). In this basic definition of those under sin, the careful arrangement of the repeated οὐκ ἔστιν shows the core characteristic of the sinner to be his lack of righteousness, his denial

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[126]Michel finds the theme of the whole in the repeated οὐκ ἔστιν, i.e., no one stands outside of the common guilt. Michel, *Die Brief an die Römer*, 100.

of God, his negation of all that is good. Therefore, the sinner is not first and foremost defined by what he does but by who he is, or rather, who he is *not*.

In order for Paul's audience to accept this application of Psalm 14 to the Jews, they are forced to consider the consequences of their own faith in Jesus the Messiah. The non-believing Jew, in spite of his religious appearance and continual efforts to "seek God," is found to be rejecting God, who has revealed himself in Christ. By asserting his own independence from Christ, the Jew turns aside from God and the covenant he offers. Despite his claim to membership in the people of God, his unbelief classifies him as an enemy.

Like the structure of Psalm 14 itself, Paul proceeds from inner orientation to outer deeds. His purpose, however, is not like the psalmist's, to give external evidence for the condition of the heart. Rather, Paul invokes the full, ugly picture of the enemy theme to show what horrible guilt adheres to those outside of Christ. The list of sins is not a police record of every non-believer, but a theological indictment which points to the very nature of those "under sin."

Significantly, the first outward sins on which Paul focuses are those of speech. As he first characterized the heart "under sin," he now turns to the words which flow from that heart. As we have seen, both Psalm 5 and Psalm 140 differentiate between the righteous and the wicked by what they say. Paul, too, presupposes the same distinction.[127] Yet, in the next verses (Rom. 3:13-14), Paul describes the speech of the godless not in their blasphemy against God but in their slander against his people. In this way, the description can more easily apply to non-believing Jews who are

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[127]Rom. 10:10, "For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (NAS); also, 1 Cor. 12:3.

careful in their speech about God but deny that those in Christ are saved. In the original settings (MT, Ps. 5, 10), the deception, the bitterness and the cursing are all directed to the destruction of God's people through efforts to separate them from the God in whom they trust. In referring these verses to the Jews, Paul himself could remember the many struggles against those who attempted to turn his flocks from sheer faith in Christ to Judaism or a Judaizing Christianity. This section also underscores the alignment of the natural man with the forces of death and Satan: their throat is an open grave, the poison of asps is under their lips. By this point, however, the chief force of the imagery is ethical. Still, the fact that Paul in so many other passages concludes that the unbeliever is dominated by demonic forces leaves open the possibility that also here "asps" carries satanic overtones.[128] Throughout all these references, the strong dichotomy and opposition between the people of God and their enemies is maintained. In Psalm 10, they are even called "the nations." The point is clear: the Jew may boast in the law, but his boasting is vain. All outside of Christ are bound together in their guilt and in their opposition to God and his people.

Romans 3:15-17 draws on the indictment which Isaiah made against Israel in his prophetic call to repentance (Is. 59). In that context, the sin of Israel had cut her off from the salvation of her God. She did not know "the way of peace," which for Paul is the way of salvation (Rom. 5:1).[129] The prophet, then, describes the sinfulness of Israel in its fallen state, a state in which it could no longer make the

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[128]While not emphasized in Romans, Paul often states that unbelievers are under demonic power (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:5, 10:20; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; Col. 1:13).

[129]Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 100.

claim to be Israel. Consequently, the characterization of the nation at that point is quite like that of the enemy in the Psalter. For Paul, the charge of violent feet and the devastating and destructive paths completes the indictment of "guilty in thought, word and deed." That this indictment was first leveled by the prophet against apostate Israel strengthens his own case, that the Jews cannot maintain their righteousness in God apart from faith in Christ.

The final citation in verse 18 verbalizes again the opening and central charge of unbelief. The wisdom overtones echo Paul's dependence on Ecclesiastes and Psalm 14 at the beginning of the catena. The lack of fear of God is a concomitant of a lack of faith. Those bound to God by sacred covenant fear him; the wicked, disregarding his awful accountability to God, rejects faith and centers his life in himself. In fact, he is so turned in on himself that he does not even realize his own sinfulness (MT, Ps. 36:2). With this verse, Paul again underscores that the Jew has no covenant status before God apart from faith in Christ. This verse also shows how this can be true regardless of the Jew's own protests to the contrary.

Function in Romans

By applying the depiction of the enemy in the Psalter equally to Jews and Gentiles, Paul urges Jewish Christians to dissociate from non-believing Jews and whole-heartedly join the people of God in Christ.[130] Paul begins to define the Church by an indication of what she is not, by identifying her enemies. Since both

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[130]This reading offers a hypothesis for identifying "those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way" (Rom. 16:17), namely, as non-Christian Jews whom the community should avoid. It might also offer an explanation for Paul's unusually long list of greetings in chapter 16. Paul wanted to ensure that his theology of a Church united in Christ would reach all the disparate groups of the city. No one was to be left out.

