



2018

Benefaction in Galatians: An Analysis of Paul's Language of God's Favor in Its Greco-Roman Context

Ferdinand Okorie

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Okorie, Ferdinand, "Benefaction in Galatians: An Analysis of Paul's Language of God's Favor in Its Greco-Roman Context" (2018). *Dissertations*. 2976.

https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/2976

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).
Copyright © 2018 Ferdinand Okorie

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

BENEFACTION IN GALATIANS:
AN ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S LANGUAGE OF GOD'S FAVOR IN ITS GRECO-ROMAN
CONTEXT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY

FERDINAND IKENNA OKORIE

CHICAGO, IL

AUGUST 2018

Copyright by Ferdinand Okorie, 2018
All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From the beginning of my academic endeavors Professor Barbara E. Reid, O.P., the academic dean and vice president of Catholic Theological Union and Professor James C. Okoye, C.S.Sp., have inspired my interest in biblical studies and scholarship. Their encouragement and goodwill have been a source of strength and inspiration throughout my doctoral studies.

I am immensely grateful to my readers, Professor Robert A. DiVito and Professor Edmondo F. Lupieri, who without hesitation accepted to be part of my doctoral dissertation writing experience. Their patient supervision, meticulous review of my work and constructive criticism of my ideas have helped me throughout the dissertation process. Of course, I am deeply grateful to Professor Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., who directed the dissertation and kindled my interest in Greco-Roman context of Pauline Christianity when I first broached the idea of doing some significant work on Paul and his gentile churches to him. He supported the entire dissertation process with his magisterial suggestions on content and structure. He was generous with his time and ultimately, his style of supervision is the best experience a young scholar may ever have in order to successfully complete a doctoral dissertation.

I am also grateful to the Claretian Missionaries for their support. My family and friends have been a source of encouragement and strength. Chris and Rosemary Aghanenu, Rev. Fr. Anthony Ejikeme and Rev. Fr. Wenceslaus Isidienu, C.M.F., have been so generous and kind. I have benefited from their support. Likewise, I have benefited from the kindness and goodwill of

Dr. Tonjeh Bah, MD. You have been exceptionally supportive throughout my graduate studies and I dedicate this work to you.

For Tonjeh Bah, MD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON PAUL’S LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ.....	9
Introduction.....	9
1.1. The Language of χάρις in Paul’s Letters	10
Introduction.....	10
1.1.1. The Prescript of Paul’s Letters.....	12
1.1.2. The Postscript of Paul’s Letters	17
1.1.3. The Body of Paul’s Letters	19
1.2. James R. Harrison on the Language of χάρις in Paul’s Letters.	56
Introduction.....	56
1.2.1. Grace in Greco-Roman Literature	56
1.2.2. Grace in Jewish Literature	59
1.2.3. Grace in Paul’s Letters.....	63
Conclusion	67
1.3. Evaluation of Harrison and Proposed Approach	68
Conclusion	70
CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN DIVINE-HUMAN BENEFACTION	72
Introduction.....	72
2.1. Experience of Divine χάρις in Divine-Human Benefaction	74
2.1.1. Experience of Paul	75
2.1.2. Experience of Abraham	82
2.1.3. Experience of the Gentile Christians of Galatia	87
Conclusion	98
2.2. Manifestations of Divine χάρις in Divine-Human Benefaction	99
2.2.1. The Death of Christ.....	111
2.2.2. The Gift of the Spirit.....	131
Conclusion	145
2.3. Experience of Divine χάρις and the Motif of Reciprocity.	147
Conclusion	155
CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN HUMAN-HUMAN BENEFACTION.....	157
Introduction.....	157
3.1. Friendship and Benefaction in the Greco-Roman World	159
3.2. Experience of χάρις in Human-Human Benefaction	161
3.2.1. Paul and the Galatians.....	162
3.2.2. Doing Good to One Another.....	186
3.2.3. Jerusalem Collection.....	196

Conclusion	210
3.3. Evidence of Friendship, Benefaction and Reciprocity in Galatians	210
Conclusion	219
CHAPTER FOUR: CONTRAST BETWEEN PAUL AND OPPONENTS ON ΧΑΡΙΣ.....	221
Introduction.....	221
4.1. Law Observance.....	223
4.2. Elemental Spirits of the World	245
4.3. Paul’s Jewish Christian Opponents.....	255
4.4. Greco-Roman χάρις and the Message of Paul’s Opponents	271
Conclusion	278
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	281
Introduction.....	281
5.1. Divine Benefaction	282
5.2. Human Response to Divine Benefaction	289
5.3. Human Benefaction	292
BIBLIOGRAPHY	298
Primary Sources	298
Secondary Sources	299
VITA.....	314

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Part 2, Principat.</i> Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
<i>AC</i>	<i>Acta Classica</i>
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Biblical Dictionary.</i> Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. NY: Doubleday, 1992.
<i>ATJ</i>	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BDAG</i>	Danker, Frederick W., Walter, Bauer, William, F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.</i> 3rd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of John Rylands University of Manchester</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>CV</i>	<i>Communio Viatorum</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Current in Theology and Mission</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>ER</i>	<i>Epworth Review</i>
<i>EJS</i>	<i>European Journal of Sociology</i>

<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> . Editio Minor. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1924–.
<i>IGRR</i>	<i>Inscriptions Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i> . Edited by René. Cagnat, J. Toutain, Georges Louis Lafaye and Victor Henry. 4 vols. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1964.
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>Kilo</i>	<i>Kilo</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selecta</i> . Edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–1905.
<i>P. Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>SIG3</i>	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger. 4 vols. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
<i>Michel</i>	<i>Recueil d’inscriptions grecques</i> . Edited by Charles Michel. Bruxelles: H. Lamertin, 1900.
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>SEA</i>	<i>Svensk exegetisk Arsbok</i>
<i>TJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>

- TDNT* *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittle and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffery Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
- TLNT* *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Ceslas Spicq. Translated and edited by James D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
- ZPE* *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
- ZNW* *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde die älteren Kirche*

INTRODUCTION

The term *χάρις* represent an important concept in the letters about which Paul's authorship is not in any serious doubt. Paul uses the terminology of *χάρις* and its cognates in the opening, closing and the body of his letters. In these letters *χάρις* describes Paul's understanding of the relationship between God and the believer, and also between the individual believer and other members of the Christian community. Therefore, by appealing to the language of benefaction in his letters, Paul explains and defends the message he proclaims to the Gentile Christians. How did Paul come to use this terminology of *χάρις* in his letters? We shall suggest that the Greco-Roman world is the setting and background for Paul's use of the term *χάρις*.

In the Greco-Roman world of Paul's communities, the term *χάρις* is often used to describe (1) beauty, (2) joy, and (3) favor or kindness.¹ We shall proceed to explain how *χάρις* is used in the ancient world to express the preceding concepts. First, the term *χάρις* is used to express physical beauty as something which is a pleasure to behold; and also, it describes the effect of the object of beauty on the beholder.² As early as Homer in the *Odyssey*, *χάρις* is what the goddess Athene pours over Odysseus' "head and shoulder, then he [goes] apart and [sits] down on the shore of the sea, gleaming with beauty and grace (ὥς ἄρα τῷ κατέχευε χάριν

¹ Mary Scott examines various meaning of *χάρις* in the antiquity. see Mary Scott, "Charis from Hesiod to Pindar," *AC* 27(1984) 1; James Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931) 21–29.

² Mary Scott, "Charis in Homer and the Homeric Hymns," *AC* 26(1983) 2.

κεφαλῆ τε καὶ ὤμοις, ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε κιῶν ἐπὶ θῖνα θαλάσσης, κάλλεϊ καὶ χάρισι στίλβων).”³ In fact, this use of the term χάρις was continued in later Greek literature. Second, in Greco-Roman world, χάρις designates the emotional feeling of joy; music is often the background of this feeling. Again early in Greek literature, Hestia is beseeched with the language of χάρις to bestow beauty on the musical rendition of a suppliant who entreats, “...bestow beauty on my singing (*Hom. Hymns* 24.6: χάριν δ' ἄμ' ὄπασσον ἄοιδῆι).”⁴ Once again, this use of χάρις can also be found in later Greek literature. Third, the term χάρις is used in the Greco-Roman world to identify the favor, kindness or goodwill freely granted by a benefactor to a beneficiary;⁵ and also, χάρις designates “the return of favour or thanks by the beneficiary to the benefactor

³ Homer, *Od.*, 6.235.236 (Murray & Dimock, LCL). Similar understanding of χάρις is also found in the *Iliad* as Hera beautifies herself so that she can seduce Zeus. She receives help from Athene. Then Hera adorns herself with many embroideries and accessories, “and abundant grace shines from them (*Il* 14:180–184: χάρις δ' ἀπελάμπετο πολλή).” Homer, *Il.*, 14.180–184 (Murray & Wyatt, LCL). Also in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, there is an account on the physical appearance of the young girl who brings food and water to Demeter. On her part, Demeter uses the language of grace to speak about the young girl’s noble birth and the charm and modesty of her eyes as coming from a king. She says, “Greetings, lady, for I do not expect you come from low parents, but ones of standing; your eyes have a striking modesty and charm, as might come from lawgiver princes (χαῖρε, γύναι, ἐπεὶ οὐ σε κακῶν ἄπ' ἔολπα τοκῆων ἔμμεναι, ἀλλ' ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ τοι πρέπει ὄμμασιν αἰδῶς καὶ χάρις, ὡς εἶ πέρ τε θεμιστοπόλων βασιλῆων).” *Homeric Hymns*, 2.213–215 (West, LCL).

⁴ In the account of the birth of Mary in the *Proto-Evangelium of James*, probably written about the middle of the second century AD, in fact, χάρις is used to express the emotion of joy. The context is God casting divine χάρις upon Mary and as a result, she danced out of joy to the delight of the house of Israel. “He set her on the third step of the altar, and the Lord God cast his grace down upon her. She danced on her feet, and the entire house of Israel loved her (*Prot Jas.* 7:3: Καὶ ἐκάθισεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τρίτου βαθμοῦ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, καὶ ἔβαλλε Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς χάριν ἐπ' αὐτὴν, καὶ κατεχόρευε τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἠγάπησεν αὐτὴν πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ).” see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels. Text and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Scott, “Charis in Homer and the Homeric Hymns,” 2–3.

⁵ John S. Kselman, “Grace,” in *ABD* (vol 2; NY: Doubleday, 1992) 1085; Ceslas Spicq, “χάρις,” in *TLNT*, 3.501.

whether human or divine.”⁶ Thus, whatever favor or goodwill conferred by a benefactor to a beneficiary is generally designated as χάρις. Whatever a beneficiary does to acknowledge what has been granted by a benefactor (εὐεργέτης) is also called χάρις. It is important to keep in mind that onwards, this use of the term χάρις as favor and gratitude becomes widespread and common in Greek and Roman literature.⁷

Seen in this way, in the Greco-Roman context of Paul’s auditors as Seneca rightly notes, the ethic of giving willingly, receiving willingly and returning the favor willingly constitutes the chief bond of human society in the relationships among humankind and in humanity’s relationship with the gods.⁸ Thus, in the Greco-Roman world, the ethos of reciprocity is an integral aspect of the language of χάρις. In fact, the language of χάρις involves a chain of obligation that makes equal demand on both the benefactor and the beneficiary.⁹ There is hardly

⁶ James R. Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 172, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 2.

⁷ David A. deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament,” *ATJ* 31(1999) 38–39.

⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.4.2. Elsewhere, Seneca suggests an image for the interlocking relationship between a benefactor and a recipient. He says, “Some would have it appear that there is one for bestowing a benefit; others hold that there are three classes of benefactors—those who earn benefits, those who return them, those who receive and return them at the same time. But of the two explanations do you accept as true whichever you like; yet what profit is there in such knowledge? Why do the sisters hand in hand dance in ring which returns upon itself? For the reason that a benefit passing in its course from hand to hand returns nevertheless to the giver; the beauty of the whole is destroyed if the course is anywhere broken, and it has most beauty if it is continuous and maintains an uninterrupted succession.” Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–5 (Basore, LCL).

⁹ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.18.1. Troels Engberg-Pedersen adds, “by giving, accepting, and returning benefits between one another, giver and receiver establish, support, and give expression to a personal involvement with one another that generates a space of sharing and community within which they may live. In a gift relationship giver and receiver are intentionally directed toward one another as specific people—you and me. The result is a wholly personalized space of sharing and community.” See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God’s χάρις and Its Human Response,” *HTR* 101(2008) 20.

any wonder then that the term is closely attached to the ethos of reciprocity in both divine-human and human-human relationships. With this in mind, we suggest that Paul's language of χάρις must be seen against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman conventions of giving and receiving benefits. So, in the Letter to the Galatians Paul invokes the Greco-Roman language of χάρις to advance his argument against the teachings of his Jewish Christian opponents.

In fact, many modern commentators, as our review of scholarship in chapter one will show, focus on the theological meaning of χάρις in divine-human relationship and on what this relationship means for the human recipient of divine benefaction. The theological interpretation of Paul's language of divine benefaction is pertinent to the message that Paul proclaimed to his Gentile converts. Nevertheless, to focus only on the theological meaning of Paul's language of χάρις and to ignore the social context of Paul's auditors, the context from which Paul's use of the language of χάρις arises, leaves us with a distorted view of Paul's overall argument. In order to illustrate this problem, we shall review representative commentaries on Paul's use of the language of χάρις in the opening, closing and body of Paul's letters.

But we shall also see that James R. Harrison has made a breakthrough in his work by dealing in a detailed fashion with the role divine and human χάρις plays in Paul's letters within the larger Greco-Roman world of benefaction. His book *Paul's Language of Grace in its Greco-Roman Context* still remains the most comprehensive study on Paul's use of the language of benefaction in his letters. He builds his investigation on the thesis that "Paul's language of grace would have been assessed by his auditors against the Hellenistic reciprocity system that shaped the rituals of giving and receiving throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin."¹⁰ In other

¹⁰ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 1.

worlds, Harrison explores, on the social level, how Paul's letters show interaction with Greco-Roman benefaction conventions and the ethos of reciprocity.¹¹ We shall review in detail Harrison's analysis of Paul's interaction with Greco-Roman language of *χάρις* in his letters. In our review of Harrison, however, we shall also indicate that his significant study of the language of *χάρις* in Paul's letters in the context of Paul's Gentiles audience leaves out for detail study the Letter to the Galatians, the letter in which the concept of *χάρις* first appears in more than the opening and closing of the letter.

There are two ways in which our interpretation of Galatians against the backdrop of Greco-Roman language of benefaction will be different from Harrison's. First, we shall propose that to grasp the trajectory of the language of *χάρις* in Paul's letters, one must first interpret the Letter to the Galatians. This is because it is the first letter where the term *χάρις* appears beyond the opening and closing of Paul's letter.¹² But Harrison's important contribution on the significance of the social context of Paul's language of *χάρις* did not examine in an extensive manner the Letter to the Galatians. Secondly, Harrison is adamant that though Paul appeals to Greco-Roman language of benefaction, he overturns, for his Gentile audience, the Greco-Roman ethos of reciprocity, which is an integral aspect of benefaction in antiquity. Unlike Harrison, we shall argue that in Galatians, Paul's appeal to the language of *χάρις* includes an exhortation to the

¹¹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 24.

¹² The term *χάρις* is a commonplace in the undisputed letters of Paul. It occurs twice in 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1; 5:28), it appears about 7 times in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:3, 4; 3:10; 15:10; 16:23), Paul uses the term about 10 times in 2 Corinthians (2 Cor 1:2, 12; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 9; 9:8, 14; 12:9; 13:14); it is used about 7 times in Galatians (Gal 1:3, 6, 15; 2:9, 21; 5:4; 6:18), the term appears only twice in Philemon (Phlm 1:3, 25); Paul uses the term 21 times in Romans (1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:16; 5:2, 15, 17, 20, 21; 6:1, 14, 15; 11: 6; 12:3, 6; 12:3, 6; 15:15; 16:20, 24); and finally, it is used about 3 times in Philippians (Phil 1:2, 7; 4:23).

Galatians to reciprocate the favors they have been granted by God and by other believers in the community.

In chapter two, we shall interpret the Letter to the Galatians against the backdrop of Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction. We shall argue that Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction in the opening, closing and body of the letter. We shall focus on how Paul appeals in the letter to the Greco-Roman language of benefaction in divine-human relationship. We shall draw examples from the Greco-Roman context to support our interpretation of Galatians. Our analysis of Galatians will propose that Paul portrays God as a benefactor who has inaugurated an era of gratuitous gift of divine favor to humanity (Gal 1:4). We shall show that Christ's self-gift on the cross is the singular manifestation of God's favor in divine-human relationship. On account of Jesus' death, God sends the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit completes and validates God's act of benefaction in the relationship with humanity (Gal 3:2–3; 4:6). Paul appeals to his experience (Gal 1:10; 15–16), the experience of Abraham (Gal 3:6–18; 4:21–31), and finally, the experience of the Galatian Christians (Gal 1:6–7; 3:1–5) in their relationships with God to support his gospel message of God's gift of divine favor to humanity through Christ. We shall draw the conclusion that Paul expects the Galatians to show gratitude for the benefits they have been divinely granted. We shall insist that the logic of Paul's argument in divine-human benefaction includes the necessity (1) to reciprocate God's gift of the Spirit by a life of active involvement that would lead to the harvest of the "fruits of the Spirit;" (2) to have faith, to trust and to be loyal in their relationship of benefaction with God, just as Abraham and Paul tenaciously display faith, loyalty, and trust in their experience of God's benefaction in divine-human relationship.

In chapter three our interpretation of the Letter to the Galatians against the backdrop of Greco-Roman language of benefaction proceeds to examine how Paul engages the experience of the mutual act of kindness among friends. We shall propose that Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman cultural value of friendship to remind the Galatian Christians about the character of the friendship relationship he shares with them (Gal 4:21–20). Also, we shall demonstrate that the language of Galatians 6:1–10 reflects an experience of mutually looking out for the good of one another by doing what is good (Gal 6:10) and noble (Gal 6:9) towards one another. The final section in this chapter will show that the Jerusalem collection is an example of how Paul encourages the communities he established in the Greco-Roman world like the Christian community in Galatia (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1–4) to share their resources with the church in Jerusalem in mutual act of kindness and fellowship. Just as we did in chapter two, here also, we shall draw examples from the Greco-Roman world to support our proposal that Paul's argument in Galatians on human-human benefaction is couched in Greco-Roman conventions of friendship relationship, which is the context of his Gentile audience.

In fourth chapter, we shall examine how Paul's appeal to Greco-Roman benefaction language sets his gospel message apart from the message of his Jewish Christian opponents. We shall propose that Paul's view of the Mosaic Law denies the belief that with the coming of Christ that one is able to experience divine benefaction through law observance. For the Mosaic Law's positive role in divine-human relationship has been upended by the coming of Christ. Then, now that Christ has come, to insist on the observance of the Mosaic Law, based on the scheme of thought of Paul in Galatians, is the same as living a life outside of divine favor (Gal 3:23–26; 5:4). Moreover, we shall analyze Paul's view on the elemental spirits of the world and why he links the Mosaic Law with the elemental spirits of the world (Gal 4:8–10). We shall demonstrate

that Paul portrays the elemental spirits of the world as enslaving beings, incapable of benefaction. Our analysis will show that one of the main contrasts in the letter is between those who are benevolent and those who are not. For Paul, the elemental spirits are not benevolent powers; rather they are enslaving powers (Gal 4:3). Paul seems to maintain that in the sphere of divine-human relationship, God alone has shown evidence of benefaction. Additionally, we shall suggest that Paul's criticizes his Jewish Christian opponents for preaching the gospel of both faith in Christ and the observance of the law.

We shall show that Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction to insist that the Galatian Christians' experience of God's gift of divine favor through Christ makes the message of his Jewish Christian opponents obsolete and ineffective. The ineffectiveness of their message is because they are seeking their own interest and not that of the Galatian Christians (4:17); they are not preaching the truth of the gospel about God's relationship with humanity through Christ (Gal 4:16; see 2:5); they want to boast in the flesh of the Galatian Christians by forcing them to be circumcised (6:13); they stand in the way of the Galatians' progress in following Jesus Christ and the truth (5:7); and they are preaching circumcision in order to avoid the scandal of the cross (Gal 5:11; 1 Cor 1:23). We shall show that by accusing his Jewish Christian opponents of these actions, Paul wishes to convince the Galatian Christians to reject them and their message of both faith in Christ and the observance of the law, and embrace his message of God gift of divine favor through the self-gift of Christ on the cross (Gal 2:20–21).

CHAPTER ONE

SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON PAUL'S LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ

Introduction

Most Pauline scholars have concluded that Paul uses the term *χάρις* to draw attention to God's benevolence, first in granting the apostolic ministry to Paul and others; second as the means of believers' experience of salvation through Christ; and third as the term that captures Paul's persuasion to his auditors to embrace a way of life based on God's gift of divine favor. Their experience of God's benefaction invites them to a life of fellowship with one another. An example of their fellowship with one another on account of God's benefaction is demonstrated in the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, which Paul encourages them to undertake.

Most theological interpretations of Paul's language of *χάρις*, which we shall review shortly, are very instructive and perhaps, reflect the same meaning that Paul's gentile audience drew from his appeal to the language of benefaction. But the social context of Paul's audience that imbues the notion of divine *χάρις* with its rich meaning is lacking in modern interpretations of Paul's language of divine benefaction. In other words, most modern commentaries on the meaning of *χάρις* in Paul's letters are without the richness in meaning that Paul assigns the term within the context of his audience. To be sure, James R. Harrison's work focuses on the social context of Paul's language of divine benefaction; but he leaves out for proper study the Letter to the Galatians. It would be impossible to focus on each individual commentator. For this reason,

we shall look at several representative commentaries that offer a detailed and broad picture of how scholars more generally interpret the concept of χάρις in Paul's letters.

Our review, therefore, will proceed in the following manner: first, we shall review modern commentaries on the meaning of χάρις in the prescript, postscript and body of Paul's letters. Second, since this research focuses on the Letter to the Galatians, we shall pay careful and particular attention to the scholarly debate on the language of divine benefaction in Galatians. We shall particularly review commentaries on Paul's use of the term χάρις in writing his Letter to the Galatians. The purpose of the review is to illustrate how these interpretations, for the most part, discuss the theological meaning of χάρις and ignore the social context. Third, we shall review James Harrison's analysis of how Paul engages the Greco-Roman aspect of giving and receiving benefaction in the letters he writes to his gentile audience. Finally, we shall suggest a new approach in the study of Paul's interaction with Greco-Roman benefaction conventions in his letters by analyzing the Letter to the Galatians.