"Jews and Greeks" are under sin, the Church is aligned with neither, but supersedes this distinction in Christ. Paul seeks to remind his audience that there is but one people of God, those who believe in Christ. Through the application of the enemy motif from the Psalter, Paul forces Jewish Christians to draw the conclusion which they had wanted to avoid: even Jews outside of Christ are enemies of God, under sin, and subject to his wrath. Paul invokes Old Testament dualism in order to demonstrate that the non-believing Jews are no better before God than non-believing Gentiles. Jews who reject the second Adam, Jesus Christ, remain bound up in the old, corrupt humanity headed by the first Adam. Dissolving the Jewish-Christian link with the synagogue, Paul has achieved the first and necessary step for uniting the Roman Christians in Christ.

Conclusion

Paul employs the enemy theme of the Psalter in accordance with his own theology of the people of God in Christ, marked by faith in him. From Paul's perspective, those who wrote the Psalter believed in Christ and were opposed by unbelievers. He could apply the catena to non-believing Jews because their unbelief stripped them of the advantages of the covenant and their status as the people of God. Furthermore, on the basis of a dualistic view of mankind, those not "in" were "out," among the enemies, bound together with evil, "under sin." The catena, then, does not simply provide Scripture proof for Paul's argumentation in 1:18-3:9. It furthers his argument by demonstrating the utter guilt of all those outside of Christ, even Jews. It also adds pathos to his appeal for Jewish-Christians to dissociate themselves from the synagogue and identify solely with the Christian community. Impressively,

he accomplishes these aims on the basis of anthropological presuppositions from the Old Testament which many Jews would themselves accept. How his application of the enemy theme parallels its use in Jewish literature will be the subject of the next chapter.

JEWISH APPLICATION OF THE ENEMY THEME

A survey of the use of the enemy theme in Judaism demonstrates the importance of this theme for group identity. The definition of self requires a definition of the other. When self and other are set in diametric opposition, the chief characteristics of the other reveal the central markers of self-understanding. We have shown how this is true for the Psalmist and we have shown that Paul's use of the enemy theme applied the self-other distinction to redefine the Christian community in Rome. Examining Judaism, we find that Paul's application was in this way not unique but typical. At the same time, the differing identification of the enemy in Paul and Judaism distinguishes each faith by highlighting what each considered the constitutive element of God's people. Due to the nature of the historical data left to us, our study limits itself to the glance at Apocalyptic Judaism offered in the Qumran documents and a view toward rabbinic Judaism, as reflected in Mishnah, Tosefta and Midrash.

Apocalyptic Judaism

The Qumran Community

The Dead Sea Scrolls, dated to between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D., grant us an unprecedented glimpse into a sectarian Jewish apocalyptic community.[1] The Standard

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[1]Wise, Michael, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 15.

Model, the dominant theory of the origins and identity of the sect, maintains that it was an isolated Essene community which was founded in part because the Jerusalem priesthood fell into the hands of the Hasmonean family and in part because their own leader, the Teacher of Righteousness, was rejected by the establishment.[2] This hypothesis places the foundation of the movement in the mid-second century B.C.

The self-understanding of the sect made the enemy theme a natural expression of their own identity *vis-a-vis* others. The community maintained the essential presuppositions which provide the basis for the enemy motif in the Psalter. At Qumran, the distinction between and opposition of God and the forces of evil came to expression as a radical dualism on almost every plane. According to the teachings of the sect, although God had created both the good spirit and the evil spirit, he loves the first and hates the second (1QS iii.26-iv.1).[3] The most revealing description of this dualism is found among the earliest discoveries from the caves:

> He created humankind to rule over the world, appointing for them two
> spirits in which to walk until the time ordained for His visitation.
> These are the spirits of truth and falsehood. Upright character and fate
> originate with the Habitation of Light; perverse, with the Fountain of
> Darkness. The authority of the Prince of Light extends to the
> governance of all righteous people; therefore, they walk in the paths of
> light. Correspondingly, the authority of the Angel of Darkness
> embraces the governance of all wicked people, so they walk in the
> paths of darkness. 1QSiii.17-21.[4]

This passage demonstrates the cosmic, ethical and sociological aspects of this dualistic doctrine. Those under the control of the evil spirit self-evidently "existed as the

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[2]Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19-20.

[3]Ringgren, Helmer, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. by James H. Charlesworth, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1963; reprint, New York: Crossroad, 1995), 69 (page references are to reprint edition).

[4]Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 129-130.

partakers of sin and darkness."[5] Their deeds and their character correspond to the power which govern their actions. The dualistic structure of humanity comes to expression in the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked, elsewhere named "the children of light" and "the children of darkness." As in the Psalter and in Paul, there is a single theological assessment of all outside the group; the "other" is an undifferentiated whole.[6] They are altogether godless, under demonic power and persecutors of the righteous.[7] Thus, in their own way, the believers at Qumran paint the enemy with the same strokes we observed in the Psalter. As one might expect from a sectarian position, the Qumran community identified the enemy as all those outside of their group. Consequently, the title "Israel" is exclusively attributed to themselves while other Jews are lumped together with Gentiles as "Men of Perversity" who "walk in the wicked way."[8] All who did not share in the life and order of the community are the "sons of darkness."[9]

Psalm Interpretation

Of the documents from the Qumran community, the brief commentary on Psalm 37 (4Q171 or 4QpPs37) is useful for our purposes. We reproduce here sections of the fragment as translated by John M. Allegro. The opening lines have

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[5]Jefford, Clayton N. *Some Observations on the Concept of Sin at Qumran*, The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Occasional Papers, no. 16 (The Claremont Graduate School, 1989), 9.

[6]"Man's whole personality and his ethical conduct is therefore determined by which of the two camps or 'lots' he belongs to" (Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, 72).

[7]Fisdel, Steven A., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Understanding Their Spiritual Meaning* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1997), 272.

[8]Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 124.

[9]Jefford, *Some Observations on the Concept of Sin at Qumran*, 8.

been deciphered since Allegro's publication, and we append them from the new work of Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook.

"[Be] silent before [the Lord and] wait for him, and do not be jealous of the successful man who does wicked deeds." [This refers] to the Man of the Lie who led many people astray with deceitful statements, because they had chosen trivial matters but did not listen to the spokesmen for true knowledge, so that they[10] will perish by the sword, and by hunger and by plague. "Cease from anger and forsake wrath, and be not inflamed with a fury which leads only to evil, for the wicked will be cut off." Its interpretation concerns all those who turn back to the Law[11] who do not refuse to return from their wickedness, for all those who rebel against turning back from their iniquity will be cut off. "And those who are waiting for Yahweh will inherit the earth." Its interpretation: they are the Congregation of His Elect who do His will. "And in a little while the wicked will be no more, and I shall look carefully for his place and it will be gone." Its interpretation concerns all the wickedness at the end of the completion of forty years when there will not be found in the earth any wicked man. "And the humble shall inherit the earth and they shall delight in the abundance of peace."[12] Its interpretation concerns *the Congregation of* the Poor who accept the Season of Affliction, and they will be delivered from all snares [of Belial][13] . . . the Pentients of the Desert who will live a thousand generations . . . "And in the days of famine they will be satisfied but the wicked will perish." Its interpretation is that He will keep them alive in famine in the Season of *Affliction* . . . will perish in famine and in plague all who did not go out[14] . . . "All of them will be consumed like smoke." The interpretation concerns the Princes of

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[10]Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 221.

[11]Stegemann translates "(rechten) Lehre" here, emphasizing the unique interpretation of the sect. Stegemann, Hartmut, "Der Pešer Psalm 37 aus Höhle 4 von Qumran," *Revue de Qumran* 4 (May, 1963): 256.

[12]Stegemann translates "Fülle von Heil," i.e., "fullness of salvation." Stegemann, "Der Pešer Psalm 37 aus Höhle 4 von Qumran," 258. The word is SHALOM (HEBREW).

[13]Stegemann reads "aus allen Fangnetzen *Belials*." Stegemann, "Der Pešer Psalm 37 aus Höhle 4 von Qumran," 258. The recently published translation of Wise, Abegg and Cook agrees with the addition. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 221.

[14]Stegemann fills the gap with the next verse from the Qumran Psalter, "Die aber Jahwe lieben gelten als das Angesehenste der Weiden. [Damit ist] gemeint . . ." Stegemann, "Der Pešer Psalm 37 aus Höhle 4 von Qumran," 262.

Wickedness who have oppressed His holy people, who will perish like the smoke of a flame in the wind.[15]

The self-description of the community claims some of the titles which the Psalmist used for his own community. Naturally, the sectarians at Qumran would recognize no difference between the two. They are poor, afflicted, holy. They follow true knowledge. However, a new title, "the elect," reflects the uniquely deterministic theology of Qumran. Of import, too, is the centrality of the performing the law according to the teachings of the sect.[16] They follow the spokesmen for true knowledge and thus do the will of God. Other documents reveal that rank and membership in the sect depended on faithful observance of the ordinances of the law as understood by the group.[17]

Emphasis on historical religious figures is unique to Qumran and can be traced to the religious and political struggles which lay behind the foundation of the community. The spokesmen for true knowledge, the founders of the sect, had been opposed by the Man of the Lie, who turned the people against the truth. Those who remained faithful and separated themselves from Judah continue to suffer oppression at the hands of the Princes of Wickedness. Unlike the Psalmist, who depicted his enemies in more general terms, the sectarians specify chief enemies and identify them with contemporary historical figures. At the same time, these chief enemies are given code names which reflect their eschatological role in the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

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[15]Allegro, John M., "A newly discovered fragment of a commentary on Psalm 37," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, vol. 86 (May, 1954), 72.

[16]". . . observance of the Law was of paramount importance." Fisdel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 53.

[17]Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 124.