1.1. The Language of χάρις in Paul's Letters

Introduction

Critical interpretations of Paul's letters have considered the various ways that he has used the concept of χάρις. It appears consistently both in the opening and closing of his letters, which often sets the tone of his argument. Moreover, he appeals to the concept of χάρις in the body of his letters in the following ways. First, he uses it to describe his understanding of the apostolic ministry granted to him. Second, the term χάρις underscores humanity's experience of God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Third, Paul uses the language of divine benefaction to encourage his auditors to embrace a new way of living in the world based on God's favor.

Our research will focus on the Letter to the Galatians. This means that we shall especially review commentators' analysis of the language of divine favor in this letter. In this section, therefore, our review of secondary literature on Galatians will follow immediately after every subsection on the use of *χάρις* in the opening, closing and body of Paul's letters. While some commentators interpret Galatians as an example of one of the forms of ancient rhetorical methods, others rather choose to interpret the letter as a theological treatise.¹ In spite of the different scholarly approaches to the letter, commentators almost always end up proposing a theological meaning of Paul's use of the term *χάρις* in the letter.

¹ Hans Dieter Betz identifies the letter as a "self-apology delivered in written form. As an apologetic letter and thus a typical judicial rhetoric." According to Betz, Paul is defending his gospel. See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979) 24–33; idem, "In Defense of the Spirit: Paul's Letter to the Galatians as a Document of Early Christian Apologetics," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1976) 103. Others, like George A. Kennedy suggest, "the basic arguments of deliberative oratory is that an action is in the self-interest of the audience. That is the pervasive argument of Galatians." See George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 146; Joop Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech," *NTS* 35(1989): 1–26. Still other scholars examine Galatians under the lens of epideictic rhetoric insisting that what is at stake for Paul and the Galatians is the quality of their relationship. See James D. Hester, "Placing the Blame: The Presence of Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2," in *Persuasive Artistry. Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson, JSNTSupp. 50, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 281–307. James D. G. Dunn shows less interest in the rhetorical argument of Galatians in his commentary. See James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 20; idem, *Jesus and the Spirit. A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975) 202–205; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* (SP 9, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SJ, Collegeville: Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 30–31; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41, Dallas: Word Books, 1990) cxix; Louis J. Martyn, *Galatians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 21–23.

1.1.1. The Prescript of Paul's Letters

The prescript of several of Paul's letters reads: "grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 1:1; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; Phlm 3; Rom 1:7: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The terms "grace or favor" and "peace" are indicative of both a Greek and Semitic influence, but have been adopted to serve a theological purpose for Paul's Gentile Christians.² Paul follows the customary Hellenistic style of greeting in letter writing, but modifies it for his own purpose.

By breaking away from the convention of Greek's epistolary salutation, Paul uses the term χάρις to stress "each time the enormous idea of the free, spontaneous, unmerited favor of God," who acts for their wellbeing.³ By elevating the term χάρις to a benediction, Paul wishes that his auditors would experience in their lives the benevolent activities of God's gift of divine favor, who blesses them.⁴ It has been observed, therefore, that it functions as a prayer in the prescript by means of which Paul places the ongoing wellbeing of the community under divine

² Raymond E. G. Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus* (Unpub. Diss., University of Glasgow, 1971) 34; Judith M. Lieu, "Grace To You and Peace: The Apostolic Greeting," *BJRL* 68(1985): 168; Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB32B, NY: Doubleday, 2000) 97. John Reumann, *Philippians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB33B, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 64. But Raymond F. Collins suggests, "the χάρις (grace) of the greeting lacks the rich theological quality with which Paul normally imbues his use of the term." See Raymond F. Collins, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL 66, Leuven: University Press, 1984) 139.

³ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43., Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983) 11.

⁴ Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 100; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 50–51; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 135.

χάρις, power, and blessing.⁵ Ultimately, with the terms “grace or favor and peace” Paul introduces at the opening of his letters the idea of salvation by God through the self-gift (χάρις) of Jesus Christ.⁶

For example, in 1 Thessalonians the simple form of Paul’s opening greetings appears as “grace to you and peace (I Thess 1:1: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη),” but in his subsequent letters, he expands the greetings as “grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ,” thereby indicating the source of grace or favor and peace. Consequently, the term χάρις in the opening of Paul’s letters (1 Thess 1:1; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; Phlm 3; Rom 1:7) points to human experience of benefits as coming from God and Jesus Christ. Peace is one of the many benefits that happens from the experience of divine benevolence or grace.⁷ James D. G. Dunn describes Paul’s combination of grace or favor and peace at the opening of his letters as “a prayer for the unbounded and wholly generous outreaching power of God which makes for humankind’s best well-being.”⁸

In a similar vein, in the opening of 1 Corinthians, which includes 1:4–9, Paul affirms God’s benevolence towards the Corinthian Christians. They have been graciously endowed by

⁵ Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 35–36.

⁶ He identifies Jesus Christ as the “chief gift” of God’s grace. See Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 35–36.

⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 17; Richard R. Melick, Jr, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (NAC 32, Nashville: Broadman, 1991) 350; Bonnie B. Thurston and Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians & Philemon* (SP 10, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005) 46.

⁸ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A, Dallas, Word Books, 1988) 25; Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (SP 11, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995) 44.

God (τῆ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν) and for this reason Paul offers thanks to God (εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ) on their behalf. Gordon D. Fee notes that since boasting is one of the main issues Paul addresses in the letter, he begins in the opening of the letter to call the attention of the Corinthian Christians to the very fact that the gifts of God granted to them is “God-oriented and Christ-centered.”⁹ Therefore, whatever gifts they have, namely, “in speech or knowledge of every kind” (v 5), Paul wants them “to focus on God, who has given the gifts to them, and to Christ, in whom [these gifts] have been made available.”¹⁰ By insisting that they have been enriched (ἐπλουτίσθητε) by God, Paul draws them into the state of recognizing the source of their experience of benefaction. Hence, “[b]y means of thanksgiving Paul redirects their confidence from themselves and their own giftedness toward the eternal God, from whom and to whom are all things.”¹¹

When we turn to the opening of 2 Corinthians, one notices the same introductory message that identifies God and Jesus Christ as the sources of grace or favor and peace (1 Cor 1:2). For Paul wishes that God as Father together with Jesus Christ as Lord will grant the community the gift of divine favor and its concomitant result, peace.¹²

⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Rev. Ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 34–35.

¹⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 36. William Manson notes that God enriches the Corinthians in Christ with a grace that “now assumes concretely differentiated forms in the life and activity of the recipients,” see William Manson, “Grace in the New Testament,” in *The Doctrine of Grace* (ed. W. T. Whitley; NY: The MacMillan Company, 1932) 49.

¹¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 43. Anthony C. Thiselton says ““gifted” people may be tempted to think of themselves as a cut above others. But, Paul’s response to the Corinthians seems to say that how can this be valid if “gifted” means receiving a gift (4:7)? See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 98.

¹² Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (SP 8., ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SJ., Collegeville: Minnesota, 1999) 18. Ralph P. Martin adds that grace is, in Paul’s hands, “charged with the force of a

The opening of the Letter to the Romans (Rom 1:1–7) begins with Paul’s self-introduction as an apostle; then he summarizes the salvation history that culminates in the birth, death and resurrection of Christ, and finally, he turns to his customary greeting in Romans 1:7 “to all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσις ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The Roman Christians who are still mostly unknown personally to Paul since he has not yet visited Rome. They are described by him as (1) God’s beloved (1:7a: ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ) and (2) called into sainthood (1:7b: κλητοῖς ἁγίοις). Suffice it here to mention that it is usually the people of Israel that are called holy and beloved by God (Lev 19:2, Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21; Isaiah 48:12; 62:12).¹³ For the final section of Paul’s opening salutation in Romans 1:7c, “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” James D. G. Dunn then offers the following paraphrases: “may you know the generous power of God undergirding and coming to expression in your daily life.”¹⁴ In the immediate context, therefore, χάρις means the generous power of God. It is the

powerful, performative wish-prayer, which conveys the idea of God’s favor (χάρις) to those who do not deserve it and his strength to match human weakness.” See Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (2nd ed., WBC 40, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 137–138.

¹³ There are examples from the Hellenistic world of people or individual being described as beloved of the gods. One such example is found in Dio Chrysostom’s admonition that a king should seek the love of the gods (*Orat.* 3.60: ἀγαπώμενος ὑπὸ θεῶν). Also there are examples from the Ancient Near East of people or individuals being identified as beloved of the gods. See Robert A. DiVito, *Studies in Third Millennium Sumerian and Akkadian Personal Name. The Designation and Conception of the Personal God* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993) 223.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 20.

power of God to grant blessing to humanity; and it is the prerogative of Jesus Christ to grant humanity access to the gratuitous gift of God's favor.

1.1.1.1. The Prescript of the Letter to the Galatians

The prescript of the Letter to the Galatians has an unusual opening statement (Gal 1:1–2), yet in the next verse, Paul salutes the Galatians, “grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:3: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου). Hans Dieter Betz suggests that this opening salutation functions as a prayer. It indicates Paul's ardent wish that the gentile Christians of Galatia remain partakers of God's redemption, which is mediated through Christ. He recognizes that Paul's formulation shows that grace or favor and peace have their origin in God and Christ.¹⁵

Thus, at the opening of the letter, in the epistolary prescript, Paul introduces one of the key words that is central to the meaning of his gospel (Gal 1:3). In the Pauline corpus, and particularly in Galatians, the term χάρις “encapsulates the attitude and activity of God as expressed in the gospel—God's outreaching, redeeming, sustaining concern for a fallen humanity...the generous output of [God's] power to achieve what is best for his creation.”¹⁶ Hence, Paul uses “grace or favor and peace,” as Dunn sees it, to call attention to the fact that God is the source of the divine benefaction that empowers humanity to “live in a mutually productive and beneficial harmony (peace).”¹⁷

¹⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 40–41; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 7; Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 74; Martyn, *Galatians*, 87–88.

¹⁶ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 31.

¹⁷ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 32. Dunn suggests that it is a short time between the death of Jesus and Paul's letter to the Galatians for Jesus to be called Lord. And it is all the more mind-boggling

1.1.2. The Postscript of Paul's Letters

The closing section of Paul's letters confirms the important role that χάρις plays in the Gospel that Paul proclaims to the Gentiles. We shall comment briefly here on scholars' interpretation of the concept of divine χάρις in the closing section of the letters of Paul. He invokes the divine χάρις of Jesus Christ upon his auditors (1 Thess 5:28; see 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:13; Phil 4:23; Phlm 25; Rom 16:20, 24) in the closing section of his letters in this way: "the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν)." In these sections, Paul summarizes the activities of God on behalf of humanity; it is the benefits that are experienced through God's gift of divine favor in Jesus Christ.¹⁸ As we saw earlier, Burnish proposed that the term χάρις is the main content of Paul's gospel. Also here, he argues that by concluding his letters with an appeal to χάρις, Paul makes it "the prime cause of his teaching" and his "gospel in all its fullness."¹⁹

1.1.2.1. *The Postscript of the Letter to the Galatians*

Unlike the postscript of other Pauline letters that we have reviewed above, the postscript of Galatians 6:18 is unique: "may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit brothers and sisters" (Gal 6:18: ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν,

in his opinion, to link "Lord Jesus Christ" with "God as father" as the progenitors of "grace and peace." See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 34. Martinus C. de Boer calls it the divine granted favor in which humanity is privileged to live. See Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatian. A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster, 2011) 28.

¹⁸ Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, 17–18; Hans Conzelmann notes that grace in the prescript indicates that grace is entirely an eschatological experience of salvation and also a free gift from God. See, Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (trans. James W. Leitch, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 24.

¹⁹ Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 37.

ἀδελφοί, ἀμήν). Betz concludes that this benediction is traditional to the early Christian community. Although Paul adapts it here for his own purposes, yet the meaning of the term χάρις as “the all-inclusive concept for salvation” is essentially Paul’s theology.²⁰ It is, as Dunn writes, the “wholly generous divine initiative.”²¹ And Paul’s prayer that divine favor will be with their spirit is “a gentle reminder that what [has] bonded them all together [is] the spirit of God working in their spirit (cf. Rom 8:6), rather than ethnic identity as marked out by circumcision.”²²

Conclusion

Our review shows that scholars have identified a theological message in Paul’s use of the terms grace in his letters. In the opening section of Paul’s letters, the term χάρις encapsulates Paul’s gospel message to gentile Christians, and it appears again at the closing of the letters to provide a summary to his message. Most modern commentators conclude that the term χάρις represents human experience of God’s bounty in Paul’s letters. Both Betz and Dunn add that the notion of

²⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 325; Louis J. Martyn suggests the grace here in the postscript is Paul’s way of drawing further emphasis on how “God is setting things right in Christ, without requiring a precondition of any sort on the part of human beings (cf. 1 Thess 5:28; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 4:23; Phlm 25; Rom 16:20).” See Martyn, *Galatians*, 569.

²¹ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 347.

²² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 347; Idem, *Jesus and Spirit*, 203. Richard N. Longenecker offers an insightful summary of the language of grace in Galatians. Paul places between the salutation in 1:3 (the grace and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ) and the benediction of 6:18 (the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ) the conviction that the Galatians are called by God’s grace (1:6), his own calling by grace (1:15) recognized by the “pillars in Jerusalem” (2:9), the promise to Abraham being a divine benefaction graciously given to him (3:18). Then, Longenecker concludes that Paul has placed grace in opposition to the observance of the law. Paul therefore, concludes his letter by emphasizing that by grace alone one is justified before God (2:15–16, 21; 3:1–8) and Christian lifestyle is solely based on grace (2:17–21; 3:9–4:11). See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 300–301; de Boer, *Galatians*, 410.

divine favor in the prescript functions as a prayer that Paul offers on behalf of the community to remain in God's boon. Since grace is God's boon, the Corinthians have no need to boast, in Paul's view, because they have received it as a free gift of God. Besides, it is as a result of God's grace that Paul identifies the Roman Christians as a beloved and saintly people (Rom 1:7). The only particular difference in the postscript of Paul's letters one should keep in mind is in the Letter to the Galatians. Paul adds the term ἀδελφοί to the closing statement of the letter (Gal 6:18). It has been noted that it serves as a reminder to the Galatians of their bond of unity under the banner of divine grace. We shall proceed to review representative commentaries on Paul's use of the language of benefaction in the body of his letters. The tendency in modern scholarship to offer a theological interpretation of Paul's language of divine grace in the opening and closing of his letters continues also in the body of his letters.

1.1.3. The Body of Paul's Letters

The body of Paul's letters share a degree of continuity with both the opening and closing sections. This continuity is easily noticed in the several places within the body of the letter where the language of grace appears, as our review of modern scholarship will show. We have chosen to review Paul's use of the term χάρις in the body of his letters under three subheadings: (1) the χάρις of the apostolic ministry, (2) the χάρις of God through Jesus Christ, and (3) the χάρις of the Jerusalem collection. Our reason for this breakdown is based on evidence that a careful reading of Paul's letters shows that he appeals to the language of divine favor to defend his apostolic ministry as a divine calling. Also, many of his Christological propositions are couched in the language of divine benefaction which has been granted to humanity through Jesus' obedience unto death. Finally, he also insists that believers' disposition to share their material resources with the poor in the Jerusalem church should be based on benefaction.

1.1.3.1. The Grace of the Apostolic Ministry

Consistently through his letters, Paul identifies his own apostolate as an act of God's χάρις granted to him to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. We shall provide a review of how several representative commentators have explained the χάρις of the apostolic ministry granted to Paul and others (1 Cor 3:10–15; 15:1–11; 2 Cor 1:12–14; 12:1–10; Rom 1:5; 12:3–8; 15:14–21; Phil 1:3–7). Paul claims that he is an apostle κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 3:10) and missionaries like Peter, Apollos and Paul “who proclaim the Gospel all over the world are simply God’s agents. They do their work according to the tasks which God has allotted to each of them.”²³ As for Paul, the apostolic grace which he has received prepares him to be the master builder laying the foundation of the church in Corinth (1 Cor 1:10).

Towards the end of 1 Corinthians, Paul uses the double εἶμι in 1 Corinthians 15:10 to strongly affirm his current vocational status as an apostle of Christ and indicates that he exercises his apostolic duties only by the χάρις of God. Hence, pertaining to his ministry, the divine χάρις granted to him as an apostle has not been in vain (1 Cor 15:10b) because he has resolutely produced the intended results. For on account of God’s grace, he has labored harder—περισσότερον ἀντῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα (1 Cor 15:10c) than all; and he has shown himself to be the master builder of the gentile churches including the church in Corinth (1 Cor 3:10b). George W. E. Nickelsburg provides an interpretation of how Paul conceives the χάρις of the apostolic ministry given to him (1 Cor 15:8–10). He speaks thus of Paul:

speaking of his apostleship with an eye toward his persecution of the church, he employs quantitative words consonant with the metaphor of the deficient, embryonic, unrealized

²³ Harm W. Hollander, “The Testing by Fire of the Builders’ Works: 1 Corinthians 3:10–15,” *NTS* 40(1994) 90.

ektrōma. He is “the least” (ἐλάχιστος) of the apostles, who is not “sufficient” (ικανός) to be an apostle²⁴

In this way, Paul acknowledges that his apostolic authority is wholly out of God’s gift of χάρις (1 Cor 15:1–10). Similarly, Matthew W. Mitchell adds that “throughout this passage, this letter and large sections of the Pauline corpus, Paul sees fit to defend his status as apostle and continually reiterates that he is called as an apostle by God alone...answerable to God alone”²⁵

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that Paul’s self-deprecation is a very common reaction of someone who receives a divine appointment. According to Harm W. Hollander and Gijsbert E. Van Der Hout “the person reacts by pointing to his insufficiency, by arguing that he is unworthy, insignificant, or inapt for the task; an obstacle which would have to be overcome by God before he would be able to deliver his message.”²⁶ Then while Paul is defending his apostolate, he is at the same time admitting to his own unworthiness. He calls himself “the least of the apostles and untimely born, one who is in a most deplorable situation, who is the most miserable and worthless man on earth,” and yet, he has become an apostle on account of God’s overwhelming gift of grace.²⁷ In sum, Paul consistently attributes his apostolic

²⁴ George W. E. Nickelsburg, “An ἔκτρομα, though Appointed from the Womb: Paul’s Apostolic self-description in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 1,” *HTR* 79(1986) 204.

²⁵ Matthew W. Mitchell, “Reexamining the “Aborted Apostle:” An Exploration of Paul’s Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15:8,” *JSNT* 25(2003) 482; Manson, “Grace in the New Testament,” 46; Joseph Plevnik, “Paul’s Appeals to his Damascus Experience and 1 Cor 15:5–7: Are They Legitimations?” *TJT* 4(1988) 101.

²⁶ Harm W. Hollander and Gijsbert E. Van Der Hout, “The Apostle Paul calling himself an Abortion: 1 Cor 15:8 within the context of 1 Cor 15:8–10,” *NovT* 38(1996) 235; Brad Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul* (SBL 11, NY: Peter Lang, 1999) 43–44.

²⁷ Hollander and Van Der Hout, 236; Plevnik, “Paul’s Appeal to His Damascus Experience and 1 Cor 15:5–7,” 106. Otto Glombitza describes it a bit clearer when he observes that Paul owes his position to “der rätselhaften, überwältigenden Macht der Gnade (the enigmatic and overwhelming power

ministry to a gratuitous gift of divine χάρις, which both turns him into the person he is and often invokes in him a feeling of humility (see, 1 Cor 15:8–10).

Even when the criticism of his apostolic authority lingers in Corinth, Paul continues to offer in his defense his conduct among the Corinthians as an apostle. Paul Barnett suggests two possible areas of criticism of Paul by the Corinthian Christians. First, Paul is criticized for failing to show up in Corinth but rather sending a letter (2 Cor 1:17–2:1). Second, the Corinthians see an element of deception in Paul’s unwillingness to accept payment for his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 11:7–9), suggesting that it is not as noble an act as it appears to be (2 Cor 12:19; see, 4:2; 7:2). Barnett sees these criticisms as offering the Corinthians a “high moral ground” to inveigh against Paul’s apostolic ministry.²⁸

But Paul boastfully defends himself on the basis of his experience of God’s gift of divine favor to him (2 Cor 1:12), and not on the basis of “earthly wisdom.” Paul is consistently aware that he is an apostle because of the grace of God (1 Cor 15:10), not because of his own ability. While invoking his conscience in his defense in 2 Corinthians 12–14 as it concerns how he has carried himself as an apostle, Paul emphatically declares “his own reliability as an apostle” is based on the benefaction of God and not on earthly wisdom.²⁹ In the same vein, against the accusation that he writes letters to avoid visiting Corinth, Paul declares that his conscience

of grace).” See, Otto Glombitza, “Gnade—Das Entscheidende Wort: Erwägungen zu 1Kor XV: 1–11, eine exegetische Studie,” *NovT* 2(1958) 289.

²⁸ Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 94.

²⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 19.

witnesses that he speaks ‘exactly his mind’ whether through letters or in person.³⁰ Since the word conscience stands for either “moral consciousness or self-awareness,” perhaps, Paul uses it here to indicate his self-awareness as an apostle through the gratuitous gift of God’s grace. The constant appeal to God’s grace when speaking about his apostolic ministry shows that Paul is aware of the subject of his ministry and of his current state of being.

Likewise, Paul’s awareness of the grace of his apostolic ministry appears in his subsequent letter to the Corinthian Christians. When faced with the harsh criticism of his style of ministry in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10, Paul turns his opponents’ provocative remarks into a reflection on his strength in weakness through the grace of God. Rudolf Bultmann hints that the struggle with weakness like Paul’s creates an opportunity for one to experience the power of God’s benefaction. To admit one’s nothingness and struggle with weakness, Bultmann continues, should “lead one to look to the divine [grace or power].”³¹ For Paul, the grace that he “must be content with is the power for action given him as an apostle.”³² Barnett stresses that to keep Paul

³⁰ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 20; Glombitza, “Gnade—Das Entscheidende Wort,” 288. James Moffatt pointedly observes that Paul is aware of the apostolic grace granted to him. “To this grace he owes not only the holiness and sincerity he has displayed but the power of living by these qualities in a career of devotion to God; unselfish care for others, as inspired by the thought of God’s grace, has been the determining power of his life, not any selfish end or side-effort to use other people as instrument for private ambition.” See Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 231–232; Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 44.

³¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985) 227; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 613–614. Scholars have suggested that in 2 Cor 12:9, grace and power are synonymous. See, Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 226; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 573; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 203; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 614; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 863; Gerald G. O’Collins, “Power made Perfect in Weakness: 2 Cor 12:9–10,” *CBQ* 33(1971) 534.

³² Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 226.

from self-glorification, God afflicted him with an “unidentified stake/thorn.”³³ Paul prays for relief, but receives an unlikely, and perhaps, negative reply from Christ. For his prayer goes unanswered. Hence, Paul declares, “I will rather boast more gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses...; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:9–10; NRSV). This is because Paul knows there is no place for arrogance in ministry. The apostolic office he receives is sustained by the benefaction and power of God through Christ.³⁴ Ultimately, the apostolic grace or favor that he has received is sufficient to deal with whatever weakness he experiences in ministry (see, Phil 4:13).

Barnett points out the semantic character of the verb tenses used in Christ’s reply to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9. It is introduced with the perfect tense “he has said to me.” And what Christ has said to Paul is introduced with the present tense “my grace is sufficient, for my power is being perfected (ἀρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται).” Therefore, while Paul’s weakness remains, the God’s favor through Christ is sufficient for Paul and the power of Christ reaches its perfection in his apostolic ministry.³⁵

Furthermore, Barnett expands the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:9 by linking weakness, power and grace to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. For “Christ’s power” arises out of his experience of powerlessness on the cross. This is because in God’s grand

³³ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 572.

³⁴ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 567; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians. Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 32A, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 550.

³⁵ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 573; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 613.

scheme of things according to Barnett, there has to be weakness (crucifixion) before there is power (resurrection). In the context of Paul's experience, therefore, thanks to prayers human vulnerability and powerlessness is overcome by means of the experience of the sufficient benefaction and power of Christ. Even Christ experiences vulnerability and weakness by his death on the cross, but power by his resurrection from the dead.³⁶

Barnett's interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:9 could be summed up then that God's gift of divine favor does not call for "resignation, which is passive and impersonal, but for acceptance, which is active and obedient to the Lord, who... continues to say, "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," my resurrection power present in this age.³⁷ By acknowledging the apostolic favor granted to him by the Lord (v 9), therefore, Paul embraces his total dependence on God's benefaction.³⁸

Undeterred by the criticism in Corinth, he writes in anticipation that the apostolic grace granted to him will bring about an increase in faith in the saving work of Christ, and gratitude to God from anyone who is touched by the experience of divine favor of Paul's apostolic ministry (2 Cor 4:13–15).³⁹ It means that through the ministry of Paul, there will be more believers to give thanks (εὐχαριστία) to God for the overflowing of divine favor. Martin suggests that it is Paul's

³⁶ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 574.

³⁷ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 574; O'Collins, "Power made Perfect in Weakness," 532. Brad Eastman says "the grace of God provides all that is needed to meet the challenge of Paul's "thorns in the flesh."" See Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 45.

³⁸ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 550.

³⁹ This passage (2 Cor 4:13–15) is fraught with exegetical difficulties. For further and detail studies, see Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 351–357; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 234–236; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 285–288; Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 48–49.

“evangelistic desire to see the good news of God’s grace reaching ever-increasing circles of men and women in his world.”⁴⁰ This is therefore one of the places where Paul emphatically declares that his apostolic grace is meant to bring about growth in faith among the Gentiles.⁴¹

In addition to his awareness of the source and meaning of the apostolic grace given to him, Paul acknowledges the partnership he shares with the Christian community in Philippi in preaching the gospel (Phil 1:3–7). Gerald F. Hawthorne notes that Paul expresses his deep affection towards all the believers in Philippi on account of their partnership “in the grace given to him by God.”⁴² Moreover, Fee points out that the *χάρις* being referred to in Philippians 1:7 is shared by both Paul and the Philippians in suffering, defense and confirmation of the gospel.⁴³ Paul seems to indicate that the partnership he shares with the Philippians continues into “his present circumstances of imprisonment.”⁴⁴ Two possibilities can be drawn from Paul’s admission

⁴⁰ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 236. Murray J. Harris aptly notes, “Paul is envisaging that, with the expansion of God’s grace by means of the conversion of an ever-growing multitude of people, the volume of thanksgiving to God for the receipt of illumination would be greatly augmented and therefore God’s greater glory would be achieved.” See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 357.

⁴¹ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 287.

⁴² Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 23. Markus Bockmuehl is even more emphatic, “the joyfulness of Paul’s thanks and prayers is due to the Philippians’ participation in the work of the gospel from the first day, ever since Paul came to preach the gospel there (cf 4:15).” See, Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC, London: A & C Black, 1998) 60.

⁴³ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 91; Joseph B. Lightfoot, *St Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians. A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations* (3rd ed., London: MacMillan, 1873) 82; Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 194. According to Markus Bockmuehl, “to live as a Christian at Philippi means to share both in its message and in the ministry of its proclamation—by extension, presumably, in its ‘advance’ (v 12) and its ‘defense and confirmation’ (v 7, 16). See, Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 61.

⁴⁴ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 92. Raymond F. G. Burnish says “grace is an ‘enabling’ power in this passage as there were in the similar passage written to the Thessalonians, where grace was

of the role of the Philippians in the apostolic ministry. First, they share in Paul's present circumstances of imprisonment and in the proclamation of the gospel through their gifts to him (Phil 4:14–20). Second, the Philippians share in Paul's experience of his imprisonment "since they are undergoing the same struggle as he is (Phil 1:30). It is very possible that they share with Paul the grace of apostolic ministry by enduring the same experience of imprisonment or at least of suffering as Paul.

This point of view is confirmed by Paul's remark in Philippians 1:28c-29 that God has given to the Philippians the divine favor both to believe in and suffer for Christ. Joseph B. Lightfoot contends that Philippians 1:29 presents the Philippians as "joint-contributors to the gift" of apostolic grace granted to Paul.⁴⁵ Then Hawthorne writes "if Paul suffers, so do they; if he defends and vindicates the gospel, so do they; Paul sees the Philippian Christians as joint-participants with him in his troubles and triumphs, co-sharers with him of the divine favor (τῆς χάριτος)."⁴⁶ David E. Garland is even clearer in his description of the apostolic partnership between Paul and the Christians in Philippi. He says "in 1:29 he [i.e. Paul] develops the premise that to suffer on behalf of Christ is a "grace" (*echaristhē*), not a dis-grace. It is the sharing of Christ's sufferings in the defense of the gospel (3:10, cf. 1 Cor 10:16; 2 Cor 1:7) that binds them

tied up with the gifts of eternal comfort and good hope, and the establishment of the church in every good work (2 Thess 2:16)." See Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 40.

⁴⁵ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 92. Julien M. Ogereau offers a detailed analysis of Paul's description of his partnership with the Philippians from the Greco-Roman Context. See, Julien M. Ogereau, "Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians: Societas as a Missionary Funding Strategy," *NTS* 60(2014) 364, 367.

⁴⁶ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 23; Gregory L. Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTSup 78, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 145–147; Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 165–166.

to Christ and to one another.”⁴⁷ The partnership in the gospel between Paul and the Philippians is certainly a team effort in which everyone is actively involved in the preaching of the gospel and directly touched by the struggles and oppositions that come with it.⁴⁸

The role God plays in the apostolic partnership that Paul shares with the Philippians is through the gift of divine favor through Christ (Phil 1:7). Akira Satake uses the expression “partner in grace (*Teilhaber der Gnade*)” to describe this divine favor that Paul shares with the Philippians.⁴⁹ Paul expresses confidence in God’s work among the Philippians (Phil 1:6) since growth in their Christian life is based on the activity of God (Phil 2:12–13). For Paul’s confident trust in God, as Markus Bockmuehl notes, is based on the nature and character of God’s unwavering work of benefaction for humanity.⁵⁰ Overall, like Paul, so also the Philippians, it is God’s gratuitous gift of divine favor that enables them to proclaim the Gospel and to stand firm against opposition (Phil 1:7, 29).

Similarly, in the Letter to the Romans, Paul writes about the apostolic grace that has been given to him and others (Rom 1:5: δι’ οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάρις καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ). C. E. B. Cranfield suggests that the “we” should be understood as “a writer’s plural, employed here perhaps as suiting the formal statement of

⁴⁷ David E. Garland, “Philippians 1:1–26: The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel,” *RevExp* 77(1980) 331.

⁴⁸ Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 60.

⁴⁹ Akira Satake, “Apostolat und Gnade bei Paulus,” *NTS* 15(1968) 99.

⁵⁰ Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 61.

authority,” otherwise known as an epistolary plural with “I” as its meaning.⁵¹ Even so, it has been suggested also that Paul is inclusively recognizing the other apostles—“we apostles.”⁵² Additionally, it has been suggested that δι’ οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν in Romans 1:5 includes Paul, the Christian community in Rome, whom he considers as co-apostles to bring “about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles” (Rom 1:5), and the other apostles who perhaps establish the Roman community. It is plausible that in Romans, “Paul wishes to convey solidarity with the apostles whose emissaries had established the house and tenement churches in Rome,” sharing in the Gentile mission like Paul.⁵³ As in Philippians 1:3–11, so also in Romans 1:5, Paul recognizes others, who like him are granted the grace of the apostolic ministry.

It is clear that in Romans 1:5, Paul recognizes God as the source of the grace of his ministry to the Gentile nations, and Christ is the agency through whom the divine benefaction to evangelize the gentile nations has been given to him and others (Rom 1:4–5). Moo calls Jesus

⁵¹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans. Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII* (ICC 1, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975) 65. Leon Morris concludes that the apostolic ministry is not a gift for every Christian. See Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 48. Douglas J. Moo goes further to argue that since the entire verse deals with Paul’s understanding of his own mission, then, it is better “to view the plural [we] as editorial.” See, Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 51.

⁵² James D. G. Dunn notes that in light of the controversy in Galatians, “this repetition of this claim to apostleship and the unexpected switch to the plural probably indicates a sensitivity on Paul’s part that his claim to apostleship and/or his understanding of that apostleship has been (and still was) the subject of some dispute (Galatians), in which case he will have chosen his words with care.” See, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 24.

⁵³ Robert Jewett, *Romans. A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 109.

Christ the mediator of Paul's apostleship.⁵⁴ Ultimately, Paul is very much aware that the grace of the apostolic ministry granted to him must be put to a good purpose.⁵⁵

When we turn to Romans 12:3–8, the term *χάρις* seems to designate the distinctively, individual gifts that God has gratuitously given to each person (*τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν*). Paul calls the attention of the Roman Christians to this divine favor on the authority of the apostolic grace which has been given to him.⁵⁶ With the seemingly formulaic remark: “grace given to me” (Rom 12:3: *τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι*) and the “grace given to us” (Rom 12:6: *τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν*), Paul places “his apostolic vocation, and the charismatic gifts of the Roman congregation under the structure of divine gift.”⁵⁷ Thus Paul identifies himself with the Roman Christians on the basis that everyone is endowed with the same divine *χάρισμα*. Then “Paul speaks as a charismatic to charismatics.”⁵⁸ He courteously acknowledges that his “grace is

⁵⁴ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 51; Jewett, *Romans*, 108; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 24; Leon Morris contends that Paul identifies Christ as the giver of the grace he has received to function as an apostle. See, Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 48.

⁵⁵ Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 46.

⁵⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB33, NY: Doubleday, 1993) 645.

⁵⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 738. Leon Morris suggests that gift (*χάρισμα*) is divine endowment in the same vein as grace (*χάρις*) is a free gift of God. See ⁵⁷ Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 439–440. C. E. B Cranfield says, “for God’s grace, His undeserved love in action, while it is one and the same for all, is free and sovereign, and it is according to this royal freedom of His grace that He bestows different gifts on different persons.” See, Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans I–VIII*, 619.

⁵⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 738; Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B, Dallas: Word Books, 1988) 720.

no different in kind from the grace given to them.”⁵⁹ For both Paul and the Roman Christians, the ethic of obligation (Rom 12:3–8) rests on how the divine favor which they have been given and never earned is used to build up one another.⁶⁰

Paul speaks further about his apostolic ministry to the gentile nations in Romans 15:14–21, which is part of a section that includes his intended visit to Rome (Rom 15:14–33). As in the passages we have reviewed so far, here also Paul draws authority from the apostolic grace given to him by God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.⁶¹ In Romans 12:3, Paul invokes the divine favor given to him by God to speak to the Romans; likewise in Romans 15:15 he appeals to the same grace given to him by God to write to the Romans (see, 1 Cor 3:10; Gal 2:9).⁶² He is writing to them because he is the apostle to the gentile nations and the completion of his ministry is intricately bound with the plan of God for the salvation of the world (Rom 15:14–21).⁶³ Joseph Fitzmyer notes that Paul justifies his impending interaction with the church in Rome, which he

⁵⁹ Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 720; Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 49; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 437; Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans. Introduction and Commentary on Romans IX–XVI* (ICC II, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979) 619; Jewett, *Romans*, 738.

⁶⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 738–739, 744–745; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 647. William Manson’s remarks is worthy of note. “It will be noticed here that it is not the grace of God which is said to differ for different members of the redeemed society but the gifts or functions in which the grace takes effect.” See Manson, “Grace in the New Testament,” 50–51.

⁶¹ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 711.

⁶² Robert Jewett emphatically suggests that Paul’s consciousness of “his entire existence grows out of his grace-filled calling to an ecumenical ministry.” See, Jewett, *Romans*, 906.

⁶³ Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 856.

did not begin, on the basis of the grace of his apostleship to the gentile nations whom he serves wherever they may be, including Rome.⁶⁴

Finally, Paul employs cultic language in the Letter to the Romans to describe the grace of his apostolic office. By appealing to the terminologies of priest and minister, Paul writes that he “offers his evangelization of the Gentiles to God as a form of worship (Rom 15:16; 1:9).”⁶⁵ Then, he boasts about his ministerial and priestly office because he derives it from the authority of God (Rom 15:17). The content of his boasting, therefore, pertains to the things God (τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν) has accomplished through him for the gentile nations.⁶⁶

1.1.3.2. The Grace of God through Jesus Christ

We next turn to review some representative scholarship on the meaning of the divine favor which God has granted to humanity through Jesus Christ. Dunn observes that the basic theme of Romans 5:12–21 is that “the excess of sin brings the fullness of grace to light.” For the act of Christ (Rom 5:12–21) for humanity is “an embodiment of grace.”⁶⁷ The double expression “the grace of God and the gift of grace through one man Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:15b: ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῆ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) captures the character of God’s

⁶⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 711.

⁶⁵ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 713–714.

⁶⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 907–909. James D. G. Dunn, puts it thus “it is the blessing he has been instrumental in bringing to others of which Paul characteristically boasts (1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12–14; 7:4; 8:24; 1 Thess 2:19).” See, Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 861–862.

⁶⁷ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 271, 279. Robert Jewett offers his own take: “I conclude that the main theme is how Christ’s life (v 10) defines the future destiny of believers just as Adam’s life defined the future of his descendants. And to demonstrate the scope of the overflowing dominion of grace (vv 15–17, 20–21) in the “life” of all believers.” See Jewett, *Romans*, 370.

gratuitous favor to humanity through Christ. Dunn says that it is intended by Paul to emphasize the superlative quality of God's act of power and benevolence for the human recipients.

Additionally, the double expression holds “together the grace of the Christ event, and the grace actually received by those who believe in Christ.”⁶⁸

Since Dunn identifies Romans 5:12–21 as the conclusion of the opening section of Romans 1:17–5:21, he then argues that “grace and gift of righteousness (τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης)” in Romans 5:17 recalls the principal theme of Paul's argument in Romans 1:17–5:21. He continues, “the phrase signifies that the status of one acceptable to God is a gift of God,” made possible through the act of Christ's benefaction.⁶⁹ It expresses the outreaching and overflowing divine favor of God to the point that God's grace overwhelms the effect of sin through the death of Christ for humanity (Rom 5:20; 6:1). Consequently, with the phrase: “where sin increases, grace abounds even all the more (οὗ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις),” Paul captures the triumph of God's gratuitous gift of divine favor to humanity in the struggle against the often overpowering force of sin. Divine favor weakens the power of sin to have lordship over believers (Rom 6:14). So in a clear change of leadership,

⁶⁸ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 279–280. Douglas J. Moo elaborates further the contrast between the work of Adam and the work of Christ both in degree and consequence. In degree, the work of Christ is the manifestation of grace for humanity which is greater than Adam's. In consequence, the work Christ brings righteousness and life, but the work of Adam does not. See Moo, *Romans*, 334.

⁶⁹ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 281, Douglas J. Moo is even more emphatic, “Paul chooses this unusual way of designating the work of Christ to accentuate its gracious character and its power: Christ's act, being a work of God's grace (*cháris*), is far more potent than Adam's act.” See, Moo, *Romans*, 335.

grace now reigns in place of sin (Rom 5:21). Indeed, “the epoch which ends in death” now is replaced with “the epoch of grace” which is life unbounded.⁷⁰

While identifying Romans 6–8 as a unit dominated by Paul’s treatment of sin, death, law, and flesh, Dunn suggests, perhaps, that Paul deliberately places these categories in contrasting pairs: sin/grace, death/life and flesh/spirit.⁷¹ Paul seems to carry over from Romans 5:12–21 some of the views he expresses in Romans 6:1–23 especially regarding the contrasting relationship between sin and grace in the life of the believer.⁷² Dunn interprets the term χάρις in Romans 6:14 as God’s enabling gift to believers to live now as they “will live with Christ in the future.” Their faith, therefore, places them in a position to “have a share in the salvation-history transition from an epoch dominated by sin and law to the epoch dominated by grace.”⁷³ It may be the case that Paul intentionally ended Romans 6:23: the gift of divine favor is eternal life through Jesus Christ (τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν) as he ended

⁷⁰ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 281–288. Brad Eastman identifies apocalyptic language in this passage proposing that Paul emphasizes “the generosity of God’s grace and the glory of the divine purpose for humanity.” See Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 131–132.

⁷¹ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 301–302.

⁷² James D. G. Dunn notices that the style of 5:12–21 is repeated by Paul in 6:1–23. See Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 305.

⁷³ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 340. Douglas J. Moo captures in clear terms the transition from one realm to the other. “Thus Paul presents the Christian as one who has moved from the “reign” of sin and death to that of righteousness and life (Rom 5:21); from the servitude, or “lordship” of sin to that of righteousness and God (Rom 6:6, 14, 17–22); from being “under the power of” the law to being “under the power of” grace (Rom 6:14, 15); from service “in oldness of letter” to service “in newness of Spirit” (Rom 7:6); from the “law,” or “compelling power,” of sin leading to death to that of the Spirit who brings life (Rom 8:2).” See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 352. Then, for believers, grace (Rom 5:17, 20; 6:1) according to Robert Jewett “is the transforming basis of the new life in which they “stand” (Rom 5:2). As conveyed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, grace frees believers from the compulsion to obey the law their culture promotes as a means of gaining honor.” See Jewett, *Romans*, 412.

Romans 5:21: the gift of divine favor may reign in righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσει διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν). For “God’s prevenient grace brings about the assimilation of Christians to the life of God.”⁷⁴

Furthermore, unlike Adam’s act, the act of Christ lavishes upon humanity the divine favors of God. God’s gift of divine favor in Christ brings about divine boon through righteousness to humanity ending the reign of sin and inaugurating the reign of divine benefaction.⁷⁵ Abundance of righteousness is the product of the benefaction of God through the act of Christ, which is being granted to believers.⁷⁶ Robert Jewett argues that the term *χάρις* is one of the “expressions of the Lordship of Christ.”⁷⁷ Therefore, Paul’s argument identifies

⁷⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 452. Moo, *Romans*, 337. Robert Jewett notes that grace “depicts the gift of unmerited love granted through Christ to “the many” who deserve nothing (Rom 5:16–17), ... the death and resurrection of Christ as granting shamefully undeserving people the gift of salvation as well as specific gifts of God’s mercy and calling into his gratifying service. According to Paul’s view, these gifts were granted without regard to whether or not one has fulfilled the requirements of the law.” See Jewett, *Romans*, 426. Richard J. Erickson further notes that while God’s grace is unboundedly made available to all, people will still respond differently. But those who choose grace, they cannot continue in sin because sin is not permissible where grace abounds. See Richard J. Erickson, “The Damned and the Justified in Romans 5:1–21: An Analysis of Semantic Structure,” in *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament, Approaches and Results* (JSNTSup 170, ed. Stanley E. Porter & Jeffery T. Reed, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 304.

⁷⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 389.

⁷⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 339. Robert Jewett suggests that in the comparison between Adam and Christ, Paul employs “the Adamic material as a foil to explain the abundant life in Christ that overturns the legacy of sin and death.” See Jewett, *Romans*, 383, 384.

⁷⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 389.

believers with the “Lordship of Christ,” who is the “mediator of grace and unity.” And where God’s *benefaction* abounds and is received, the reign of sin ends.⁷⁸

Thus, the divine favor of God through Christ inaugurates a new social order which eliminates any distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Rom 3:21–22). It is God who is putting in place this new social order whose foundation is the redemption given to humanity as a gift in Christ (Rom 3:24). According to Jewett, it is Paul’s contention that the nature of humanity’s relationship with God in this new social order cannot be attained by human effort. He further explains that “the threefold reference in Romans 3:24 to “free gift,” to divine “grace,” and to “redemption” through Christ makes it clear that no one gains this honorable, righteous status by overpowering others or by privilege of rank, wealth, or ethnicity.”⁷⁹ Then, in the context of the argument of Romans 2:21–26, the free and gratuitous gift of God that has brought about humanity’s redemption is “Christ’s shameful death freely given on behalf of the shamed.” Romans 3:24 makes it explicit that God is the giver through the event of Jesus’ life. What has come to humanity therefore is free access to God’s *benefaction* unimpeded by social status or ethnic identity because the divine favor of God through Christ is all-encompassing and all-embracing.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 389; George C. Westberg, “The Two Adams (Exposition of Romans 5:12–21),” *BSac* 94(1937) 45–46.

⁷⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 281–282.

⁸⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 282; Manson, “Grace in the New Testament,” 43–44. Joseph Fitzmyer puts it in this manner, “now human beings find that this status is not achieved by something within their own power or measured by their own merits. It comes to humanity through an unmerited dispensation of God himself, who has taken the initiative.” See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 347.

In the same vein, Romans 5:1–2 states that Christ is the agent of our experience of divine benefaction. For through Jesus Christ we have been assured of (1) peace with God, and (2) hope of sharing in God’s glory. Dunn suggests that Paul draws the imagination of the Roman Christians into being led like a suppliant by a royal chamberlain into the presence of the king. And the experience of benefaction becomes the monarch’s favorable disposition towards the suppliant.⁸¹ Related to this view, Jewett notes that this access to favor through faith “reverses the cultural expectation that approaching either God or the emperor requires a high level of purity. This is an unqualified access, open to the shamed as well as the honored without regard to their performance.”⁸² One easily notices Dunn’s allusion to the benefactor-beneficiary relationship in his interpretation of Romans 5:2. Such an allusion is a testament to the fact that Paul appeals to Greco-Roman language of benefaction in his letters. Even so, Dunn does not elaborate any further on a social level the significance of Paul’s appeal to the patron-client relationship of benefaction.