Several lines in this passage show how the enemy is a negation of the people of God and how the people of God, in turn, can be understood as the negation of the enemy. Those led astray "did *not* listen to the spokesmen for true knowledge"; they "did *not* go out" to the desert. On the other hand, the righteous "do *not* refuse to return from their wickedness." To some extent, both groups are defined by the fact that they act contrary to the other. This depiction by negation parallels Paul's pattern at the opening of his catena, with the repeated "οὐκ ἔστιν" refrain.

The characteristics of the enemy of Qumran exhibit all the essential elements from the Psalter. The enemies are wicked and godless. They reject the truth to follow the "Man of the Lie" who leads them astray. This title, "the Man of *the* Lie," reflects the unity of wickedness, the domain of the one evil spirit. In a similar phrase, Paul asserts that the wicked have "exchanged the truth of God for *the* lie." More than the Psalter itself, the sect stresses the connection between the wicked and demonic forces. In this passage, those who oppose them are said to lay the "snares of Belial," the prince of demons. Also, the enemies are presented as persecutors who oppress God's holy people. Although the sect transforms the depiction of the faithful to fit their own theology (e.g., double predestination and the centrality of the law), in describing the enemies all the motifs of the Psalter come to the fore.

Rabbinic Judaism

The Earliest Sources

Recent efforts to study early rabbinic Judaism have approached the subject and the sources with much greater caution than, for example, the immense but historically insensitive effort of Strack and Billerbeck. The difficulty begins with the nature and

development of Judaism itself. Early Judaism had no dominant system or theological structure, but embraced diverse positions and movements. The various contradicting and correcting positions of the rabbis reflect something of this diversity. Also, the perspectives of Judaism developed through time. For example, Robert H. Gundry maintains that legalism increased after the loss of the temple;[18] Jacob Neusner marks a profound shift in Jewish self-identity in the late fourth-century as a result of Christian political domination.[19] Next, the sources present data which was first passed on as oral tradition and, when committed to writing, was edited and reedited until it finally reached a standardized form. For this reason, some scholars abandon any hope of reaching back beyond the period of an estimated final redaction.[20] Countering this skepticism, others, such as Neusner, have attempted to develop methods which could identify more reliable traditions.[21]

Those scholars who seek to isolate the earlier traditions of rabbinism emphasize the value of the Mishnah and Tosefta as the earliest witnesses. The Mishnah is a collection of Halachoth, practical precepts which apply the restrictions of the oral and written Torah to contemporary life. It was compiled early in the third

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[18]Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Biblica* 66 (1985): 7.

[19]Neusner, Jacob, *The Body of Faith* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996), 49.

[20]This is the position of Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity*, xxxv. Similarly, Segal notes, "The pharisaic traditions evidenced in the Mishnah are of uncertain date" (Segal, Alan F., "Universalism in Judaism and Christianity," in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, ed. by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1.

[21]Mikeal Parsons surveys a number of the approaches taken. Parsons, Mikeal C., "The Critical Use of the Rabbinic Literature in New Testament Studies," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 12 (Summer, 1985): 98.

century.[22] While the Mishnah early achieved something of official status in the

Jewish community, the Tosefta (lit. "addition" or "supplement") is the one extant

rival collection.[23] Edited shortly after Mishnah, it has been extolled as the "earliest

source of information which unambiguously can be attributed to the Palestinian rabbis

of the first centuries of the common era."[24] Nevertheless, the editorial activity has

been thorough and the majority of the authorities cited flourished after the Bar

Kokhba War.[25] As our earliest sources for rabbinic thought, the Mishnah and the

Tosefta prove equally valuable for historical research.[26]

The Earliest Psalm References

Since the primary concern of Mishnah and Tosefta are proper behavior

(Halachah) and since they present their teachings independent of Scripture,[27]

references to the Psalms are scarce. When a passage is cited, the author often simply

intends to demonstrate the validity of a religious custom, such as the importance of

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[22]Herford places the date at 220 (Herford, R. Travers, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* [New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1903], 18); Porton likewise places the final editing in the first quarter of the same century (Porton, Gary G., *Goyim: Gentiles and Israelites in Mishnah-Tosefta* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 7).

[23]Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 21.

[24]Porton, *Goyim*, 7.

[25]Porton, *Goyim*, 9.

[26]Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 22.

[27]Porton, Gary G., *The Stranger within Your Gates*, ed. by William Scott Green and Calvin Goldscheider, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 51.

praying with attentiveness or the prohibition against "blessing an arbiter."[28] There

are, however, a few instances in which we may observe applications of the enemy

theme from the Psalter.

An interesting case arises with Psalm 1:1, which is put to both narrow and

broad use. The Tosefta cites one opinion that the "seat of the scoffers" can refer to

the seats at the amphitheater or wherever frivolous entertainment is presented.[29]

Although the former are called the "*Gentiles*' amphitheaters," certainly the character

of the entertainment itself earns the association of wickedness. Still, the fact that the

Gentiles invented this diversion aids in making the case that it is alien to Jewish

identity and purpose. Broader use of Psalm 1 occurs in two passages attributed to

rabbis of the second century. Both explicate the importance of Torah at table.

> Rabbi Hananiah b. Teradion[30] said: If two sit together and no words
> of the Law [are spoken] between them, there is the seat of the scornful,
> as it is written, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But if two sit
> together and words of Law [are spoken] between them, the Divine
> Presence rests between them . . . .[31]

> R. Simeon[32] said: If three have eaten at one table and have not spoken
> over it words of the Law, it is as though they had eaten of the
> sacrifices of the dead [Ps. 106:28], for it is written, For all tables are
> full of vomit and filthiness without God [Is. 28:8].[33]

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[28]Psalm 10:17 is cited in the first case (*The Tosefta*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Richard S. Sarason [Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1977], vol. 1, 13). Psalm 10:3, in the second (*The Tosefta*, vol. 4, 193).

[29]*The Tosefta*, vol. 4, 316.

[30]R. Hananiah b. Teradion died in 135.

[31]Mishnah, Aboth 3:2.

[32]Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, 100-170.

[33]Mishnah, Aboth 3:3.

In both passages, the recitation of Torah marks the boundary between the people of God and those outside. In the first, Torah is linked directly to presence of God among his people. Those who don't speak Torah at table (one may presume whether Jew or Gentile) are the scornful. On the same point, the second passage cites the Psalms, this time with reference to apostate Israel. The psalm details how these were rejected by God and punished by the hand of Phinehas (Ps. 106:29-30). Neglect of the Torah equals apostasy and excludes one from God's people. As the reference to Isaiah 28 shows, the Divine Presence withdraws itself. The same citation explicates the universal applicability of this principle in that it speaks of "all" tables. Therefore, also the tables of non-Jews are unclean because God and Torah are not present.

In rabbinic Judaism, the possession and practice of Torah identifies the Jew. "Israel is Israel by virtue of the Torah."[34] On the one hand, Torah communicated the covenant given by God to his elect people.[35] On the other hand, it detailed what observances the faithful Jew would perform to confirm and maintain his membership in the people of God.[36] As reflected in the passages about Torah at table, Torah sets Israel above the nations and in a unique relationship with God.[37]

The following saying from the Mishnah reflects the dualism between the people of God and their enemies, even as it cites Psalter.

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[34]Neusner, *The Body of Faith*, 48.

[35]Stern, Sacha, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, vol. 23 (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 81.

[36]"In the opinion of the rabbis who transmitted Mishnah-Tosefta, a true Israelite is one who relates to the Land, the People, the Temple, and YHWH in the explicit and circumscribed ways prescribed in these documents." Porton, *Goyim*, 2. This understanding of identity actualized through behavior continued through later Judaism (Stern, *Jewish Identity*, xxxiv).

[37]Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 74.

> A good eye and humble spirit and a lowly soul--[they in whom are these] are the disciples of Abraham our father. An evil eye, a haughty spirit, and a proud soul--[they in whom are these] are of the disciples of Balaam the wicked. How do the disciples of Abraham our father differ from the disciples of Balaam the wicked? The disciples of Abraham our father enjoy this world and inherit the world to come . . . The disciples of Balaam the wicked inherit Gehenna and go down to the pit of destruction, as it is written, But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days [Ps. 55:23].[38]

The opposition between the figures of Abraham and Balaam are reflected in the opposing characteristics of the disciples of each as well as their contrasting outcomes. Note the universal description of each group. All disciples of Abraham have a good eye, a humble spirit and a lowly soul; the second group functions as the perfect antonym of the first. In the conclusion, the enemy theme is invoked and applied to all who are not saved, all who are not disciples of Abraham. This quote with its focus on proper disposition could suggest that there might be those among the Gentiles who could merit the world to come. E. P. Sanders concludes that the dominant view of early Judaism was that Gentiles could be righteous by fulfilling the seven Noachian commandments.[39] Segal also argues for this kind of "universalism" in Rabbinic Judaism, by which Gentiles could be saved even if they did not convert.[40] Sacha Stern however comes to a more negative conclusion, observing that the Noahide laws functioned to demonstrate that Gentiles did *not* keep even those laws which God had given them.[41] Stern also observes that the few times his sources cite

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[38]Mishnah, Aboth 5:19.

[39]Sanders, E. P., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 210.

[40]Segal, "Universalism in Judaism and Christianity," 5.

[41]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 205.

righteous Gentiles (e.g., Jethro, Rahab, Ruth), they are all said to have later converted to Judaism, as if the oxymoron "righteous Gentile" could not be allowed to stand.[42] Given this data, it seems best to understand "the disciples of Abraham" in this passage as Jews and Jews alone.

One final citation from the Mishnah illustrates a specific application of the enemy theme, one which supposedly hearkens back to the days of the Temple cult.