Grace is the unconditional access to God and the benefits that have been granted to underserving humanity through Christ.⁸³ In Jewett’s view, the present state of divine grace through the outpouring of gratuitous gift of divine favor eliminates the period of divine election

⁸¹ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 263. Leon Morris adds that the stress is to the activity of Christ, who continuously leads us to the presence of God and the effects of the experience are ongoing. “Access to grace is access to God” because it is God’s self-giving through Christ. See Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 219.

⁸² Jewett, *Romans*, 350. Douglas J. Moo suggests that grace here denotes “the state or realm into which God’s redeeming work transfers the believer. It is the realm in which grace reigns (5:21), in contrast to the domain of the law.” See Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 301.

⁸³ Jewett, *Romans*, 659.

by privilege and qualification (Rom 11:4–5). Therefore, “those who have no claim to honor are given the honor of God’s grace and brought into a community in which the honor system has been transformed.”⁸⁴ In the next verse (Rom 11:6), Paul clearly summarizes the manner in which one gains divine favor. “But if by grace” (εἰ δὲ χάριτι) eliminates completely any tendency to earn divine favor by works (οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων). For any effort to earn God’s benefaction by merit is no longer possible in this present order. Consequently, Paul seems to be arguing that God’s benefaction through Christ “does not discriminate concerning the worth of its recipients,” or on their respective abilities, it is freely given to all.⁸⁵ Jewett’s interpretation of Romans 11:5 demonstrates that Paul’s language of χάρις betrays awareness of the patronage relationship of benefaction in the Greco-Roman world. But Jewett does not further elaborate on the social level how Paul engages the benefaction conventions of the world of his auditors.

For the grace of God through Christ to retain its efficacy and to impart meaningfully every believer, Paul exhorts his auditors in 2 Corinthians: “we urge you not to accept the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor 6:1: παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δεξασθαι ὑμᾶς). Murray J. Harris suggests that Paul is exhorting the Corinthians not to allow the opportunity given to them by God’s gratuitous favor to be wasted, yielding no positive result in their lives.⁸⁶ Paul seems to be concerned that the internal crisis in the community could stymie the effective workings of God’s grace among the Christian community in Corinth. The disunity among the Corinthian Christians is a sign that they are yet “to grow and mature in the Christian life, as

⁸⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 659.

⁸⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 660.

⁸⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 459.

evidenced by a life under the control of the one who died for believers.”⁸⁷ To address this internal crisis, Paul reminds them of the gratuitous divine benefaction granted to them in full measure through Christ.

1.1.3.3. The Grace of the Jerusalem Collection

The final subheading in the body of Paul’s letters to be reviewed concerns the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Paul identifies this collection as an integral aspect of his ministry, to persuade Gentile Christians to contribute money for the church in Jerusalem. We shall survey modern interpretations of how Paul uses the language of χάρις to advance his campaign to raise money for the church in Jerusalem. We have decided to focus on the commentary by Hans Dieter Betz: *2 Corinthians 8 and 9. A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, as the primary resource for our review on the recent interpretation of the Jerusalem collection, while paying attention at the same time to other notable commentaries.

In his commentary on 2 Corinthians 8 and 9,⁸⁸ Betz notes that Paul is targeting the success of the collection for Jerusalem in this case, among the Christians in Corinth. Then to

⁸⁷ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 328; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 316–317; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 459.

⁸⁸ One should note that the unity of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 has been a topic of scholarly investigation. Hans Dieter Betz suggests 2 Cor 9 to “have been a letter by itself,” separate from 2 Cor 8. He further says that the introductory statement of 2 Cor 9:1 does not refer to anything that precedes it. “rather, it refers to that which follows without connection to what has gone before.” See Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthian 8 and 9. A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 27, 90. On the contrary, Stanley K. Stowers proposes that the introductory statement of 2 Cor 9:1, in particular the phrase περὶ μὲν γάρ “expresses a close relationship—a reason, warrant, explanation, subtopic—to what precedes.” See Stanley K. Stowers, “Peri men gar and the integrity of 2 Cor 8 and 9,” *NovT* 32(1990) 345; Jan Lambrecht, “Paul’s Boasting about the Corinthians. A Study of 2 Cor 8:24–9:5,” *NovT* 40(1998) 353–354; Charles H. Talbert, “Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity: 2 Corinthians 8–9,” *RevExp* 86(1989) 360. My review of scholars however,

advance his campaign among the Corinthians, Paul uses the benefaction motif (χάρις) to persuade the Corinthians to undertake the collection. Betz is convinced that it is “part of Paul’s strategy to play with the different meanings of the term.”⁸⁹ Betz identifies two such meanings: (1) the grace of God (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ) is a quintessential expression in Paul’s letters that “describes God’s salvation in Christ as a whole,” and (2) the attributive participle phrase “the grace of God which has been given” (8:1: τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην) that “reminds us of the ordinary meaning of χάρις as gift.”⁹⁰ Betz notes that the second meaning of grace calls to mind the importance of gift-giving in antiquity, which has “a deeper root in religious practice.”⁹¹ He concludes,

gift-giving in all its forms [is] related to ritual sacrifice. Paul made use of such underlying connotations when he [connects] the grace of God, manifest in Christian salvation, to the gift of money expected of those who have participated in that salvation. This connection [is] in keeping both with Paul’s theology and with religious notions and practices common to all antiquity.⁹²

Indeed, to persuade the Corinthians to undertake the collection, Paul introduces the example of the generous benefaction of the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8:1–5. According to Betz, Paul praises the Macedonians with the hope “that the Corinthians would take it to heart and emulate”

seeks to illustrate how Paul’s appeal to the language of benefaction to advance his project of collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem has been given insufficient consideration in modern scholarship.

⁸⁹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 42.

⁹⁰ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 42.

⁹¹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 42.

⁹² Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 42.

their generous collection for the poor in Jerusalem.⁹³ Why is the story of the churches of Macedonia set up as an example or paradigm of generosity for others? Betz suggests that, like the Macedonians, every Christian community “has been granted the full measure of God’s grace,” and has experienced salvation through Christ.⁹⁴ Therefore, their act of benefaction is “always a response to divine grace. And divine favor for Paul is defined as salvation in Christ.”⁹⁵ As it stands, the Corinthians ought to share their gift of salvation by donating generously to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Furthermore, Paul states that the Macedonians are “begging us earnestly for the favor (δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν) of sharing in this ministry to the saints” (2 Cor 8:4). They are seeking to be partners in the collection for the church in Jerusalem.⁹⁶ On account of this, notwithstanding the poverty of the Macedonians, Betz notes that they surprised Paul with the generosity of their contribution for the collection for Jerusalem. They are practicing a cultural ideal of antiquity whereby simplicity of life is manifested in generous giving and in showing hospitality. Betz suggests that the Macedonians are able to practice this virtue because they have “been enabled

⁹³ Betz observes that Paul uses an ancient rhetorical technique known as *exemplum*. With this technique, Paul vividly describes “the praise-worthy activities of the churches in Macedonia, praise-worthy because they have done so much on behalf of the collection for Jerusalem.” See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 48.

⁹⁴ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 42.

⁹⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 44–45; Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor. Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul’s Collection* (WUNT 124, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 136–137.

⁹⁶ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 46.

by God's grace." In antiquity, "the generosity of the simple folk [is] always a response to divine grace."⁹⁷

Accordingly, the action of the Macedonians reflects the religious values of the ancient world. The mainstay of the religious tradition of antiquity is found in their relationship with the deity and its expression in their lives. One of the ways this relationship is expressed is through the sacrificial cult that was ubiquitous in the ancient world. The ancient religious sacrifices as Betz observes are seen as "a symbolic substitution of human self-dedication, as such, it [is] the only proper response to the beneficence of the deity."⁹⁸ Then, it seems to me that when Paul writes about "the gift of God's grace," he means "Christ's self-sacrifice as well as God's sacrifice of his own son."⁹⁹ Just as sacrifices connect the deities of the ancient world with their devotees, likewise "the proper response to God's grace and sacrifice is the complete dedication of oneself to God."¹⁰⁰ Thus, Paul notes that the Christian community in Macedonia express their self-dedication to God with lavish generosity to the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁰¹

After setting up the example of the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1–5), Paul then turns to persuade the Corinthians to follow their lead (2 Cor 8:9–15). In Betz's view, Paul presents the

⁹⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 45.

⁹⁸ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 47. Betz goes on to show that the theological message Paul intends in 2 Cor 8 is finally coming on full cycle, namely, (1) the connection between the divine gift of salvation and the human response of self-sacrifice; (2) the connection between the charitable giving expected of Christians and God's beneficence; (3) the common ancient understanding of the nature and function of gifts; and (4) the connection of gift-giving with the cult. See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 47–48.

⁹⁹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 47.

¹⁰¹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 47–48.

first of three proofs in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Paul begins by invoking the example par excellence of Jesus Christ, the example that is already known to the Christians in Corinth. Christ's pre-existent status is associated with wealth (2 Cor 8:9b), but he chooses to enrich humanity by embracing poverty (2 Cor 8:9c) for their sake. Therefore, the example of Christ has become the paradigm for how Paul expects the Corinthian Christians to relate to the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁰² Paul expects them "to respond appropriately to the example of Christ" and complete the collection for the sake of the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁰³ By completing the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, the Corinthian Christians express the proper act of gratitude worthy of Christ's exemplary life of choosing poverty over wealth for their sake.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 63; Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 191. According to Charles H. Talbert, "the Macedonians have manifested a spiritual gift (liberality in contributing) in a marvelous way;" also Paul portrays Christ in 2 Cor 8:9–11 as "another example of liberality. If the first [is] the example of churches, this is a Christological example." See Charles H. Talbert, "Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity," 362–363; Richard R Melick states that the wealth of Jesus implies the "possession of resources sufficient to accomplish a proposed task. The willingness to change the conditions of life for the sake of others." See Melick, "The Collection for the Saints," 101–102. David Horrell suggests that the example of Christ is not in his sacrificial death, but rather in his incarnation. "The self-giving of Christ can serve as a model for the self-giving of Christian people, and that this self-giving includes the giving of material things like money." See David Horrell, "Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology," *ER* 22(1995) 77. Similarly, Dieter Georgi points out that the self-giving of Christ is the incarnation that enables humans to participate in heavenly life. See Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor. The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon: 1992) 83; Cranfield, "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Corinthians 8:1–9," *CV* 32(1989) 106.

¹⁰³ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 61. The example of Christ is basically his self-giving on the cross that brings about salvation for the human race. Ralph P. Martin adds to this point of viewing observing that grace carries here a "theological weight of a divine attribute, namely, love in action, expressed on sinners' behalf and reaching out to help the undeserving." See Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 440; Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 50; Melick, "The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8–9," *CTR* 4(1989) 101.

¹⁰⁴ Burnish, *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*, 51.

In the second proof, Paul calls attention to the nobility of an expedient completion of “the collection rather than leaving it undone” (2 Cor 8:10–12).¹⁰⁵ Paul knows that the Corinthians have the willingness to undertake this collection (2 Cor 8:11b: ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν), so they just need to get it done with a little encouragement (2 Cor 8:11c: οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν).

Then, in the third and final proof, Paul “regards the collection for the poor in Jerusalem as a means of bringing about unity within the church between Jews and Greeks” (2 Cor 8:13–15).¹⁰⁶ The act of reciprocity solidifies the unity among the churches in Jerusalem and the gentile nations. This is evident in the collection for Jerusalem as the material abundance of the Corinthian Christians alleviate the material poverty of the Jerusalem church and the spiritual abundance of the Jerusalem church nourishes the Corinthian Christians. This seems to be what Paul wishes to accomplish with the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, namely, to promote equality in the Church.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 64.

¹⁰⁶ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 68.

¹⁰⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 68–69. Betz further suggests that Paul recognizes the spiritual poverty of the Corinthians and even their material deficiency by “not being able to raise the money. By contrast, Paul could speak of the spiritual abundance of the church at Jerusalem in spite of their material poverty. Thus, give-and-take should occur at a number of levels, and this is the meaning of equality.” Charles H. Talbert suggests that Paul intends the collection for the poor in Jerusalem to serve the following theological functions: (1) an expression of Christian charity (Gal 2:10; 2 Cor 8:14, 9:12; Rom 15:25); (2) as a symbol of Christian unity (2 Cor 9:13–14; Rom 15:27); and (c) it will serve as a proof that the Gentiles are included in God’s saving plan. See, Talbert, “Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity,” 360; Lambrecht “Paul’s Boasting about the Corinthians,” 364; Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection. A Study in Paul’s Strategy* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966) 100–114. David Horrell summarizes the three reasons suggested to be the purpose served by the collection for the poor in Jerusalem: (1) eschatological, (2) church unity, (3) financial assistance. See Horrell, “Paul’s Collection,” 75–76. Scot McKnight adds a fourth reason for the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, which he identifies as “substitute for Jewish entry rites” See Scot McKnight, “Collection for the Saints,”

To strengthen his exhortation to the Corinthians, Paul mentions how one who gives cheerfully to the needy is beloved by God (2 Cor 9:7) because that one gives to others as an appreciation of the benefaction that has been received from God.¹⁰⁸ On this note, Betz claims that Paul knows for certain that human-human benefaction is a response to God's gift of divine favor one has received. God's gift is sufficient with nothing lacking (2 Cor 9:8).¹⁰⁹ Therefore, if the Corinthians feel that they have been given enough by God, then "there is plenty left in reserve with which to do good works (ἵνα...περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν)."¹¹⁰ It is on this note also that Paul expects them not to delay any longer than necessary in extending benefaction

in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph E. Martin; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993) 145–146; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 52–53; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 111. Charles H. Talbert says, "a willing gift cheerfully given is what is meant by "sowing bountifully." And "reaping bountifully" means that generosity is beneficial to those who practice it." See Talbert, "Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity," 366; Melick, "The Collection for the Saints," 100–101.

¹⁰⁹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 110.

¹¹⁰ Han, Dieter Betz explains, "Paul based self-sufficiency on economic wealth obtained through the exchange gifts." See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 110. Stephan Joubert adds, "the result of the χάρις of God in the lives of the Corinthians is ἀντάρκεια, self-sufficiency." See Joubert, "Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthian 9:6–15," 83; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 81–82.

to the poor in Jerusalem.¹¹¹ For they are assured of being “enriched in every way for your great generosity” (2 Cor 9:11a) by God in whose benefaction they depend for their enrichment.¹¹²

A cognate of the term χάρις that plays a key role in Paul’s argument on the Jerusalem collection is thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία). With regards to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, the Corinthians’ benefaction on their behalf “overflows with many thanksgivings to God” (2 Cor 9:12, NRSV). For “when they had received the gift, the Jerusalem Christians would respond in the way of all religious people on such occasions; they would offer prayers of thanksgiving (εὐχαρισταί) to God.”¹¹³ The prayer of thanksgiving to be offered to God includes praises (2 Cor 9:13) and intercessions for others (2 Cor 9:14).¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 110. Betz says, “The recognition that wealth is a divine gift of blessing means ipso facto that it enables the human recipient to share with others. The very act of receiving divine beneficence must, if done properly, lead to sharing the goods with those in need, in order to do good by giving freely.” James Moffatt adds “grace means giving, at the heart of it, in man as well as in God.” See Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 230. Brad Eastman suggest, “the gift which they receive from God is apparently the gift of giving.” See Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 45.

¹¹² Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 115. Betz insists that wherever Paul employs “the language of wealth (πλοῦτος) and abundance (περισσεία) in the text, both the economic and spiritual realities are present, and are a part of the argument.” See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 115–116. Stephan Joubert adds, “by giving generously and cheerfully, believers will experience the miracle, due to God’s grace in their lives, that they will actually have more to give away in future.” See Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15,” 85.

¹¹³ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 120, Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 147.

¹¹⁴ Betz insists that “Paul expected that the thanksgiving prayer used by the church in Jerusalem would first praise God for his beneficence in general terms. The very existence of the donation provides concrete evidence of divine benevolence in this particular instance.” See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 122; Charles H. Talbert adds that God is the source of generosity, then thanks are offered “to God as well as gratitude for the humans who manifest the gift.” God is the source of such generous Christian benefaction so that “if the Corinthians are generous, Paul thinks it is because of the surpassing grace or gift of God in them (v 14). See Talbert, “Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity,” 368;

Moreover, one may observe an aspect of reciprocity in the generosity of the Achaians towards the Jerusalem church and the intercessory prayer of the Jerusalem church towards the Achaians (2 Cor 9:14), which is emblematic of their partnership (κοινωνία) with one another. This partnership is made possible by the abundant benevolence of God given to the Achaians, and also, the surpassing favor of God that causes the Jerusalem church to offer prayers for the Achaian Christians (2 Cor 9:14).¹¹⁵ Stephan Joubert suggests that even before the collection is delivered, the poor in Jerusalem are already expressing their gratitude for the maturity of the Corinthian Christians on account of their generosity made possible by God's benefaction.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem is a "gift of blessing" as Paul describes it.

Taking everything into consideration, Betz states the claim in 2 Corinthians 9:15 that actually "no one can render an adequate account of every aspect of the divine gift of salvation, of

Lambrecht, "Paul's Boasting," 366–367; Joubert, "Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15," 83, 85–86.

¹¹⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 125. Betz concludes that *grace* is an essential theme in the Corinthians Correspondence. Paul is confident that the Achaian Christians have experienced abundant benefaction of God and it is merely reemphasized in 2 Cor 8 and 9. Furthermore the ultimate goal of the collection of the gentile churches is to link them in partnership with the Jerusalem church bringing about the recognition of the former and Paul's ministry. See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 126. Charles H. Talbert adds that it is "liberality in contribution" towards "the poor that brings benefit because they then pray for their benefactors and by implication, they are powerful in their prayers." See Talbert, "Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity," 367. Stephan Joubert aptly adds, "the collection was the ideal vehicle to give visible expression to the κοινωνία between them. Neither the physical distance between these two groups, nor the cultural differences between them, stood in the way of sharing their common life in Christ." See Joubert, "Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15," 88–89; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 53–54.

¹¹⁶ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 148.

which the collection for the saints [is] but a small part.”¹¹⁷ What is essential is to be motivated to do good towards one another on account of our experience of divine benefaction.

1.1.3.4. Grace in the Body of the Letter to the Galatians

We shall conclude our review of modern commentaries on the language of grace in Paul’s letters by looking into the interpretation of grace in the body of the Letter to the Galatians. We shall review several significant scholarly interpretations of the language of grace in the body of the Letter to the Galatians as we have previously done with both the prescript and postscript of the letter. We shall again see that scholars conclude that Paul employs the term *χάρις* in the body of the letter to serve his theological enterprise.

Right after the epistolary prescript, Paul states his reason for writing the Letter to the Galatians, namely, the Galatian Christians are at the verge of “moving away from grace, the essence of the Pauline message of faith (Gal 1:6).”¹¹⁸ Their defection is described as abandoning God’s calling in Christ, which invariably means that they are jettisoning their experience of salvation through the ministry of Paul. According to Betz, “in the grace of Christ” is “synonymous with “in Christ Jesus or the “body of Christ.””¹¹⁹ Seemingly, the Galatians are about to walk away from God’s gift of divine favor that binds them in Christ. Dunn notes that Paul could hardly hide his feelings of outrage on this sudden perversion of the Galatians’

¹¹⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 128. Charles H. Talbert is even more specific, “over and beyond the benefits to be received, there is the benefit already received, even our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.” See Talbert, “Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity,” 368.

¹¹⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 49; de Boer, *Galatians*, 40.

¹¹⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 48.

response to God's benefaction.¹²⁰ Dunn maintains that it is the same God who called the people of Israel into a covenant relationship (Rom 9:7–11; 11:5–6) that has equally called the Galatians to the same relationship through grace (Gal 1:6). Thus he notes, "Paul [sees] God as the moving source of and force in salvation, with Christ as the main expression and facilitator of [God's] call."¹²¹

As in the other letters we have surveyed, likewise in Galatians, Paul writes about the grace of his own calling. He appeals to his biographical information in the context of the grace of his apostolic vocation to preach the gospel (Gal 1:15). Both the experience of being set aside (ἀφορίζειν) and being called (καλεῖν) is a divine plan similar to the experiences of prophets in the Jewish Scriptures like Jeremiah (Jer 1:5). Dunn suggests that like the "grace-character of Israel's calling," Paul understands the "grace-character" of his calling as "an expression of God's unconditional generosity from start to finish."¹²² Therefore, it is "through God's grace" (διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ) that Paul has become an apostle.¹²³

It has been noted that Paul's report on the Jerusalem council (Gal 2:1–10) serves to build up the defense of his ministry and the gospel he preaches. On account of this, Galatians 2:9 summarizes the council's resolution, which also serves to validate Paul's self-defense.

¹²⁰ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 39.

¹²¹ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 41.

¹²² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 63–63.

¹²³ Betz, *Galatians*, 70; Frederick F. Bruce notes that Paul identifies both the calling of the Galatians (1:6) and his (1:15) as the same gracious divine calling. See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 92; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 54.

Interpreting the statement “recognizing the grace that has been given to me” (Gal 2:9a: καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν) Betz proposes that χάρις here has the same meaning as in Galatians 1:3. It “is the content of the Pauline message of the gospel; the redemptive work of God,” and it is not in his view, the grace of Paul’s apostolic authority.¹²⁴

Dunn adds, “the pillars of the church” “did not only see the effect of Paul’s preaching,” they recognize it as God’s grace at work through Paul (Gal 2:9).¹²⁵ As he has done with the previous occurrence of the term χάρις in Galatians, likewise here also, Dunn interprets the grace that has been given to Paul (Gal 2:9) as “the enabling of God’s spirit” that empowers Paul to undertake his divine commissioning. Paul is aware of this grace and the “pillars of the church” recognize it. It is important to note that Dunn links grace in Galatians 2:9 with χάρισμα. He insists that χάρισμα is the “expression and embodiment of grace in word or action.”¹²⁶

The action of Peter in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14) is still in Paul’s mind as he outlines the argument in Galatians 2:15–21. Peter retreats behind the boundary wall of the Mosaic Law that marks off Jews from Gentiles, undermining thereby Paul’s understanding of the gospel and his commission. Therefore, Paul takes a fundamental stand declaring that he does not “nullify the grace of God” (Gal 2:21: οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ). Dunn suggests, “Paul obviously has in mind the grace of God manifested in his calling and in his successful missionary work (Gal 1:15;

¹²⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 99; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 56; Martyn, *Galatians*, 203. But, Heinrich Schlier has suggested that Paul’s appeal to the language of grace points to the apostolic grace which has been granted to him (Χάρις hat hier den speziellen Sinn von Apostelgnade). See Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 78; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 121; de Boer, *Galatians*, 122.