> When [the chiefs of the priests and Levites] reached the Temple Mount even Agrippa the king would take his basket on his shoulder and enter in as far as the Temple Court. When they reached the Temple Court, the Levites sang the song, I will exalt thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up and not made mine enemies to triumph over me [Ps. 30].[43]

It seems that the selection of this psalm was considered appropriate at that point when the despised king had to stay behind. In this scene, whether historically accurate or not, the Levites thus celebrated together their holiness, their access to God and their separation from the wicked. King Agrippa functions as the "other" which underscores uniqueness of Levitical status.

Fundamental Presuppositions

The few citations of the enemy theme in Mishnah and Tosefta suggest that early rabbinism understood and sometimes applied the enemy theme in ways which recognized its significance for defining the people of God. Drawing from the studies of early Jewish identity conducted by Sacha Stern, Jacob Neusner and Gary G. Porton, we can easily understand why this should be so. Early Judaism remained faithful to many of the key presuppositions which made the enemy theme so useful.

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[42]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 30.

[43]Mishnah, Bikkurim 3:4.

Like the Psalter, early Judaism divided humanity into two monolithic and opposed groups, the people of God and their enemies. Each could be described as a collective, an aggregate of individuals, identical to each other in terms of religious evaluation.[44] In the particular Jewish development of this concept, the people of God in the Old Testament equates to Jews both as individuals and as group.[45] Consequently, Israel can be referred to by means of singular or plural metaphors.[46] Also, the singular noun sometimes takes a plural verb ("Israel are dear").[47] As Rabbi Shimon b. Yohai said, Israel is "as one body, as one soul."[48] Israel is altogether righteous, holy, and separate from the nations; they are praised for their חֶסֶד, wisdom and faith.[49] We have already noted Torah as gift and as practice is central to Israel's unique status. It places her in an exclusive relationship with God. As a marker of this unique status, God has given Israel circumcision. Abraham redeems the sinners of Israel on the merit of their circumcision;[50] if any Israel do end up in Gehenna, an angel must first decircumcise them and so remove their status as Israel.[51]

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[44]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, xvii.

[45]Neusner, *The Body of Faith*, 5.

[46]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 12.

[47]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 11.

[48]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 12.

[49]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 30-32.

[50]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 122.

[51]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 67.

At the same time, the nations compose the contrary, homogenous whole.[52] They are defined theologically as the obverse of Israel, and thus they, in turn, serve to define Israel itself.[53] Israel is righteous (צַדִּיק); non-Jews are the wicked (the רְשָׁעִים).[54] In contrast with the wise Israel, they are the fools.[55] While Israel is angelic in nature, the nations are like animals.[56] Often, for the purpose of emphasizing the unique identity of Israel, the nations are described with the opposite characteristic.[57]

The wickedness of the Gentiles expressed itself in their utterly depraved behavior. In dealing with the Gentile, the Jew always had to remain aware of the likelihood that the other could give in to gross vice at any moment. Murder, adultery, and idolatry were common and random occurrences among the Gentiles.[58] Also, one could count on Gentiles to lie and steal.[59] Like the enemy in the Psalter, the nations live for their hatred of and persecution of Israel.[60] But in opposing the people of God, they oppose God himself, for "whoever attacks Israel is like attacking

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[52]Neusner, *The Body of Faith*, 6; Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 7, 14.

[53]Porton, *Goyim*, 285; Neusner, *The Body of Faith*, 6, 36.

[54]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 4.

[55]Midrash Tanhuma Tetzave 11, quoted in Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 2.

[56]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 33.

[57]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 3.

[58]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 22.

[59]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 29.

[60]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 48.

the Almighty."[61] Finally, Israel understands itself to be something of a new creation in an old and corrupt humanity. The nations number 70 and correspond to the 70 languages which arose after the tower of Babel.[62] Israel, however, was called into being by a separate divine act, the covenant with Abraham. One who converts from the nations enters the humanity of Israel a new creature, "similar to a newborn infant."[63]

Jewish understanding of self and other is quite parallel to what we have observed in the Psalter and Paul. Although differently defined, חֶסֶד is named as a chief and distinctive characteristic of the people of God. This corresponds to central role πίστις in Jesus Christ plays in Paul's theology. The Jews recognize the nations as the fools, just as Paul cites Psalm 14 to assert the lack of understanding of the man "under sin." As the Psalmist describes his enemies with animal imagery, Jews see the nations as animals and Paul compares the unbeliever to a snake (Rom. 3:13). Jews often simply characterize the non-Jew as the negation of themselves. This perfectly parallels Paul's description of the unbeliever with the constant refrain, οὐκ ἔστιν (Rom. 3:10-12). Finally, the Jews anticipated that Gentiles would engage in gross vice at any moment, without reason or warning. This parallels Paul's insinuation in Romans 2:21-22 that his non-believing interlocutor has committed theft, adultery and sacrilege.

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[61]Mekhilta, Shira 5, quoted in Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 41.

[62]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 8.

[63]Gerim 1,7, quoted in Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 90.

Successive Development

Although the studies of Stern and Neusner survey more than just the earliest rabbinic evidence, their conclusions about Jewish identity show that the structure was present for meaningful applications of the enemy theme. Later Jewish scholars then developed this motif on a large scale, as is evidenced by the later Midrash. Haggadic Midrash, commentary on the Scripture which focuses on contemporary application, was apparently gathered together from sermons and school lectures.[64] The earliest of these is the Genesis Rabbah, edited in the fifth century.[65] Sacha Stern, however, observes that it would be hard to prove that any passage of the Genesis Rabbah was later than the third century.[66] The entire collection of Midrash Rabbah (expositions upon the Pentateuch, Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes) did not come together into one great collection until the thirteenth century.[67] The following survey examines the cases in which the Midrash comments on those same Psalms Paul includes in his catena.

In the exposition of Genesis 34:10 and Esther 6:6, the Midrash cites Psalm 14 to distinguish between the Gentile ("Esau," "the fool") who speaks "in" his heart and the righteous who speak "to" their heart and keep its passions in submission.[68] So,

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[64]Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 23.

[65]Porton, Gary G., *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*, Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1985, 161.

[66]Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, xxxii.

[67]Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 24-25.

[68]*Midrash Rabbah*, ed. by Dr. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, translated by H. Freedman (London: Soncino Press, 1939, reprinted 1961), vol. 1, *Genesis*, 274; vol. 9, *Esther and Song of Songs*, 115.

it is said, the righteous "resemble their Creator, of whom we read, And the Lord said to his heart (Gen. 8:21)."[69] The following passage, also making use of Psalm 14, exhibits both the antithesis of the people of God and their enemies as well as the enemies' intrinsic hatred for God's people:

> You will find many things written of Esau to his discredit, but of Jethro in praise. In reference to Esau it is written, They have ravished the women in Zion (Lam. 5:11), but of Jethro it says, And he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter (Ex. 11:21). Of Esau it says, Who eat up My people as they eat bread (Ps. 14:4), but of Jethro it says, Call him, that he may eat bread (Ex. 11:20).[70]

Jethro, while not a Jew by birth, was reckoned by the rabbis to be righteous and, eventually and inevitably, a convert to Judaism.

The rabbis sometimes identify the wicked in Psalm 5:6, "Thou destroyest them that speak falsehood," with the generation of the flood.[71] In explaining the Aaronic Benediction, however, the same verse comes up again by way of analogy. As God blesses his people, so he curses the nations, who "sneer" at his commandments and are consequently guilty of "blood and deceit."[72] In this way, both the determinative significance of doing Torah and the common guilt of non-Jews are expressed. As in the Psalter, the Midrash predicates murder and deception of all the enemies.

In an explanation of Psalm 140:8, "Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not his evil device," the wicked, "Esau," is identified with the Roman

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[69]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 9, *Esther and Song of Songs*, 115.

[70]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 322.

[71]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1, *Genesis I*, 249.

[72]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 5, *Numbers I*, 407. Cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 5, *Numbers I*, 408: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked (Prov. 3:33) applies to the wicked Esau."

government.[73] Although Esau plans wicked schemes against Jacob, God has given him a bit, namely the Goths and Huns, which constrains him.[74] This usage of the enemy theme recalls that of Qumran, where the enemey manifests itself as a specific political entity which oppressed God's people.

Another passage links the sins of the enemy to Satan and the first sin of humanity. Commenting on the curse of the serpent in Genesis 3:14, one rabbi immediately refers to the enemy in Psalm 140:11, "A slanderer shall not be established in the earth; the violent and wicked man shall be hunted with thrust upon thrust."[75] The slanderer refers to the lying serpent, who maligned God. Thus, the wicked man is caught in the original sin and bound with the father of sin.

Psalm 10:16 is often quoted to defend the opposition between God and the nations: "The Lord is King for ever; the nations are perished out of His land." God delights in the destruction of the nations as the destruction of evil.[76] This verse is even found on the lips of the wicked, who recognize it as the curse that Israel speaks against them.[77]

In reference to Psalm 36, two interesting comments are made. Rabbi Ishmael again underlines the distinguishing significance of Torah when he says "the

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[73]Similarly, Remus and Romulus are said to have been orphans "of Esau," whom God provided for; thus, Roman ingratitude appears all the worse. *Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 9, *Esther and Song of Songs*, 48.

[74]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 2, *Genesis II*, 694.

[75]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1, *Genesis I*, 159.

[76]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 5, *Numbers I*, 72.

[77]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 9, *Esther and Song of Songs*, 93.

wicked . . . did not accept the Torah which was revealed on the mountains of God."[78] In the same passage, Rabbi Judah explains how the wicked match their eternal destiny in the deep and in Gehenna, since all three are darkness.[79] Darkness, in opposition to light, is a useful symbol in a dualistic worldview of good and evil. The uniformity of darkness also reflects the undifferentiated character of those outside of God's people.