¹²⁵ Dunn, *The Galatians to the Galatians*, 108.

¹²⁶ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 108; idem, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 203.

2:9). The essence of this grace, in Paul's understanding and experience, is freely extended to the Gentiles as well."¹²⁷ The introduction of any kind of separation between Jews and Gentiles would, therefore, invalidate the essence of the gospel message and ultimately render meaningless (δωρεάν) the death of Christ on the cross (Gal 2:21c).

For this reason, Paul objects to righteousness through law observance that ends up excluding gentile Christians from experiencing God's gratuitous gift of divine favor as Gentiles. Dunn notes that Paul condemns the belief in righteousness through the Law as a false understanding of God's grace because of what Christ accomplishes for humanity through his death on the cross. The death of Christ on the cross has broken down boundary-defining barriers for Jewish and gentile Christians. Anyone who fails to recognize it as Peter did in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), nullifies the grace of God and denies the death of Christ its efficacy.¹²⁸

Additionally, Betz notes that Paul's declaration in Galatians 2:21 that he does "not nullify the grace of God" is a refutation of a charge.¹²⁹ Paul vehemently denies that his beliefs, which he has carefully laid out in Galatians 2:15–20 lead to the corruption of God's grace. Paul's denial that he "does not nullify the grace of God" serves to refute the accusation made against him by his Jewish Christian opponents that his brand of gospel renders null and void the grace of God. In Betz's view, it is conceivable that the opponents of Paul actually accuse him of annulling the

¹²⁷ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 147–148.

¹²⁸ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 148–149.

¹²⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 126.

grace of God on account of his brand of ministry.¹³⁰ But Paul's response to the charge is a total denial by stating the opposite, namely, "I do not nullify the grace of God" (Gal 2:21a). In this immediate context, the "grace of God" as Betz describes it is "the entire process of salvation in Christ."¹³¹ And in Galatians 2:21c, Paul's refutation turns into an accusation against his opponents. Like Peter, it is Paul's opponents who are nullifying the grace of God. They are preaching justification through the observance of the law and thereby denying the death of Christ its efficacy (Gal 2:21c: δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν).¹³²

As Paul's argument progresses, he further appeals to the example of Abraham to strengthen his position that "salvation is always, first to last, a matter of divine initiative and grace."¹³³ Paul defends the priority of divine benefaction and relativizes everything else, especially the role of the Mosaic Law in God's relationship with the world since the event of Christ's death. Paul easily links the story of Christ with the promise of Abraham, through whom the promise retains its validity and precedence over the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:18). Dunn then observes, "the interlocking character of the three concepts, grace-promise-faith establishes the

¹³⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 126; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 146; Martyn, *Galatians*, 259–260; de Boer, *Galatians*, 163.

¹³¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 126.

¹³² Betz, *Galatians*, 127; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 147. The antinomy in this verse is put in clear terms by Louis J. Martyn, "God [is] making things right by Christ's cross rather than by the law." See Martyn, *Galatians*, 260; de Boer, *Galatians*, 164.

¹³³ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 186.

character of Abraham's inheritance so firmly that nothing else could alter it."¹³⁴ Besides, Paul seems to have deliberately used the Greek perfect of χάρις (Gal 3:18: κεχάρισται) to establish his view that the promise to Abraham remains valid through Christ.

Since God's promise to Abraham remains valid in Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews can now share in the inheritance promised to Abraham. Betz maintains that by inheritance, Paul means "all the benefits of God's work of salvation."¹³⁵ But without the observance of the law, how can one obtain the promise of God's inheritance? It is already a gift promised to Abraham by God (Gal 3:18: δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός), the saving effects of which are ongoing and include the gentile Christians of Galatia.¹³⁶

It is on this note that Paul warns the gentile Christians of Galatia on the consequences of seeking righteousness from God through the observance of the law. Without mincing words, he lets them know that their action will result in the loss of divine benefaction (τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε) and estranged from Christ (Gal 5:4: κατηργήθητε). Betz notes that both God's gift of divine favor and the death of Christ on the cross are in stark opposition to the observance of the law. According to Paul's view, if the Galatian Christians agree to the teachings of his opponents,

¹³⁴ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187. Richard N. Longenecker adds, "Paul is radically opposed to any mingling of God's promise and grace with the Mosaic Law." See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 134.

¹³⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 159.

¹³⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 160; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 174. Louis J. Martyn says that the inheritance "is the innumerable Abrahamic progeny among the uncircumcised Gentiles (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8), and it is the gift of the promised Spirit to all who are heirs of Abraham because they are heirs of God in Christ (3:14, 29; 4:7)." See Martyn, *Galatians*, 343; de Boer, *Galatians*, 224–225.

they will miss out entirely on the only means of salvation, namely, divine benefaction.¹³⁷ The domain of law observance and the domain of grace are mutually exclusive. The domain of grace “enshrines as its fundamental principle, unconditional grace; any attempt to add a further fundamental principle (law) [is] equivalent in Paul’s eyes to abandoning the domain of grace altogether.”¹³⁸

Moreover, Dunn notes that the force of Paul’s argument is based on the conviction that the observance of the Mosaic Law now will bring to an apparent end the benefits the Galatian Christians are already enjoying on account of their relationship with Christ (Gal 5:4). Paul is very adamant that the relationship with Christ is inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles. He fears that the pressure from his opponents that the Galatian Christian should observe the Mosaic Law “will force Jesus back into the role of a purely Jewish messiah rather than that of last Adam and Lord of all.”¹³⁹

Conclusion

In the body of his letters, Paul appeals to the language of divine favor more in some letters than in others. Modern scholarship has noted that in the body of Paul’s letters grace is the term that underscores Paul’s understanding of his apostolic ministry; also, it is the term that Paul uses to acknowledge his apostolic partnership with the community in Philippi, who endure the same

¹³⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 261; Frederick F. Bruce notes, “to seek it through faith in Christ [is] to see it on the ground of God’s grace; to seek it through legal works [is] to seek it on the ground of their own merit. God [calls] the Galatians in χάριτι (1:6); to forsake his call for the way of law [involves] self-expulsion from his grace, because they no longer [rely] on it.” See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 231; Martyn, *Galatians*, 47; de Boer, *Galatians*, 314–315.

¹³⁸ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 269.

¹³⁹ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 268.

experience of suffering as Paul (Phil 1:3–11), and his partnership with the Roman community (Rom 1:5). Besides, he links his apostolic vocation to the calling of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures like Jeremiah (Gal 1:15). Also in Romans, he identifies his apostolic vocation as a minister of Jesus Christ serving as a priest for the gentile nation (Rom 15:16–17). Indeed, taken together, Paul is the indefatigable apostle, who labored harder than other apostles among the Gentiles to produce the results on account of the grace of apostleship that was given to him (1 Cor 15:10).

When Paul writes about the grace that God has given to humankind through Jesus Christ, as modern scholars have noted, he is convinced that God's grace has attained its fullness in the event of Christ's life. Scholars like Robert Jewett note that Paul is convinced that the lordship of Christ brings about the outpouring of God's grace, which ends the reign of sin. On this note, in this new order of God's grace through Christ, (1) human effort to earn God's approval and blessing has been eliminated, (2) and the barrier between Jews and Gentiles has been removed (Gal 3:18; Rom 3:21–22). It is for this reason, therefore, that Paul was furious with Peter, Barnabas and other Jews in Antioch who wished to maintain the old order, the status quo before the outpouring of divine favor through Christ (Gal 2:11–14).

Lastly, the Jerusalem collection is an integral part of the body of some letters of Paul (Gal 2:10; Rom 15:25–28; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9). This project is an important example of how Paul appeals to the language of grace in his letters. In his interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8–9, Betz demonstrates that, first, to encourage the Corinthians to complete the collection, Paul invokes the benefaction of the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1–5), and ultimately, the example of Jesus, who graciously has given himself for us (2 Cor 8:9). Second, Paul sees the benefaction of the gentile churches towards the Jerusalem church as a way of bringing about fellowship among the

churches. And lastly, Betz notes that upon receiving the benefaction of the gentile churches, the Jerusalem church will respond with a prayer of thanksgiving to God on behalf of their gentile Christian benefactors.

Taken together, therefore, theological interpretations of Paul's use of the term grace in modern scholarship are very instructive. But not to consider the role played by the social context of Paul's language of grace means that the conclusion reached by modern commentators is without the richness in meaning with which Paul imbues the term χάρις. Only James R. Harrison has analyzed Paul's use of the term χάρις from the viewpoint of its context in the Greco-Roman world, the world of Paul's gentile Christians. We shall therefore, proceed in the next section to review Harrison's significant study of Paul's language of grace from the Greco-Roman context.

1.2. James R. Harrison on the Language of χάρις in Paul's Letters.

Introduction

So far, our survey of literature reveals that the background of the term χάρις in the Greco-Roman world has received very little or no consideration from modern commentators of Paul's letters. The focus of scholarship on the theological meaning of grace has produced an incomplete picture of what Paul is about in employing the language of χάρις in his letters. But our review of Harrison's work will illustrate that the language of grace is commonplace in the provinces and cities where Paul proclaims the gospel of Christ. Harrison provides evidence for this point of view by examining Greco-Roman literature and Jewish writings in the light of his analysis of Paul's letters.

1.2.1. Grace in Greco-Roman Literature

Harrison provides an extensive analysis of benefaction terminology in honorific inscriptions, papyri and Greco-Roman philosophies. His analysis demonstrates that the honorific inscriptions

represent the very fact that the reciprocity system of benefaction is normative in Greco-Roman culture. In the inscriptions the ethos of reciprocity pertains to each party of the benefaction ritual, either divine or human. In other words, *χάρις* refers “either to the disposal of ‘favour’ by the benefactor, or return of ‘favour’ or ‘gratitude’ by the beneficiary.”¹⁴⁰ For instance, Zosimos of Priene achieves glory and honors on account of his benefaction, his *χάρις* and *ἀρετή*.¹⁴¹ On the strength of his analysis of Greco-Roman honorific inscriptions, Harrison concludes, “by the first century AD *χάρις* had become the central leitmotiv of the Hellenistic reciprocity system.”¹⁴²

When we turn to Harrison’s analysis of the concept of *χάρις* in the papyri, we learn that the papyri reveal, on a literary level, “a darker side to the social reality behind the benefaction system.”¹⁴³ This is confirmed by the uneasiness generated by the concept of *ἀχαριστοί* (ungrateful) throughout the papyri. Harrison draws attention to a letter in which the writer mentions a certain Publius who did not reciprocate the generosity of others towards him.¹⁴⁴ For this reason, would be benefactors are encouraged to choose carefully their dependents, lest the dependents become ungrateful.¹⁴⁵ Be that as it may, Harrison notes that the papyri contain letters

¹⁴⁰ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 63.

¹⁴¹ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 57–59.

¹⁴² Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 2.

¹⁴³ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 70–71, 95.

¹⁴⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 71.

¹⁴⁵ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 72.

of gratitude just as the one by a certain Herakleos for the generous help he received from a doctor.¹⁴⁶

The next Greco-Roman source that Harrison examines for benefaction ideology is the works of philosophers. Philosophers promote the relationship of benefaction, encouraging benefactors always to have the right motivation for their benevolent acts. For instance, Plato encouraged benefactors to confer benefits only to the needy because they are the most likely people to reciprocate the gifts received. Aristotle insists that benefactors must have the right motives for their altruism.¹⁴⁷ And the beneficiaries ought to show gratitude for the favors received to avoid the wrath of Fortune.¹⁴⁸ Harrison notes that Plutarch “provides the most extensive discussion of the return of gratitude.”¹⁴⁹ Plutarch observes that “even the animals display gratitude for benefits (χάριτες εἰς παθόντων).”¹⁵⁰ Philosophers describe χάρις and its cognates in the same manner as we encountered in the honorific inscriptions and the papyri above.¹⁵¹ An important discussion of the ideology of benefaction in the philosophies worth

¹⁴⁶ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 75.

¹⁴⁷ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 174.

¹⁴⁸ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 209.

¹⁴⁹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 176.

¹⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Mor.*, 966B quoted in Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 176.

¹⁵¹ Harrison makes this point on the basis that the philosophers encourage the bestowal of favor, especially “to the most underserving, and to those most unable to repay.” And given that the philosophers encourage reciprocity, they “regard gratitude as a noble expression of the human spirit.” Reciprocation of favor is integral to the philosophical discussion of benefaction. For example, Pythagoras “reminds the young men at the gymnasium of Kroton that they owed their parents gratitude (ὀφείλειν χάρις) as benefactors.” So, with regards to the discussion of benefaction and the ethos of reciprocity, the writings of

keeping in mind is the insistence on the moral obligation of reciprocity. For example, Harrison notes that “the philosophers heavily underscore the perpetual reciprocation of parental favour by their progeny.”¹⁵² With regards to divine benefaction, right ritual practice on the part of the human supplicant is necessary to secure the favor of the gods. Some philosophers even teach that one could demand divine recompense from the gods for one’s genuine ritual piety and worship in their honor.¹⁵³

1.2.2. Grace in Jewish Literature

Harrison also analyzes in detailed fashion the presence of Greco-Roman benefaction ideology in the LXX, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, in Philo, Josephus, in Jewish synagogue and funerary inscriptions, in synagogue-style sermons of Pseudo-Philo and rabbinic exegesis of Jewish Scriptures. Harrison also provides an extensive discussion of the ‘new perspective’ on Paul, focusing on the works of E. P. Sanders, and others.

Harrison demonstrates that the Greco-Roman benefaction ideology is already part of the literary world of first-century Judaism. Yet he admits that the language of grace in the LXX “does not capture in nascent form the theological emphases that Paul [would] later develop in his letters.”¹⁵⁴ Therefore, the source of the influence on Paul’s use of the language of grace to

Greco-Roman philosophers are similar to the inscriptions and papyri. See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 174, 175, 181.

¹⁵² Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 209.

¹⁵³ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 210.

¹⁵⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 165.

underscore divine-human and human-human beneficence in his letters has to be sought elsewhere than in the LXX.

Unlike the LXX, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha develop a more nuanced view of grace. In these documents, grace (χάρις) often is linked with almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνη). Harrison attributes this development to the Hellenized state of Jewish culture since the second century BCE. The *Letter of Aristeas* is an example of the presence of such Greco-Roman influence in Jewish life and literary culture.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, after analyzing the work of Pseudo-Philo, Harrison concludes, “electing and predestinating grace” form the central theme of the synagogue-style sermons of Pseudo-Philo. God’s grace does not depend on “human obedience, as the career of Samson amply demonstrates.”¹⁵⁶ Although Pseudo-Philo speaks about the unconditional nature of God’s benevolence, yet he insists that God should be returned fitting thanks by those who receive God’s benefaction. With this in mind, Harrison notes that Pseudo-Philo “highlights the importance of reciprocity in a manner reminiscent of traditional [Greco-Roman] benefaction ideology.”¹⁵⁷

In the works of both Philo and Josephus, Harrison notices an extensive discussion of the Greco-Roman benefaction system in their writings. Indeed, the works of both Philo and Josephus are by far the most detailed interactions in Judaism with Greco-Roman benefaction conventions. Harrison demonstrates that Philo and Josephus show knowledge of the benefaction terminology

¹⁵⁵ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 165.

¹⁵⁶ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 165.

¹⁵⁷ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 165.

that we saw in Greco-Roman honorific inscriptions.¹⁵⁸ While Philo uses the Hellenistic idea of merit to discuss covenantal grace, Josephus discusses Jewish Scriptures' narrative in Greco-Roman benefaction motifs. Furthermore, both Philo and Josephus, as Harrison notes, offer a critique of the Greco-Roman benefaction system. Philo inveighs “the χάριτες of the benefaction system,” contrasting it “in stoic manner with the unconditional generosity of God.”¹⁵⁹ And “Josephus compares the character of the true God with the χάριτες of the pagan gods and moralizes about the self-interest of Graeco-Roman beneficence.”¹⁶⁰

Here are few examples on the interpretation of divine χάρις in both Philo and Josephus as presented by Harrison. One of Philo's use of the term χάρις that Harrison examined concerns the recipients of God's χάρις. Harrison's interpretation of Philo shows that only those who are worthy of God's grace are granted the favor of God. According to Harrison, Philo insists “that God judges those who are worthy of His gifts (δωρεῶν ἀξιούς) to be the recipients of His grace.”¹⁶¹ Noah is worthy to receive God's favors (χάριτος ἄξιος), just as Moses “is deemed worthy of the boon (ἀξιοῦνται μέντοι τῆς χάριτος) [of God] due to his ἀρετή.”¹⁶² For the covenant of God with Abraham guarantees bounties (χάριτας) and divine favors (δωρεάς) “to those who are worthy to receive them (ἀξιούς).”¹⁶³ When we turn to the works of Josephus for an

¹⁵⁸ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 165.

¹⁵⁹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 165.

¹⁶⁰ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 165–166.

¹⁶¹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 124.

¹⁶² Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 124–125.

¹⁶³ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 125.

example of divine χάρις, we see that Josephus “emphasizes how God *providentially* cares for the Israelites.”¹⁶⁴ Harrison notes that Josephus’ interpretations of divine χάρις is conspicuously absent in the LXX. One such example is during Israel’s first camp after crossing the Red Sea. Moses prays for water “and God responds with grace (τὴν χάριν) by sweetening the bitter waters of Marah.”¹⁶⁵ Whenever the Israelites grumble, Moses reminds them “of God’s favours (χάριτας) and bounties (δωρεάς).¹⁶⁶ Likewise, in Rephidim, Moses prays to God to “undergird past generosity with a new boon (δωρεά) of water,” in order to maintain the gratitude (χάρις) of the Israelites.¹⁶⁷

Harrison discovers that synagogue inscriptions clearly betray the influence of Greco-Roman benefaction language among diaspora Jews. Rabbis and civic leaders are honored in these inscriptions for their acts of benefaction to the diaspora community. Moreover, the synagogues provide hospitality to travelling Jews. There are reasons to conclude as Harrison notes, that a band of Jewish merchants has been exposed to and practiced “the benefaction culture of Hellenistic trade guilds.”¹⁶⁸ Jewish trade guilds help to spread Greco-Roman benefaction terminologies among diaspora Jews.

Finally, rabbinic literature, which post-dates Paul’s letters, exhibits an inconsistent understanding of the language of grace. For instance, Harrison observes that in the *Babylonian*

¹⁶⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 136.

¹⁶⁵ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 136.

¹⁶⁶ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 137.

¹⁶⁷ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 147.

Talmud (600 CE), R. Simeon b. Laqish notes that God's grace to the humble is as a result of their ritual purity.¹⁶⁹ Elsewhere, R. Simeon b. Laqish interprets Psalm 42:9 by insisting that one who studies the Torah "draws out the thread of grace."¹⁷⁰ Harrison also notes that there are other Midrashim that focus on the relationship between grace and prayer. For instance, *Rabbah Deuteronomy* interprets Exod 33:19 by showing that Yahweh answers "Moses' prayers as an act of grace."¹⁷¹ Overall, Harrison notes that grace in the rabbinic literature is complex and multifaceted and there is a rare use of grace in the context of philanthropy.¹⁷²

1.2.3. Grace in Paul's Letters

Finally, in our review of Harrison's work, we turn to his interpretation of Paul's letters within the context of the Greco-Roman language of benefaction. Harrison divides his interpretation of the

¹⁶⁹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 162.

¹⁷⁰ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 163.

¹⁷¹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 161.

¹⁷² Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 166. James Harrison offers two opposing perspectives on the presence of the term χάρις in rabbinic literature. First, he notes the challenges that one faces in the effort to examine the rabbinic literature for conventions of benefaction. With regards to the challenges, Harrison says, "given the size of the rabbinic corpus and its different concerns, any discussion of the rabbinic view of grace can hardly be representative." Second, he insists that rabbinic exegesis on the notion of grace might have arisen in response to Paul's theology of grace. See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 158–159. Rabbinic literature betrays interaction with the Greco-Roman culture that provides the background for Paul's language of grace. The evidence behind Harrison's view that the language of grace in rabbinic literature is in response to Paul's theology of grace is based on assumptions. This is because (1) Paul's language of grace is against the backdrop of Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction; and (2) the notion of grace in rabbinic literature, essentially, is based on Jewish Scriptures. The rabbis see themselves as interpreters of scripture. In other words, "the rabbis [see] themselves not as the creators of something new, but as the bearers of something old." See Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987) 231. But Paul's portrait of God is shaped by the Greco-Roman world of his auditors. He appeals to Greco-Roman language of grace to persuade his auditors against the view of his Jewish Christian opponents' vision of the Mosaic Law for Gentile Christians.

letters of Paul into (1) Paul and Divine Beneficence, and (2) Paul and Human Beneficence. Concerning Harrison's exposition on 'Paul and Divine Beneficence,' he seeks to ascertain the "portrait of divine grace Paul sketches for first-century Christians living in the Western and Eastern Mediterranean basin."¹⁷³ Harrison analyzes the link between Greco-Roman benefaction language and Paul's honor and shame dynamics in the Letter to the Romans, particularly in his interpretation of Romans 1:23, 24a, 25b; 3:2–6, 9, 23. He notices, therefore, that members of Pauline churches are encouraged to free themselves from dependence on the benevolence of the city luminaries and "adopt the role of benefactor for themselves."¹⁷⁴ God is by far a Benefactor superior to the Olympian gods, magic and the gods of the mysteries cults.

Harrison admits that "Paul endorses conventions from the honorific inscriptions that stress the obligation of the beneficiary to respond worthily of the Benefactor."¹⁷⁵ This admittance is as a result of Harrison's interpretation of Romans 1:14; 15:15–21; Galatian 1:15–16, etc. Yet he insists that Paul actually rejects and overturns the ethos of reciprocity for his gentile Christians. He writes that Paul strongly proposes that unlike the benefaction of Greco-Roman gods and human benefactors, God's gift of divine favor through Christ is "unilateral, not reciprocal."¹⁷⁶ The death of Christ for the unworthy challenges traditional notion of benefaction, especially the type proposed by philosophers. The philosophers suggested that potential benefactors should take into consideration the disposition of their beneficiaries. But because

¹⁷³ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 287.

¹⁷⁴ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 287.

¹⁷⁵ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 287.

¹⁷⁶ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 288.

Christ's act of benefaction is beyond the ability of the beneficiaries to reciprocate, Harrison concludes, "Christ however, [takes] no such precaution" from the philosophers.¹⁷⁷

In the next major section of Harrison's survey of Paul's language of grace, namely, 'Paul and Human beneficence,' he notes,

Paul's most extended discussion of beneficence—the Jerusalem collection—still awaits in-depth coverage against the backdrop of the honorific inscriptions. This is a curious oversight given the substantial overlap in benefaction language and motifs between Paul's treatment of the Jerusalem collection and the honorific inscriptions.¹⁷⁸

Harrison contends that there is little surprise among Paul's auditors on his use of benefaction terminology from the honorific inscriptions as he writes about the Jerusalem collection. Unlike the Hellenistic world where beneficiaries try to curry favor from local benefactors by honoring them, benefaction activities in the Christian community are driven by their "common experience of divine grace" to care for one another, especially the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁹ By weaving together the benefaction terminologies of χάρις, κοινωνία, and διακονία, Harrison contends that Paul redefines Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction for his audience.¹⁸⁰

In the Letter to Philemon Harrison further observes that Paul redefines traditional patron-client relationship of the Hellenistic world. The letter explains the kind of relationship that binds together Paul, Philemon, Onesimus and the Christian community that meets in the house of Philemon. On account of the web of relationships and obligations they share with one another,

¹⁷⁷ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 225.

¹⁷⁸ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 291.

¹⁷⁹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 343.

¹⁸⁰ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 343.

Paul emphasizes more than anything their brotherhood in Christ. Harrison concludes that it is very unclear to Paul how this web of relationship, obligation and “dynamic reciprocity between them in the context of first-century slavery” will be worked out.¹⁸¹ Therefore, Paul in Harrison’s view, cautiously affirms “traditional reciprocity conventions while providing a glimpse for us of their social transformation in Christ.”¹⁸² Nevertheless, as a freedman in Christ, Onesimus is returning to join the ranks of the local church that gathers in Philemon’s house as a brother and partner in the gospel (Phlm 11, 13, 16–17). Taken together, Harrison observes that Paul’s letter to Philemon, in fact, “could be viewed as reversing the direction of obligation between patrons and clients.”¹⁸³

Turning next to Paul’s apostolic relationship with the gentile Christians in Corinth, Harrison suggests that in 2 Corinthians 10–13, Paul defends his practice of benefaction conventions with the Corinthian Christians. He declares that he has proclaimed the gospel to the Corinthians by “waiving his right to any reciprocation of expense.”¹⁸⁴ By appealing to benefaction terminology, Paul portrays himself as a parent and benefactor to the Corinthians, who gladly spends (δαπανήσω) and is spent (ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι) for their souls (2 Cor 12:15a).

The ethos of reciprocity is an integral part of benefaction relationships in antiquity, both in the divine-human and human-human relationships. According to Harrison, the language of commensurability (ἄξιτος, κατάξιτος) and reciprocation (ἀμείβειν, ἀμοιβή, ἀντί) usually

¹⁸¹ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 329.

¹⁸² Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 328–329.

¹⁸³ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 329.

¹⁸⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 333.

accompany the concept of χάρις.¹⁸⁵ But Paul rarely uses them, and the occasions where reciprocity terminology appear in his writings, he redefines it for his audience.¹⁸⁶ Rather “Paul chooses the language of abundance (πλοῦτος, περισσεύειν, ὑπερβάλλειν and their cognates) to accompany χάρις” in his letters. Therefore, he emphasizes “the abundance of God’s grace against the obligation of reciprocity.”¹⁸⁷ The reason Paul completely avoids using Greco-Roman terminologies of reciprocation that accompanies χάρις in his writings, according to Harrison, is because God, the Chief Benefactor, “operates on the basis of an overflowing grace over and against the obligation of reciprocity.”¹⁸⁸ In effect, therefore, the relationship among believers is based on their non-reciprocal relationship with God and it does not include the obligation of reciprocity.

Conclusion

The work of Harrison remains a well-researched analysis on the conventions of the benefaction motif in the Greco-Roman world. First, he shows how the background of the Greco-Roman world is the basis of Paul’s notion of grace. Second, he demonstrates the extent that Judaism has been influenced by Greco-Roman benefaction conventions. Third, he convincingly provides an analysis of how Paul appeals to the term χάρις in his letters. In divine-human relationship, God,

¹⁸⁵ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 348.

¹⁸⁶ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 348.

¹⁸⁷ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 348. In all intents and purposes, God’s benevolence towards humanity is based on free grace. It neither depends on human merit nor expects human reciprocation. For humanity, Harrison observes, “is incapable of reciprocating God’s infinite generosity (Rom 11:35; 1 Cor 4:7).” See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 285.

¹⁸⁸ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 348.

the Chief Benefactor, has granted an overflowing sea of grace to humanity through Jesus Christ. And in human-human benefaction, the community of believers' practice of benefaction is based on their experience of God's benefaction. As such, for example, the Letter to Philemon will draw from the common experience of divine grace in persuading Philemon to welcome back Onesimus as a believer and not as a slave. Fourth, Harrison takes the position that Paul overturns the Greco-Roman ethos of reciprocity that is an integral aspect of benefaction convention in the letters he writes to his gentile Christians.

1.3. Evaluation of Harrison and Proposed Approach

We have noted that Harrison's work is a significant study of Paul's use of Greco-Roman benefaction language in his letters. His analysis of Paul's letters drawing on the language of grace from the Greco-Roman world is comprehensive; and it illuminates, on a social level, how the context of Paul's audience influences Paul's message of the gospel. In other words, our review has shown that Harrison demonstrates how the cultural value of benefaction conventions in the Greco-Roman world was integral to the logic of Paul's argument.

On the strength of his analysis, Harrison concludes that Paul criticizes and upends the ethos of reciprocity, which is an essential aspect of the Greco-Roman language of benefaction, for his gentile audience. Yet how does Paul's argument in his letters, as Harrison analyzes it, retain an aspect of benefaction convention without the role the ethos of reciprocity plays in benefaction language? In other words, is it possible to have a system of giving and receiving gifts, namely, benefaction without some sort of reciprocity? From the very beginning of Greco-Roman culture, the feeling is that if a person or a god has done a good deed toward you during your time of need you ought as a sign of gratitude to repay that person or god with the highest

honor befitting the good deed granted to you.¹⁸⁹ Thus the relationship of benefaction and reciprocity that exists between a benefactor and a beneficiary is at the heart of Greco-Roman society.¹⁹⁰ This relationship is sustained by an ethos of reciprocity because the gift makes the beneficiary indebted and obligated towards the benefactor whether the benefactor realizes it or not.¹⁹¹

On this note, we shall propose in the following chapters on the basis of our interpretation of the Letter to the Galatians that Paul's appeal to Greco-Roman benefaction conventions is more complex than suggesting that he overturns the ethos of reciprocity for his gentile audience. The Letter to the Galatians seems to indicate that Paul expects his auditors to practice reciprocity, although perhaps not exactly as the Greco-Roman world understands reciprocity.

As a result, it seems that leaving out, for a comprehensive analysis, the Letter to the Galatians, perhaps, leaves Harrison with very little choice but to conclude that Paul overturns the Greco-Roman ethos of reciprocity for his auditors. For the Letter to the Galatians reveals that by appealing to his own experience (Gal 1:15–16), the experience of the Galatians (Gal 3:4–5), and the example of Abraham (Gal 3:18), Paul couches his argument in the web of relationships that

¹⁸⁹ Martin Percival Charlesworth, "Some Observation of Ruler-Cult Especially in Rome," *HTR* 1(1935) 9.

¹⁹⁰ Stephen Charles Mott, "The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence," in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation. Festschrift for Merrill Tenney* (ed. Gerald, F. Hawthorne, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 60.

¹⁹¹ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.24.4. Ingratitude damages social cohesion and it is a socially disapproved behavior. On this note, Cicero in *Pro Plancio* admits that the power to recognize one's obligation towards a benefactor is essentially human, while to ignore one's indebtedness, namely, reciprocal obligation towards a benefactor, violates our humanity. See Cicero, *Planc.* 81. Harrison's analysis of the Greco-Roman literature shows that benefaction includes the need for one to reciprocate the favors received. See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 40–43, 50–53, 75–77, 179–183.

undergird Greco-Roman benefaction conventions and the system of reciprocity. And he proposes for the Galatian Christians a form of reciprocation that is founded on their relationship with God.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that Harrison left out of his analysis an important and critical letter of Paul, namely, the Letter to the Galatians. For after the Letter to the Thessalonians, where Paul introduces the language of grace only in the opening (1 Thess 1:1) and closing of the letter (1 Thess 5:28), Galatians is the first letter where Paul mentions χάρις not only in the opening (Gal 1:3) and closing (Gal 6:18) of the letter, but also in the body of it (Gal 1:6; 2:9; 3:18; 5:4). Therefore, to understand Paul's interaction, on a social level with Greco-Roman benefaction conventions, one must begin from the Letter to the Galatians. Such a fresh look at what provoked benefaction language, especially in the body of the Letter to the Galatians, is called for. How does benefaction language support Paul's argument in Galatians?

With this in mind, in the following chapters, we shall analyze the Letter to the Galatians for how Paul appeals to Greco-Roman language of benefaction in presenting his gospel message to the gentile Christians of Galatia. In chapter two we shall analyze the letter for benefaction language in the divine-human relationship. Next in chapter three, we shall also analyze the letter for benefaction language in human-human relationship. Finally, in chapter four, we shall discuss how Paul appeals to Greco-Roman benefaction language to draw a contrast between his gospel message and that of his Jewish Christian opponents.

Conclusion

Scholars have engaged the language of grace in Paul's letters with far-reaching assumptions on the purpose it serves in Paul's overall argument. To insist on the theological meaning of the term is not an error in judgment. After all, Paul's letters do offer his auditors a platform to deepen their faith in God, to attain an appreciation of Paul's role as the harbinger of God's message of

salvation for humankind, and, finally to embrace its invitation to a new way of life in the world that reflects their ongoing relationship with God and other believers. It is for this reason that most commentaries on the language of grace in Paul's letters, such as the commentaries we have reviewed, understandably focus on highlighting the theological aspect of Paul's message. Nevertheless, to focus just on the theological meaning of Paul's appeal to grace alone impedes their effort to discuss the broader meaning this term invokes in Paul's letters.

James R. Harrison has expanded the debate on the meaning of grace in Paul's letters by focusing not only just on the theological aspect of the term, but also on its social meaning in the context of Paul's gentile audience. His insightful work places Paul's letters within the broader Greco-Roman ideology of benefaction. On the basis of Harrison's work, we see a strong influence of the Greco-Roman system of giving and receiving benefaction, a commonplace value for Paul's auditors, in Paul's letters. Even before Greco-Roman benefaction motifs began to influence Christian beliefs through the writings of Paul, it already had made a significant inroad in Judaism of the first-century CE, as Harrison's extended discussion of the benefaction motif in Judaism shows.

To leave out the Letter to the Galatians for detailed analysis, as we have indicated, affects the conclusion that Harrison draws from his research. Galatians is a critical letter on how one should understand Paul's initial appeal to the Greco-Roman language of benefaction beyond the opening and closing of his letters. Therefore, Paul's preliminary appeal to the Greco-Roman language of benefaction beyond the prescript and the postscript of his letters demands a critical consideration of the Letter to the Galatians.

CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN DIVINE-HUMAN BENEFACTION

Introduction

The argument of the Letter to the Galatians is an invitation to Paul's auditors, on account of the gospel Paul proclaimed to them, to take a particular course of action, namely, to embrace his message about the intimate bond of friendship between God and themselves as believers. Paul's persuasive strategy, therefore, is in large part an appeal to their experience of God's benefaction in divine-human relationship when he proclaimed the gospel to them (Gal 3:1–5), which also is the basis of their experience of benefaction in human-human relationship. We shall focus here only on Paul's appeal to their experience in divine-human relationship and how the cultural context of the Galatians, namely, the Greco-Roman world supports Paul's arguments. He seems, as I will show, to describe divine-human relationship using the conventions of the relationship of benefaction from the Greco-Roman world. By appealing to the benefaction system of the Greco-Roman world, Paul outlines his understanding of the gospel of faith in Christ without the obligation to observe the Law.

We shall show how the benefaction system of the Greco-Roman world is the background of Paul's portrait of God. The surest proof of the divinity of a deity in Greco-Roman religions is the experience of the favor of a deity by a suppliant. In turn, the suppliant reciprocates the divine favor received either in the form of votive sacrifice, thanksgiving, or a combination of both. Seen in this way, the suppliant depends on the power of the deity to grant favor, while the deity relies

on the act of gratitude of the suppliant for a recognition of the deity's famed place in the pantheon of Greco-Roman religions. In other words, the deities of the Greco-Roman world retain popular devotion among the people is because the divine favors they granted are reciprocated by their devotees.¹ This understanding of benefaction of a deity in the Greco-Roman world provides a significant background for Paul's argument in Galatians on God's benefaction. We shall draw examples from the Greco-Roman world to support our proposal on how Paul's appeal to the Greco-Roman language of benefaction works.

Our investigation will show that Paul draws from the Greco-Roman language of benefaction in discussing his own experience of God and Jesus Christ (Gal 1:15; 2:9), the experience of Abraham (Gal 3:18), and finally the Galatians' experience of God, Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit (Gal 1:6; 3:1–5). Paul draws from these experiences to support his use of the language of benefaction. We have already discussed in the Introduction that χάρις in Greco-Roman relationship of benefaction is the favor that a benefactor grants to a beneficiary; and also, it is whatever a beneficiary does in gratitude for the favor received. On this note, we shall often use the term “favor” to translate the Greek word χάρις, rather than the more common translation “grace.”

Accordingly, we shall argue that the gentile Christians of Galatia would have recognized that just as benefaction conventions in their social context are institutionalized and maintained in the practice of reciprocity, so too Paul calls their attention to the importance of reciprocity in their experience of God's gratuitous gift of divine favor. The examples that we shall draw from the Greco-Roman world will serve to support our claim that Paul uses the conventions of

¹ Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986) 54.

benefaction in Galatians. Also, these examples will illuminate that just as the relationships of benefaction in the Greco-Roman world demand reciprocation, so too Paul expects the gentile Christians of Galatia to practice reciprocity in their relationship with God. In other words, Paul expects them to show gratitude for the gratuitous gift of God's favor that has been granted to them. We shall show that the invitation "to walk by the spirit" (Gal 5:16), their experience of freedom (Gal 2:4; 5:1), and their fidelity/faithfulness/loyalty to Christ underscore the need for reciprocation of the favor they have received in their relationship with God. By using the terms *χάρις* (favor) and *πίστις* (faith, trust or loyalty) in the argument of Galatians, Paul uses the basic terms usually associated with the conventions of benefaction from the Greco-Roman world of his gentile audience.

2.1. Experience of Divine *χάρις* in Divine-Human Benefaction

The logic of Paul's argument on divine favor in Galatians is supported by the appeal to his own experience, Abraham's experience, and the experience of the Galatian Christians. These experiences lend credence to Paul's use of the language of benefaction in divine-human relationship. On the one hand, both the calls of Paul, and the Galatians; and then the faith of Abraham identify God as the initiator of the relationship of benefaction that drives Paul's argument in Galatians. On the other hand, the responses of Paul, the Galatians, and Abraham to the gift of God are indicative of their loyalty to God's offer of divine favor and relationship. We shall see that this point of view underscores the logic of Paul's argument in Galatians.

2.1.1. Experience of Paul

Paul's own experience and the larger Jewish tradition are the two sources of his relationship with God and Jesus Christ; they informed his convictions about God's relationship with humanity;² and they are pivotal to his understanding of God's relationship of benefaction with humanity. The experience that Paul had of God and Jesus Christ has changed significantly his religious convictions and outlook (Gal 1:1). An essential aspect of Paul's religious convictions and outlook is that through the death of Christ, God has put in place a period of divine favor. Paul experiences this outpouring of divine favor in his encounter with God who revealed Jesus Christ to him. We shall proceed to analyze how Paul's experience of God and Jesus Christ support his language of divine favor in Galatians. We shall show that Paul's calling and his vision of Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus are essential features of his appeal to the language of benefaction in Galatians.

First, Paul states that his current religious experience is made possible by God, who sets him apart and calls him out of divine favor (Gal 1:15; see Jer 1:5). Paul's experience of his calling is the backdrop against which he understands God's outpouring of divine favor through Christ. On this note, Paul identifies his own calling and his experience of God and Jesus Christ as an act of divine favor (Gal 1:15: καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, see Gal 2:9). Paul recognizes the gratuitous action of God in his life, which includes God's plan for him, God setting him apart, and God calling him by God's χάρις.³ Differently phrased, Paul vividly describes his

² Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008) 60.

³ Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 106.

experience of divine favor (χάρις) as based on God's good pleasure (εὐδοκέω), appointment (ἀφορίζω), and calling (καλέω). Paul is convinced that the transition into proclaiming the faith he once persecuted is an act of divine benefaction (Gal 1:23–24). The gospel Paul proclaims (Gal 1:11: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν) comes through the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12: δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), who is the manifestation of God's favor (Gal 4:4–5). Based on Paul's scheme of thought, the dative of means with a possessive genitive in both Galatians 1:6 (ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ), and Galatians 1:15 (διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ) shows that God and Jesus Christ are the sources of divine favor. Taken together, therefore, Paul's commissioning is an act of divine favor; and he is entrusted with the gospel of God's gift of divine favor through Christ. It is, in fact, the message of divine benefaction which Paul receives in his calling that he proclaims to the Gentile nations (Gal 2:9; Rom 1:1, 5; 15:15; 1 Cor 3:10), and he is defending it against attacks from his Jewish Christian opponents.

We are fortunate to have at our disposal a wealth of commentaries on the theological meaning of the divine favor granted to Paul in his apostolic ministry, most of which we have laid out in chapter one.⁴ Paul's calling brings him into closer intimacy with God, an intimacy that has tremendously changed his belief about God's relationship with the world. Paul does not think that his experience of intimate relationship with God involves a sudden conversion from Judaism's God to a different God, the God of Jesus Christ. Moreover, his description of his former life in Judaism (Gal 1–13–14) does not mean that he has ceased to be a Jew. What Paul is saying, in fact, is that his calling and his vision of Jesus Christ has radically affected his religious

⁴ See A. B. du Toit's instructive comment on the grace character of Paul's call. A. B. du Toit, "Encountering Grace: Towards Understanding the Essence of Paul's Damascus Experience," *Neot* 1(1996)71–87; Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 277–278.

practices and perception about God's relationship with the world.⁵ The same God who has made an irrevocable promise to Abraham (Gal 3:18), which has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:24–26) and in the outpouring of the Spirit (Gal 4:6), has called him to preach the message of divine favor to the Gentiles. What Paul has laid out in this letter, therefore, is the gospel of God's gift of divine favor to humankind through Christ's self-gift on the cross.

In the context of Paul's experience of being called by God and having a vision of Jesus Christ, the crucifixion of Christ stands out in Paul's understanding of God's relationship with humanity. God reveals the death of Christ and Christ's glorification to Paul and entrusts him with the responsibility of proclaiming it (Gal 1:11–12). It is a vision of Jesus Christ who has given himself up to death so that the promise of God might reach all, Jews and Gentiles alike (Gal 2:20). From Paul's point of view, this experience is so powerful that he expresses faith in Jesus' crucifixion (Gal 2:20) and he is unwilling to add the observance of the law into his current relationship with God.⁶ For his present experience of the world has been altered by Christ self-gift on the cross, Christ's crucifixion (Gal 6:14; see Gal 1:4). By being crucified with Christ and by dying to the world, Paul is confident that the present age has lost its vicious grip on him; he now belongs to Christ and experiences an intimate relationship with God (see Rom 6:11), who lavishes upon him divine boon. With this in mind, Paul chooses to boast in the cross of Christ by means of which God's boon has been gratuitously given to him (see Gal 2:20; 6:14). The term to boast appears in several places in Paul's letters (Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Cor 10:17; Phil 3:3:

⁵ For a detailed interpretation of Paul's calling and the experience of the revelation of Jesus Christ, see Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul*, 43–49.

⁶ See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context. The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2004) 56.

καυχάομαι). In all the places the term appears, Paul wishes to eliminate the human tendency to take credit for the experience of the relationship of benefaction between God and humankind. Rather Paul chooses to boast in what Christ has accomplished for humanity (Gal 1:4). For through the cross of Christ humanity enjoys lasting favor in their relationship with God. We shall, in a moment, discuss the role the death of Christ plays in humanity's relationship with God. But it is important at this point to keep in mind that Paul understands Christ's role in divine-human relationship of benefaction as the reason to boast.

An outcome of Paul's experience of being called by God, having a vision of Jesus Christ, and being bonded in an intimate relationship with God, is Paul's self-identification as a servant of Christ (Gal 1:10: Χριστοῦ δοῦλος). Furthermore, he states that he has the mark of Christ in his body (Gal 6:17: ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι μου βαστάζω). Dunn summarizes the modern views on what it means for Paul to have the mark of Christ in his body.⁷ However, Bruce's interpretation of Galatians 6:17 is instructive, and it is the view that we shall follow in this work. Paul's branding or tattooing confirms that he belongs to Christ. In contrast to the mark of circumcision, Paul asserts that he has the marks (στίγματα) "which he has acquired as the direct consequence of his service for Jesus. These proclaim whose he is and whom he serves."⁸ His service for the sake of the Gospel of Christ has put him in harm's way; he has come so close to death on several occasions; and he has the scars to show for it (2 Cor 11:25). A similar story

⁷ See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 346–347. J. Louis Martyn discerns an apparent paradox in Paul's self-identification as a "slave of Christ." See Martyn, *Galatians*, 140–141. Nevertheless, I suggest that interpreting this metaphor from the backdrop of Paul's language of divine favor in Galatians brings to the fore the intended meaning of Paul's self-identification as a "slave of Christ," a meaning that will perhaps be obvious to the Gentile Christians in Galatia.

⁸ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 276.

on receiving a scar for the service that one renders toward another person is recounted by the Jewish historian Josephus about Antipater, the father of Herod, who serves Caesar with valor during the war. Josephus notes that Antipater has in his body the scars of war to show for his service to Caesar.⁹ But when Antipater was accused of disloyalty to Caesar, he strips himself of his clothes, exposing his numerous scars (τραύματα) as evidence of his loyalty to Caesar.¹⁰ Like Antipater, Paul understands his marks (στίγματα) as a sign of his loyalty to Christ. Therefore, Paul's "slave of Christ" identity has meaning within the conventions of the relationship of benefaction in the Greco-Roman world. It is the mark of his commitment to the favor that he now enjoys with God through Christ. Also, Paul's marks (στίγματα) represent his faithfulness and royalty for the gift of Christ's death.