This has been a brief review of Midrashic development of the enemy theme from the Psalter, particularly those psalms which Paul cites in Romans 3. These later rabbis did not overlook the usefulness of the "other" to define and establish the self, of those "out" to emphasize the significance of those "in." The fundamental basis for such a development had already been established in earliest Jewish self-understanding. It then found its natural and obvious expression in these later expositions of Holy Scripture.

Conclusion

Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and rabbinic literature maintain the presuppositions which make the enemy motif a viable method of group identification. Each interprets the world from a dualistic perspective of the people of God and their enemies. These are understood as two monolithic wholes in direct opposition, each the negation of the other. The enemy theme then finds consistent applications along these lines. The enemy of Qumran fails to submit to the rule of the community; the enemy of the rabbis despises Torah. Both apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism pictured the enemy as

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[78]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1, *Genesis I*, 257.

[79]*Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1, *Genesis I*, 257.

thoroughly wicked and as a persecutor. They differ, however, in their development of the demonic animal imagery. Qumranic theology maximized the demonic domination of man outside the community. Rabbinic theology went in the other direction and associated the enemy with animals. In each case, the enemies are characterized by their relationship with the law. The enemies reject the law.

CONCLUSION

The enemy motif in the Psalter identifies the people of God by depicting their opposite. To do this, it presupposes that humanity falls into two opposing and homogenous groups, the people of God and their enemies. In accordance with the unequal dualism of good and evil in the Old Testament, each group is in league with an opposite spiritual force. The people of God rejoice in the rule of Yahweh; the enemies join the forces of darkness in opposition to that rule. The depiction of the enemy, then, amounts to a theological assessment of those not in covenant with God. The Psalmist describes them as the epitome of evil in human form, full of deceit and violence. The accusation of gross sins reflects the enemies' guilt, due to their association with the powers of darkness. It also portrays their very nature as those opposed to God and everything good.

The theological function of the enemy theme clarifies Paul's citation of the Psalter in Rom. 3:10-18. In Romans, Paul concerns himself with the disunity of the Roman Christians and seeks to reassert their united identity in Christ. Some continued to maintain stronger ties to the synagogue than to the largely Gentile Church. Paul addresses the situation by applying the enemy theme to all outside of Christ. He especially focuses on the status of "faithful" but non-Christian Jews, a case which particularly confused the community. Paul groups Jews and Gentiles together, all outside of Christ, as the common enemy in order to establish the Christians in their common identity as the one people of God.

Paul can apply the enemy theme against Jews because he believes the people of God are and always were marked by faith in Christ. Those who reject this faith have cut themselves off from God's people and find themselves among the enemies. Paul goes to great lengths to demonstrate that possession of the Torah and circumcision provide no special defense for Jews. God remains just in judging those who spurn faith in his Christ. The character of the enemy theme as a broad theological assessment also explains how Paul can charge Jews with the most heinous of crimes. Those opposed to Christ set themselves against God, his people and all that is good. They associate themselves with demons and all wickedness. The depiction of gross sins reflects the wickedness and guilt of humanity that sets itself against God.

Reading the catena of Romans 3 in the light of the enemy theme in the Psalter also sheds light on the difficult passages which frame the citations. Since the catena aims to show that the Jews who reject Christ fall outside the people of God, its introduction (Rom. 3:9) must be read in such a way as to emphasize the position of the Jew, namely, his equal standing with the Gentile. For this reason, Paul places Jews first in his conclusion, "Jews and Greeks are under sin," even though his argumentation follows the reverse order (Rom. 1:18-32 addresses the situation of the Gentiles; Rom. 2:1-3:8, that of the Jews). The force of the catena would also help explain the προεχόμεθα by favoring a Jewish referent. At the close of the catena, Paul's interpretation in Rom. 3:19-20 again addresses the case of the Jew, those "in the law." Paul there defends the unprecedented application of the enemy theme to the "faithful" Jews themselves. Rom. 3:20 then restates Paul's contention that the Jews

have misplaced their hope. "Works of the law" never were intended as a means of salvation. Only faith in Christ can justify the sinner.

Parallel to this Pauline application, apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism also employ the enemy theme to mark themselves off from others and to establish group identity. Three chief characteristics of the enemies find some expression in each community. They are thoroughly wicked in their opposition to God and his people. They act under the power of demonic forces, or, as in rabbinic Judaism, they live more like animals than human beings. Finally, the enemies persecute the faithful. They live to destroy the people of God.

While the similarities in usage reinforce the power of this motif to differentiate between in-group and out-group, the identification of the "other" in each case highlights the distinctive self-definition and boundary markers of each. The community at Qumran found its enemies in those who did not follow their interpretation of the law. Similarly, the rabbis saw their enemies in those who neither possessed nor practiced Torah. In both of these expressions of Judaism, the performance of the law plays the central role in group identity. This contrasts sharply with Paul's focus on faith in Christ. The different applications of the enemy theme shows a central difference between Paul and Judaism. In equating the enemy with every unbeliever, Paul identified the people of God by chiefly their faith. In making the enemy those who spurn the Torah, both apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism defined themselves in terms of their possession of and obedience to the law.

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