In the context of Galatians, what message does Paul wish to put across to his auditors as he identifies himself as a slave of Christ with a scar to show for it? How will the Gentile Christians in Galatia understand Paul self-identification as a "slave of Christ"? In fact, "slave of Christ" is one of the names that Paul assigns to every Christian including himself (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 7:22; Phil 1:1). The Galatians know too well that a slave owes an absolute loyalty to a master; and a slave owes the master unalloyed faithfulness and obligation. The slave's outlook towards life often is shaped by the master. Also, the Galatians know that to be a slave of a noble household comes with a certain degree of prestige. Indeed, the term "slave of Christ," as Meeks observes, might not sound odd to the ears of the Gentile Christians in Galatia because the people of the ancient world are "accustomed to thinking of "slaves of Caesar" as sometimes exercising

⁹ Josephus, *Bel. jud.* 1.193–194.

¹⁰ Josephus, *Bel. jud.* 1.197.

enormous power and even enjoying extraordinary, though reflected, honor.”¹¹ Furthermore, Harrison explains that “in the first century AD, many talented members of the Caesar’s household—regardless of their freedman or servile status—acquired significant career opportunities in the emperor’s personal staff, the Roman civil service, and the imperial estates.”¹²

In Galatians, Paul does not really elaborate on his “slave of Christ” identity.

Nevertheless, in the context of the argument of the letter, it underscores Paul’s commitment and fidelity to Christ who died for him; it bespeaks Paul’s obligation to Christ and to no other, not even the Mosaic Law. Taken together, it is the relationship he now enjoys in the household of God through Christ that so enriches him that he now considers as unattractive any other means of

¹¹ Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origin of Christian Morality. The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 169; Gräbe, “Paul’s Assertion of Obedience,” 355.

¹² Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 235. P. R. C Weaver provides one of the most detailed discussions on the *Familia Caesaris*. The group he calls “*vicariani*” within the *Familia Caesaris* is “higher in legal and occupational status.” The *vicariani* occupy administrative positions, mostly in the area of finance. See P. R. C Weaver, *Familia Caesaris. A Social Study of the Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 212, 218–219. Epictetus provides an example of how a slave in the emperor’s household could easily acquire reputation. He tells a story about one Epaphroditus who owns a cobbler. He accuses the cobbler of being useless to him. Eventually, the cobbler is bought into the household of Caesar and he becomes a cobbler to Caesar. Epictetus says that on account of the cobbler’s new status in the household of Caesar, “you should have seen how Epaphroditus honored him. How is my good Felicio, I pray you? He used to say.” See Epictetus. *Diss.* 1.19.19–21 (Oldfather, LCL). Another example worth keeping in mind is this statement in a papyrus: “you should know that Herminos has gone off to Rome and become a freedman of Caesar so he can get official posts (γίνωσ(κε) οὐ[ν] ὅτι Ἑρμῖνος ἀπῆλθεν εἰς Ῥώμ[ην] καὶ ἀπελεύθερος ἐγένετ[ο] Καίσαρος ἵνα ὀπίκια λάβ[ῃ].” See *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 3312 quoted in Paul Weaver, “P. Oxy. 3312 and Joining the Household of Caesar,” *ZPE* 149(2004) 196. On Herminos decision, Paul Weaver remarks, “Herminos appears to accept that, to get a post (*officium*) in the imperial service, he has to belong to the household of the emperor, the *familia Caesaris*, as a slave or freedman.” See Weaver, “P. Oxy. 3312 and Joining the Household of Caesar,” 196. For further nuance on the slave status of Herminos in the *familia Caesaris*, see G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978* (vol. 3, Australia: Macquarie University, 1983) 8–9.

trying to gain access to God.¹³ Does Paul’s “slave of Christ” identity represent his commitment to his relationship with God and Jesus Christ? As a “slave of Christ” Paul has enjoyed divine favor and an intimate relationship with God. In return, therefore, Paul is committed to his experience of divine benefaction through his ministry of preaching the gospel of Christ. For Paul’s commitment to the ministry of preaching the gospel of Christ is his mark of gratitude. Will the gentile Christians of Galatia understand Paul’s self-identification as a “slave of Christ” to mean his commitment to God’s gift of divine favor through Christ?

The gentile Christians of Galatia will understand how Paul’s self-identity as a “slave of Christ” is linked with language of mutual loyalty in patron-client relationship. God sends Jesus Christ to give his life for all, and Jesus Christ obediently dies for humanity. Becoming, therefore, the origin of God’s outpouring of divine favor to humankind. In a return of gratitude, Paul pledges fidelity to Christ “because loyalty is a mutual attitude in patron-client relationship.”¹⁴ In other words, Paul’s privilege of enjoying God’s favor has been made possible by Christ, then, Paul responds to Christ’s loyalty with the loyalty of his own, namely, faith in Christ and service as a “slave of Christ.” Christ faithfully died for all and in response, humanity ought to demonstrate fidelity to Christ. Paul’s “slave of Christ” identity reinforces his appeal to the language of benefaction with a reciprocal undertone. In other words, Christ accepts to die for humanity, then believers ought to respond to Christ’s obedience unto death with the obedience of

¹³ Rightly so, Paul’s “only loyalty is to the gospel of Christ as originally preached in Galatia, the gospel of God’s grace in Christ, which would remain true and in force even if he or an angel from heaven were now also preaching that conditional, counterfeit gospel of the new preachers.” See de Boer, *Galatians*, 65–66.

¹⁴ Peter Lampe, “Paul, Patrons, and Clients,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003) 506.

their own.¹⁵ By invoking his own experience, Paul teaches the Galatians that embracing their relationship with God requires from them an obligation to fidelity. On his part, he has chosen to be faithful to Christ, and no one should, therefore, make any more trouble for him (Gal 6:17). For his experience is a testament to the fact that he has found freedom through loyalty and obedience to Christ alone.¹⁶

2.1.2. Experience of Abraham

In Galatians, Paul strengthens and emboldens the validity of his own experience of divine favor by appealing to the experience of Abraham. The figure of Abraham, therefore, becomes a bulwark of Paul's argument on the experience of the relationship of benefaction between God and humanity, and on how believers should respond to their experience of divine favor. We shall proceed to analyze how Paul appeals to the experience of Abraham in his argument on divine favor which includes God's promise to Abraham.

Paul appeals to the experience of Abraham and his household in Galatians 3:6–14, 15–18 and 4:21–31.¹⁷ The section of Galatians 3:6–14 situates the faith of the Gentiles within Abraham's trusting experience of God's benefaction (Gal 3:6–8; see Gen 15:6). Is Paul's appeal

¹⁵ Lampe, "Paul, Patrons, and Clients," 506.

¹⁶ Matera, *Galatians*, 48.

¹⁷ I am following the excellent analysis of Thomas H. Tobin that proves very helpful. See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context*, 126–130; idem, "What Shall We Say That Abraham Found? The Controversy behind Romans 4," *HTR* 4(1995) 438. Also, G. Walter Hansen has done an important study on the figure of Abraham in Galatians. G. Walter Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians. Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSupp. 29, Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1989). Also, Debbie Hunn's recent article on the role of Abraham in Galatians contributes to our understanding of Gal 3:6–9. See Debbie Hunn, "Galatians 3:6–9: Abraham's Fatherhood and Paul's Conclusions," *CBQ* 78(2016) 500–514.

to the experience of Abraham a reinforcement of what he had previously preached to the Galatians about Abraham? Or is Paul's appeal to Abraham's experience meant to neutralize the argument of his Jewish Christian opponents, who in their preaching might have appealed to Abraham's experience? Why is the appeal to the experience of Abraham so important to Paul's argument on divine favor? To answer these and several other questions on the experience of Abraham in Galatians, one must keep in mind that Paul wishes to argue that Abraham enjoys a relationship of benefaction with God prior to his circumcision and long before the giving of the Law. The Law is given 430 years after God has made the promise to Abraham (Gal 3:17; see Gen 15). The relationship between God and Abraham remains valid for believers even after the giving of the Mosaic Law. Moreover, Paul appeals to the experience of Abraham to argue that God grants the promised inheritance to Abraham on the basis of faith and not through the observance of the law (Gal 3:18; see Rom 4:16).

For what purpose does Paul appeal to the experience of Abraham in the argument of Galatians? The statement that the promise of God which the Galatian Christians enjoy was given to Abraham as a *favor* is integral to Paul's appeal to the example of Abraham (Gal 3:18: τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός, emphasis added). By appealing to the experience of Abraham, Paul justifies his argument that the promise made to Abraham is based entirely on God's favor, whose effects have reached the Galatians Christians through Christ. By using the perfect tense of χαρίζομαι, Paul argues that the divine favor granted to Abraham in the past has a present and an ongoing effect. God's promise of divine favor to Abraham, which includes the gentile nations strengthens Paul's argument that God already has set in place the means for right relationship with humanity through Abraham. Accordingly, it has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:14, 16, 22) with the result that Jews and Gentiles alike are children of God through Christ

(Gal 3:26–29). On this note, the appeal to the experience of Abraham serves to support Paul’s use of the language of benefaction in divine-human relationship.

In what is obviously a complex argument from Scripture, Paul links Abraham’s relationship with God through faith with the Gentiles’ experience of God’s gratuitous promised inheritance through faith in Jesus Christ’s gift of himself on the cross. “Thus Paul is able to set the promise and its fulfillment in Christ over against the Mosaic Law.”¹⁸ Paul accomplishes this by clearly stating in Galatians 3:14 “that in Christ Jesus [ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ] the blessing of Abraham [ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ] might come upon the Gentiles [τὰ ἔθνη], that we might receive the promise [τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν] of the Spirit through faith [διὰ τῆς πίστεως].”¹⁹ A crucial point in Paul’s argument is that the blessing that God has granted to Abraham includes the Gentiles.²⁰ The gift of the Spirit, which we shall shortly examine, shows that through Christ the promise of God to Abraham has been granted (Gal 3:14, for the promise of the Spirit, see Isaiah 44:3; Ezek 36:26–27; 37:14) to all, Jews and Gentiles alike.²¹ In other words, in Galatians, God

¹⁸ Pheme Perkins, *Abraham’s Divided Children. Galatians and the Politics of Faith* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International Press, 2001) 67. Jan Lambrecht expresses discontent for the logic of Paul’s argument. See Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 272–273.

¹⁹ M. A. Kruger adds, “the Law of Moses did not exist at the time that God established the covenant with Abraham. It was no condition for receiving the promise. The two factors which existed at the time were the promise and Abraham’s faith. Through faith he received the promise. The Law of Moses could not replace faith as the means of receiving the promise” See M. A. Kruger, “Law and Promise in Galatians,” *Neot* 2(1992) 316.

²⁰ Modern scholars have puzzled over the meaning of the “us” in Gal 3:13–14. For the various interpretative conclusions arrived by scholars, see Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 138, 143; Perkins, *Abraham’s Divided Children*, 68. In this work, we propose that the “us” is anyone—Jew and Gentile alike who approaches the relationship with God on the basis of faith, and trust just as Abraham.

²¹ Sam K. Williams rightly observes, “Paul is talking about the promised Spirit, the Spirit which had been promised in the past and had now been poured out upon believers.” See Sam K. Williams, “Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul’s Reading of Scripture,” *JBL* 4(1988) 712. There are opposing

gives the Spirit to believers through Christ (Gal 3:14; 4:6); and Christ is the promised offspring of Abraham. Therefore, “the reception of the Spirit must be seen as the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.”²²

The blessing of Abraham has reached the Gentiles through Jesus Christ because in the Letter to the Galatians, Paul intentionally has linked Abraham’s offspring with Christ (Gal 3:15–18). Paul connects his appeal to the experience of Abraham with both Christ’s death and the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:15–18). By appealing to what Paul claims to be a common legal practice in the Greco-Roman world (Gal 3:15), he then suggests that God’s promised benefaction to Abraham remains valid. Paul wants the Galatians to know that the favor God promises to Abraham on account of Abraham’s fidelity to God is irrevocable and has not been supplanted by the Mosaic Law. In fact, God is reliable and will neither annul nor replace the promises which already have been made to Abraham, and to Abraham’s offspring through whom it reaches the Gentiles (Gal 3:16–18). For Paul, God’s promise to Abraham includes his offspring; the offspring of Abraham is Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16); gentile Christians in Galatia belong to Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26–29); therefore, gentile Christians in Galatia are heirs to the promise (Gal 3:19),

opinions on the content of the promise of God to Abraham. Few examples will suffice. Ernest De Witt Burton suggests that the promise of God is the “inheritance” (3:18), and the content is messianic salvation. See Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921) 185. Also, Hans Dieter Betz notes that the promise includes offspring, land and the inclusion of offspring to which Paul pays no attention (see Betz’s interpretation of 3:16). Moreover, Betz’s interpretation of 3:18 demonstrates that “inheritance includes all the benefits of God’s work of salvation.” See Betz, *Galatians*, 156–159; Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 279; Bruce, “The Spirit in the Letter to the Galatians,” 40.

²² Sze-Kar Wan, “Abraham and the Promise of the Spirit: Galatians and the Hellenistic-Jewish Mysticism of Philo,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Paper 1995* (ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995) 8.

which God has granted to them through the outpouring of the Spirit (Gal 4:6). By making this argument, Paul insists that the Mosaic Law, which is ratified 430 years later, plays no role in Abraham's experience of divine favor and will not also play any role in God's relationship of benefaction with the gentile Christians in Galatia.²³

By appealing to the household of Abraham in Galatians 4:21–31, Paul continues to use Abraham's experience of divine favor to support his position on God's benevolent relationship with the Galatians through Christ without the obligation to observe the Law.²⁴ Although the allegorical interpretation leaves behind a strange picture of Abraham's household, yet Paul's goal, as Thomas H. Tobin rightly observes, "is to affirm the status of the gentile believers of Galatia and to argue against any demand that they be circumcised and observe the Mosaic Law."²⁵ The status of gentile Christians of Galatia is based on their faith in Christ's death on the cross, which has sealed their relationship with God. On this note, Paul vehemently rejects the argument of his Jewish Christian opponents that the gentile Christians of Galatia should both have faith in Christ and observe the Mosaic Law.²⁶

²³ M. A. Kruger adds, "God's covenant of grace in which [God has] given the promise to those who believe, [is] a functioning reality during the period [before the law is given]. It is thus senseless after four hundred and thirty years to regard the law or part of it, as essential to receiving the promise. This would have meant that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could not have received it." See Kruger, "Law and Promise in Galatians," 317; Tobin S. J. "What Shall We Say That Abraham Found?" 440; Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, 34.

²⁴ For the discussion of the difficult allegorical argument of Paul in this passage, see Betz, *Galatians*, 238–252.

²⁵ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context*, 129.

²⁶ Tobin, "What Shall We Say That Abraham Found?" 441.

What Paul did with the figure of Abraham and Abraham's household in Galatians might have perplexed and troubled some Jewish Christians, leaving them completely puzzled. For Paul seems to conclude that Jews are not the true children of Abraham (Gal 3:28–29; 4:28–31); and he also seems to identify the Mosaic Law as “a yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1). Be that as it may, Paul is adamant that Abraham's relationship with God is built on faith and trust in God's promise and not on the observance of the law. For God has granted divine favor to Abraham “through promise, which Abraham accepted through faith (see Rom 4:1–12)”²⁷ God's promise, as Paul presents it in Galatians 3:14 is fulfilled in Christ Jesus, who has given himself up to death (Gal 2:19–21); and the outpouring of the Spirit through faith is the fulfillment of divine favor to the gentile Christians in Galatia. Paul wants the Galatians to know that from start to finish, both in Abraham's experience of benefaction and in their own experience, it is God's initiative and gratuitous gift that has ennobled their life of faith. God has always planned, from the moment God entered into relationship with Abraham, to bring all nations under the banner of a single relationship of benefaction.²⁸ Therefore, their membership in God's household is a fulfillment of God's plan and as a result of their relationship of benefaction with God. Paul's use of the experience of Abraham shows that without faith in Jesus Christ, which leads to the reception of the Spirit, one cannot be a child of Abraham or an heir to the promised inheritance.

2.1.3. Experience of the Gentile Christians of Galatia

Next, we shall proceed to analyze how the experience of Paul and the figure of Abraham support his description of the experience of the gentile Christians of Galatia against the backdrop of his

²⁷ Kruger, “Law and Promise in Galatians,” 317.

²⁸ For insightful analysis, see Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 287.

appeal to the Greco-Roman language of divine favor. Knowing the significance his own experience of God and the role his vision of the crucified Christ play in his relationship with God, Paul then rebukes the Galatians for not taking seriously their own experience of God and Jesus Christ (Gal 3:1–5). Like Abraham and himself, Paul wants the gentile Christians of Galatia to take very seriously their experience of being called by God (Gal 1:6), and being witnesses to a public portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and being changed by the experience (Gal 3:1).

It is critical to note that in Galatians 1:6–7, Paul introduces the *crux argumentum* of the letter, namely, (1) the apparent departure of the Galatian Christians from God’s gift of divine favor into which they have been called through his message,²⁹ and (2) the disapproval of the message of his Jewish Christian opponents as lacking in God’s favor.³⁰ Immediately after the opening section of the letter, Paul expresses astonishment that the Galatian Christians are quickly deserting their calling to participate in God’s gift of divine favor (Gal 1:6: θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπο τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ). Whether it is in terms of the means by which the Galatian Christians experience God’s favor, or whether it is the state into which God’s favor has brought them (Gal 3:1–5), Paul wants them to recognize the gratuitous gift of divine favor in their lives.³¹ Their seeming departure from Paul’s gospel message is, in fact, a desertion from God’s favor since what Paul preaches is exactly what he had experienced

²⁹ Hans Dieter Betz notes, “the Galatian maneuvers are still in progress. By writing his letter Paul hopes to be able to still influence and perhaps reverse the decision of the Galatians.” Betz, *Galatians*, 47.

³⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 44–45.

³¹ See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 41.

in his own calling and in the revelation of Jesus Christ, namely, the essence of divine χάρις (Gal 1:12, 15). Therefore, Paul is concerned that the Galatians are on the verge of departure from the experience of their calling into God's favor. The phrase ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ confirms the Galatian Christians' present state of life in the experience of divine boon. It attests to the divine favor, whose effective expression is in the self-gift of Christ for believers (Gal 2:20).³² As a result, the Galatian Christians have become God's children (Gal 3:26; Gal 4:5) and heir to God's promise (Gal 3:29; Gal 4:7).

Already we have analyzed both Paul's own experience of being called by God's favor (Gal 1:15) and Abraham's experience of being a recipient of divine favor in his relationship with God (Gal 3:18). In the same vein, Paul notes that the Galatians too are called by God's favor (Gal 1:6).³³ Therefore, Paul's logic in Galatians is driven by the conviction that God's outreach of gratuitous favor to the Galatian Christians supersedes their effort to please God by taking up the observance of the law. Overall, for both Paul and the Galatians, God is the "moving source of and force in salvation, and Christ is the main expression and facilitator" of God's favor.³⁴

³² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 41; Betz, *Galatians*, 48. Richard N. Longenecker says "the preposition ἐν with the dative χάριτι highlights the means by which the Galatians were first brought to God—i.e., by God's unmerited benevolence." It shows that both in Gal 1:6 and 1:15, Paul uses God and Christ interchangeably as the architect of humanity's experience of divine favor. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 15.

³³ Brad Eastman notes, "to be called ἐν χάριτι is to enter a state where one experiences God's favour. To follow "another gospel" is to leave the "sphere of God's favour. 1:6 reflects not only Paul's understanding of the whole of Christian existence as an experience of divine favour, but also his understanding that believers would not enjoy that experience were it not for God's call. Being called by God implies dependence on God for salvation." See Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 81–82.

³⁴ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 41; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 15. Hans Dieter Betz agrees that "in grace of Christ" is "a definition of the situation before God enjoyed by those who [are] called." See Betz, *Galatians*, 48. J. Louis Martyn further adds that the phrase "the one who calls" "functions as a

In Galatians 3:1–5, Paul’s angry outburst towards the Galatians is that they have not taken very seriously their own experience of being called by God. And they have become indifferent to the awe-inspiring message of Christ’s crucifixion, which Paul proclaimed to them, and their consequent reception of the Spirit. Paul’s outburst is a critique of their slow comprehension (Gal 3:1: ἀνόητος) of God’s works in their lives beginning with Paul’s ministry (Gal 3:5: ὁ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις)³⁵ and leading up to their faith in Christ and the gift of the Spirit. With a series of interrogatives (vv 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Paul wishes to bring them to admit that their experience of God and Jesus Christ has happened without the obligation to observe the Law (Gal 3:5). Longenecker notes that Paul “is convinced that if they would but recall their own experience of having received God’s Spirit” when he proclaimed the gospel to them, “then no further argument from him would be necessary and no enticement from [Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents] would be possible.”³⁶ For Paul knows that the proclamation of the Christ’s event was so powerful and vivid to their eyes that they should not fail to recognize its enduring significance in their relationship with God.³⁷

name for God (Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8; 1 Thess 2:12; 5:24; Rom 9:12).” God calls and God equally offers grace to the Galatians. Through grace “God elects to call into being something that [is] not there before.” See Martyn, *Galatians*, 108–109.

³⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 130; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 99–100; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 151; de Boer, *Galatians*, 170; Matera, *Galatians*, 111. Contra J. Louis Martyn who suggest that the Galatians are lacking in wisdom. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 282.

³⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 101. Hans Dieter Betz suggests that in Paul’s appeal to the experience of the Galatians, “the undeniable evidence is the gift of the Spirit, which the Galatians themselves have experienced.” See Betz, *Galatians*, 130; de Boer, *Galatians*, 184; Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 290.

³⁷ James D. G. Dunn rightly observes that Paul is so convinced of the central message of his gospel, namely, “God’s grace through Christ” that he, i.e. Paul wonders “how is it that those who have experienced God’s grace, drawing them to himself in the way it did (3:2–5), can now disregard that call

The rhetorical style of Galatians 3:1–5 with its interrogatives shares similarities with the *Discourses of Epictetus*. Epictetus, who “wrote only a generation or two after Paul,”³⁸ insists through a series of interrogations on humanity’s recognition of divine favor, just as Paul had earlier encouraged the Galatians to do. In one of his *Discourses*, Epictetus makes the case for gratitude for God’s benefaction towards humanity. Like Paul, in Epictetus’ series of interrogations, he is determined to know from his auditors the reason behind their indifference and lack of gratitude to God, who is the Giver, and the Creator; who also has given to humankind senses and reason. Epictetus discusses the importance of the divine-human relationship on account of divine favor. He suggests that the act of reciprocity for divine favor includes obeisance and thanksgiving (προσκυνήσας καὶ εὐχαριστήσας).³⁹ Indeed, Epictetus admonishes, “we should be giving thanks to God for those things for which we ought to give [God] thanks (καὶ οὕτως ἂν ἠὲ εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἐφ’ οἷς δεῖ εὐχαριστεῖν).”⁴⁰ I have discussed Paul’s experience of divine favor, his expression of gratitude, and that he uses his experience to persuade the Galatians to do the same. Likewise, Epictetus invokes his experience of God’s favor

and succumb to teaching which, however persuasive on one level, [is] so much at odds with the experience?” See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 275.

³⁸ Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in Context*, 92. On the relationship between early Christian literature and the works of Epictetus, see Jackson Hershbell, “The Stoicism of Epictetus: Twentieth Century Perspective,” in *ANRW II*. 36.3: 2160–2161

³⁹ Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.1.103–105.

⁴⁰ Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.4.18 (Oldfather, LCL).

to persuade his auditors to acts of gratitude. He expresses his gratitude for his existence and the divine favors he enjoys.⁴¹

The logic of Paul's appeal to the experience of the gentile Christians of Galatia in Galatians 3:1–5 has a counterpart in Galatians 4:8–11. Perhaps, on the one hand, Paul thinks that through repeated appeals to their experience, the Galatians will be persuaded to remain in his message of divine favor. On the other hand, Paul hopes that his appeal to their experience will bring them to reject the message of his Jewish Christian opponents on human effort to earn God's favor. Just as divine initiative underscores their experience of God's favor in the gift of the Spirit in Galatians 3:1–5, so also God's initiative has brought them into the scope of God's knowledge in Galatians 4:8–11. For they have been known by God without any obligation to observe the Law (Gal 4:9). Being called by God (Gal 1:6) and being known by God (Gal 4:9) are the essential features of the Galatians' experience of divine relationship. Wishing to revert to the period of slavery under the elemental forces (Gal 4:9–10) undermines in Paul's view the present order in which faith in Christ has earned them God's favor. We shall analyze the elemental forces in detail in chapter four. For the present, what is important is that Paul counsels the Galatians not to compromise their relationship of benefaction with God. Most importantly, by identifying and insisting on the poverty of the elemental forces of this world, Paul contrasts their

⁴¹ Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.10.16. Elsewhere, Epictetus speaks on been grateful to [God], “what language is adequate to praise [God] or bring [God] home to our minds as [he] deserve? Why, if we had sense, ought we to be doing anything else, publicly and privately, than hymning and praising the Deity, and rehearsing His benefits?” See Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.16.15–16 (Oldfather, LCL).

weak influence with the riches of God's favor. Therefore, "life under such a power, life under the Law, [is] impoverishment in comparison with the riches of [God's] grace."⁴²

Just as in Galatians 3:1 Paul seeks to know who has tricked the Galatians out (τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν) of the gospel of God's favor he previously preached to them, so also in Galatians 5:7 he repeats his desires to know who is standing in their way (τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν) of following the truth about God's χάρις that he proclaimed to them.⁴³ There is no reason to suggest here that there are two different groups preaching the gospel of the observance of the law to the Galatians. Rather, it is one and the same Jewish Christian opponents of Paul, who are peaching that the observance of the law goes with faith in Christ. Paul is horrified that the Galatian Christians' wholehearted response and commitment to God's favor, a response that Paul identifies with the commitment and dedication of an athlete, is under threat from other Christian missionaries. He says, "you are running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth" (Gal 5:7; NRSV, see Gal 2:2)? The progress of the Galatian Christians in their relationship with God has been impeded by the preaching of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents. Suffice it to state here that Paul identifies the Christian life of fidelity/faithfulness to God with the metaphor of the concentration and self-discipline of an athlete.⁴⁴ Already in Galatians 1:6, Paul has argued that God called the Galatians into a relationship of benefaction and offered them the Spirit as a sign of God's χάρις in Christ. On account of this, he claims that the preaching of his Jewish Christian opponents

⁴² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 226.

⁴³ See comment by Martyn, *Galatians*, 474.

⁴⁴ See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 273.

cannot be from God (Gal 5:8: ἡ πεισμονὴ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς),⁴⁵ who already has called the Galatians (Gal 1:6), and offered them divine favor (Gal 3:1–5) that has made them heirs of the promised inheritance (Gal 4:29).

In Galatians 5:13a, Paul states that the reason God has called the Galatians is for freedom. Also, in Galatians 5:13a, Paul identifies the desires of the flesh as the opposition to freedom. Previously in Galatians 5:1, submission to “the yoke of slavery”, that is, the observance of the law is the opposition to freedom (see Gal 2:4). In both Galatians 5:13a and 5:1 Paul is addressing the Galatian Christians. The exhortation that begins in Galatians 5:1, which deals with responsible obligation to God’s gift of the Spirit, includes Galatians 5:13a. Moreover, just as Paul stands his ground in defense of his experience of freedom in Christ (Gal 2:4), he encourages the Galatians to do the same on the basis of their experience, to stand firm against the teaching of his Jewish Christian opponents (Gal 5:1). What does freedom stand for in the context of Paul’s language of divine favor?

In Galatians, freedom stands for a way of life that is characterized by and rooted in God’s gift of divine favor.⁴⁶ In this experience of freedom, an impartial God has granted divine favor to

⁴⁵ Richard N. Longenecker suggests, “Paul, however, [believes] their work and influence to be without divine backing and totally of their own making.” See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 230; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 274; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 234. Hans Dieter Betz thinks that with reference to the *argon motif* in other Paul’s letters, that Paul is probable suggesting that it is Satan who hinders them from following the truth. This is a hardly a convincing approach. See Betz, *Galatians*, 264.

⁴⁶ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 112. Richard N. Longenecker adds, “Freedom for Paul results from both what Christ effects in our lives (instrumentality) and our being brought into personal union with Christ (locality).” See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 51. In the same vein, Hans Dieter Betz says that freedom “is the basic concept underlying Paul’s argument throughout the letter.” As “the central theological concept, [its] sums up the Christians’ situation before God as well as in the world.” see Betz, *Galatians*, 255. James D. G. Dunn calls freedom “the leitmotiv of the letter.” Freedom underscores “the depth of feeling which so strongly motivated the writing, and which moves disturbingly beneath the

all through Christ, so that all who are in Christ are free and are united as one, sharing in God's promised inheritance (Gal 3:26–29). Betz remarks are pertinent here, “Christian freedom is the result of Christ's act of having liberated those who believe in him,” which is the “direction of the life of the Christian.”⁴⁷ Then how will Paul's auditors understand his message of freedom through Christ against the backdrop of his use of the Greco-Roman language of benefaction?

The experience of freedom is rooted in the social consciousness of the citizens of the Greco-Roman world since the principate of emperor Augustus. Though living a couple of generations removed from the reign of Augustus, Paul's Galatian auditors know that Augustus' fame in the history of the ancient world is on account of his accomplishments. For Augustus is remembered down to their generation and, perhaps, beyond because his reign is characterized by lasting peace and freedom in the entire empire. Augustus' reign sets up a standard for leadership, particularly, as a benefactor. For by divine will, Augustus is “filled with *arete* for the benefit of humanity (εις εὐεργεσίαν ἀνθρώ[πων] ἐπλή||ρωσεν ἀρετῆς).”⁴⁸ Besides, in a letter to the Provincial Assembly from the proconsul of Asia, Paulus Fabius Maximus observes that the reign of Augustus inaugurates “the beginning of life and real living (ἀρχὴν τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ζωῆς γεγονέναι), ... fraught with good fortune for everyone (τῆς πᾶσιν γενομένης εὐτυχοῦς).”⁴⁹ Even

surface throughout, bursts through once again in the forcefulness of the appeal. See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 260.

⁴⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 256.

⁴⁸ Danker, *Benefactor*, 217, Victor Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus & Tiberius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949) 75; A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel. Grand Thematic Narratives in Galatians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016) 179–180.

⁴⁹ Danker, *Benefactor*, 216, Ehrenberg and Jones, *Documents*, 74.

though the age of Augustus is immortalized and celebrated in various ways in the social world of Paul's auditors; and even though Augustus is reckoned as an ideal leader and benefactor—yet, Paul's auditors in the eastern Mediterranean like the Galatians, are well conscious of being under Roman power.

The people of the eastern Mediterranean have experienced relative peace and freedom under Roman power with the propaganda of *Pax Romana*. Perhaps, this experience will influence the response of the Galatians to Paul's argument that they should avoid the enslaving message of his Jewish Christian opponents and to embrace the freedom in Christ which surpasses their experience of freedom under Roman rule. Their experience of liberation from the present evil age (Gal 1:4; 4:1–10), from the observance of the law (Gal 2:19; 3:19, 25; 4:5), from oppression and discrimination (Gal 3:26–28), and from superstitious rituals (Gal 4:8–10) is ennobled by the gift of the Spirit that leads and directs their lives (Gal 5:16, 25). Betz notes that the freedom that has resulted from the Galatians' relationship with God is under threat from the "yoke of the Torah" (Gal 5:1) and the corruption of the flesh (Gal 5:13).⁵⁰ It seems clear that in the context of Galatians, Paul places the Mosaic Law, the elemental spirits of the cosmos, and the desires of the flesh in the same category of powers that are against the Galatians' experience of freedom in Christ. It is the freedom in Christ that has become possible through God's gift of divine favor and their faith in Christ.

Freedom from the observance of the law does not mean freedom to a way of life without a moral compass to regulate the behavior of believers in divine-human relationship of benefaction. The way of life of believers in divine-human relationship of benefaction is

⁵⁰ Betz, "Spirit, Freedom, and Law," 157; see Barrett, *Freedom & Obligation*, 62.

characterized by selflessness and freedom. It involves the freedom to love (ἀγάπη), to be selflessly generous to one another in the same manner that Christ selflessly has made God's favor available to every believer. In this case, the believer's experience of divine χάρις imposes an obligation,⁵¹ and invites one "to a new responsibility."⁵² In the context of the benefaction conventions of Paul's auditors, the language of obligation connotes reciprocity. Based on the social dynamics of slavery and freedom in the Greco-Roman world, which permeates the self-perception and consciousness of the people, it is common to accord the highest gratitude to one who provides a person with an experience of freedom. We cannot examine here the complex social reality of slavery and freedom in the Greco-Roman world. However, the experience of freedom from an enslaving situation ties the freed person, in a patron-client relationship, to the agent of manumission. This is because the agent of manumission has become a benefactor of the freed-person's experience of freedom. In antiquity, therefore, patron-client relationship is rooted in the experience of freedom, social or economic freedom to say the least.⁵³ Besides the experience of freedom through the favor of a benefactor in a patron-client relationship is the feeling of deference that engenders the act of reciprocation from the client. By and large, their experience of freedom requires that they make the effort to dedicate themselves to the demands of their relationship with God. Paul knows that liberty without responsibility or obligation is playing into the hands of his Jewish Christian opponents' critique of his gospel (Gal 2:17).

⁵¹ Barrett, *Freedom & Obligation*, 62.

⁵² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 287.

⁵³ J. Albert Harrill, "Paul and Slavery," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003) 580.

Conclusion

We have shown that Paul's experience of his calling (Gal 1:15), Abraham's experience of God's promise (Gal 3:18), and the Galatian Christians' experience of being called by God (Gal 1:6) are integral aspects of his persuasive argument in Galatians. We have argued that Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman language of *χάρις*, which his auditors would have easily recognized, in persuading them to accept his message. Paul's appeal to divine favor and his invitation to the Galatians to be grateful for the divine favor they have received betray Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction. Observe, for example, how Paul identifies himself as one who has faith in Christ from the time God called him and revealed Christ to him. This experience did not only affect his faith in Christ, it has led to his unalloyed loyalty to Christ, he is a "slave of Christ" (Gal 1:10). Like the freedmen of Caesar, Paul knows the privileged status of his servant or slave identity in Christ. He knows that it involves commitment and fidelity, which he unreservedly has embraced. His ardent defense of God's benefaction in Galatians as we have demonstrated indicates that his experience of God's *χάρις* through Christ is the central message he proclaims to the Galatians.

As an integral part of his argument in Galatians, Paul's appeal to Abraham's relationship with God lends credence to his use of Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction in Galatians. Seen through the lens of his appeal to the language of favor, Paul is convinced that Abraham's relationship with God is anchored by his faith and trust in God's promise (Gal 3:18; Gen 15:1–6) and not on the observance of the Mosaic Law. Therefore, Paul seems to argue that through faith and trust all nations will enjoy the divine favor that God promised to Abraham. And God has made this divine favor available to all through Christ, the true heir of Abraham. Then to be a child of Abraham and to be an heir to what God has promised through Abraham one must have faith in Christ and welcome the leadership of the Spirit of the "Son of God" into one's life.

On the basis of Paul's experience of the relationship of benefaction with God and Jesus Christ, which is strengthened by his appeal to the figure of Abraham, Paul then try to persuade the Gentile Christians of Galatia to embrace their present experience of divine favor in divine-human relationship. Then Paul hopes to dissuade them from the observance of the Mosaic Law as proclaimed by his Jewish Christian opponents. Therefore, he insists that just as God makes the Galatians the object of God's knowledge (Gal 4:8–11) by their calling (Gal 1:6), likewise God makes it possible for them to experience divine favor through Christ and to receive the Spirit (Gal 3:1–5). On the basis of their experience of divine favor in Christ and in the outpouring of the Spirit, they have been set free from the leadership of the Law, the elemental spirits of the world, and the desires of the flesh. It is a matter of fact that in the context of Paul's auditors, to the one who has given you an opportunity to experience freedom, you owe an obligation of gratitude. In the ancient world, most experiences of freedom in patron-client relationships are accompanied with a deep sense of gratitude.

2.2. Manifestations of Divine χάρις in Divine-Human Benefaction

We shall proceed to examine the manifestation of Paul's language of divine favor in the death of Christ that ends the enslaving reign of the forces of this present evil age (Gal 1:4; 4:8–10, 5:1, 13) and inaugurates a new age in the world (Gal 6:15). Also, we shall examine the gift of the Spirit against the backdrop of the manifestation of divine favor in divine-human relationship. In the other words, we shall propose that the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are the manifestations of God's χάρις in divine-human relationship as Paul proclaims it. Every detailed study of the Letter to the Galatians must explore Paul's view of the role of God in the gospel he preaches to the Galatians. In fact, to grasp Paul's portrait of God is vital to discerning comprehensively the message of Paul in Galatians.

The message of Paul in Galatians is described in the language of one's experience of God's favor using a series of Pauline substantive participles: God is the One who calls both Paul (Gal 1:15: ὁ ἀφορίσας με ... καὶ καλέσας) and the Galatians (Gal 1:6; 5:8: τοῦ καλέσαντος), God is the One who is at work in the ministry of both Paul and Peter (Gal 2:8: ὁ ἐνεργήσας), God is the One who supplies the Spirit (Gal 3:5: ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα) and works miracles (Gal 3:5: ὁ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν). Besides, God is the one who grants to Abraham the promise as a gift (Gal 18: κεχάρισται ὁ θεός). Paul also provides evidence of God's favor in sending Jesus Christ to die (Gal 4:4: ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ) and in the giving of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to believers (Gal 4:5: ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ).

Furthermore, on the basis of his own experience, Paul is adamant that God has inaugurated a new era, a time of a new beginning for humanity encased by the outpouring of God's favor through the event of Christ's life (Gal 1:4). As rightly noted by Raymond W. Pickett, "God has taken the initiative to provide the basis for a new relationship through the death of Christ."⁵⁴ For the Christ's event is an ultimate sign of God's favor which fulfills God's promises to Israel. For God is a reliable benefactor who has fulfilled the promise of a time for the outpouring of divine boon through Christ.⁵⁵ Both the death of Christ on the cross as Paul proclaims it and the gift of the Spirit as the Galatian Christians experience it are God's gifts to humanity in this unique era of extraordinary outpouring of divine favor. For it the will of God that the human family receives God's gift of divine favor through Jesus Christ and then, to

⁵⁴ Raymond W. Pickett, "The Death of Christ as Divine Patronage in Romans 5:1–11," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers* (ed., Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., SBL 32, Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1993) 729.

⁵⁵ deSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity," 52.

experience lasting divine favor through the Spirit (Gal 1:4; 4:4, see 1 Cor 2:7b). The death of Christ on the cross is the central message of Paul's preaching in order to highlight God's "pure grace, [by] putting forward Jesus Christ" as symptomatic of divine love towards humanity.⁵⁶

Several commentators on Galatians identify the redemptive work of Christ to have happened according to the will of God, as God intends it (Gal 1:4), but do not elaborate further on the meaning of this divine action and on how it underscores God's relationship with humanity.⁵⁷ An exception is James D. G. Dunn, who, in discussing the Letter to the Romans within his interpretation of Galatians, suggests that by allowing Jesus to die on the cross, God liberates humanity from the "present world of futility and decay (Rom 8:19–21)," to share in "the fullness of the liberty (Rom 8:17–23)" that Christ accomplishes by dying.⁵⁸ But indeed, what most commentators have yet to examine is how Paul's auditors might have perceived the role of God, who is the architect of this new beginning in divine-human relationship of benefaction. Did the Galatian Christians perceive God as the Chief Benefactor who is inaugurating a new era of liberty and gift of eternal salvation for humankind? One may observe that the characterization of God in Galatians is similar to the portraits of the gods and heroes of the Greco-Roman world, whose benefactions usher in a new beginning, a time of greater wellbeing for all. So, did the

⁵⁶ Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 216. Jan Lambrecht calls the death of Jesus Christ, "the great grace of God [that] is meant for all." See Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994) 306.

⁵⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 42–43; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 9; Martyn, *Galatians*, 91; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 76. On the contrary, Wayne Meeks examines the notion of God's will from a moral point of view. See Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality*, 84–85, 151–152.

⁵⁸ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 36–37.

gentile Christians of Galatia understand Paul's message of God's gift of divine favor within their own larger cultural conventions of benefaction?

The Gentile Christians of Galatia perhaps understood this new boon granted to them through the death of Christ as a non-contractual agreement. It is based entirely on divine initiative to helpless humanity. An important aspect of Paul's convictions is the inability of human effort to merit God's favor. For this reason, Paul firmly believes "that only God is capable of restoring the human condition."⁵⁹ By allowing Christ to die on the cross, God initiates the experience of divine favor for humanity. By pointing out, therefore, in the opening of the letter what has been accomplished for humanity as God has intended it (Gal 1:4: κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν), Paul reminds the Gentile Christians of Galatia of the Chief Benefactor of this new beginning whose benefits they are presently enjoying. Suffice it to say that divine interventions in human affairs to benefit humanity are commonplace in the Greco-Roman world. Paul's auditors in the provinces of the empire know and experience the benefaction of deities, together with the benefaction of human patrons, in their daily lives.

One of the many examples of benefaction by a Greco-Roman deity is the life-changing experience of Lucius, the main character in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, when he encountered Isis.⁶⁰ In this example of divine-human relationship, the goddess promises to be with Lucius to give him aid and solace. For Lucius' sake, the goddess declares "there is now dawning for you,

⁵⁹ Pickett, "The Death of Christ," 730.

⁶⁰ Frederick W. Danker notes, "Isis [is] in fact a deity revered for her sensitivity to human needs, respected for her insistence on uprightness and justice, and adored for all the beauty with which she [enriches] the life of mortals." See Danker, *Benefactor*, 178. Likewise, the deity Asclepius is noted for his sensitivity towards humankind. See Aelian, *Nat. an.* 8.12 (Scholfield, LCL).

through my providence, the day of salvation (*iam tibi providentia mea illucescit dies salutaris*).⁶¹ Providentially, during the annual festival honoring the goddess as the sailing season begins, Lucius is transformed from a beast back to his human form. Lucius' day of salvation arrives during the festival of *Navigium Isidis* that usually begins at Cenchreae, one of the ports of Corinth. Lucius' transformation has happened by the will and initiative of the goddess. Likewise, according to Paul, the deliverance of the Galatians from the present evil age is the initiative and plan of God. Just as Isis is the source of boon for Lucius, so also God is the benefactor of the Galatians' experience of divine favor.

At the annual festival of the goddess, many of her devotees gather to receive blessings and favor from the deity.⁶² Also, Lucius draws near to receive the goddess' promised benefits (*numinis promissa nobis accedunt beneficia*), the benefits that are his destiny and salvation (*fata salutemque*) as divinely promised (*divinae promissionis*) to him.⁶³ Besides, Mithras, the high priest of the cult of Isis, admits that Lucius is fortunate to be favored by the goddess' gift of divine favor (*te beatum, quem propitia voluntate numen augustum tantopere dignatur*).⁶⁴ On his part, Lucius identifies the goddess as "the holy and eternal saviour of the human race (*sancta et humani generis sospitatrix perpetua*), ever beneficent in helping mortals (*semper fovendis mortalibus munifica*)."⁶⁵ If one compares the experiences of Lucius with the goddess Isis and

⁶¹Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.5 (Hanson, LCL).

⁶² Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.9.

⁶³ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.12.

⁶⁴ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.22.

⁶⁵ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.25 (Hanson, LCL).

that of the Galatians with God, it seems clear that in these divine-human relationships, it is the deity's favorable disposition to the human recipient of favor that is being emphasized, supplying divine favor where human effort is inadequate or completely lacking. One obvious difference though between the divine favor granted by God to the Galatians and the favor of Isis to Lucius worth keeping in mind is the death of Christ as a unique display of God's favor and power.

Suffice it here to say that the self-gift of Christ on the cross (Gal 2:10: παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ; see Gal 1:4; 3:1b; 1 Tim 2:6) makes Paul's argument about God's benefaction different from the benefaction of Greco-Roman gods and goddesses like Isis. It is by dying on the cross that Jesus fulfills God's plan to redeem humanity and inaugurates the era of God's gift of divine favor (Gal 3:13a). God manifests the depth of divine favor to humanity through the gratuitous death of Christ on the cross. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul adds that humanity enjoys a bond of intimate union with God through the death of Christ (Rom 5:10–11; see Gal 4:5–7; 1 John 3:16). We shall shortly examine the role of the death of Christ on the cross in divine-human relationship.

Related to God's will that begins a new era of gracious outpouring of divine favor for humankind is Paul's reminder to the Galatians that they are the subject of God's knowledge. For they have been known by God (Gal 4:9b: μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ). In Galatians, to be known by God is to experience the gratuitous gift of divine favor through Christ. Let us keep in mind that Galatians 4:8–9 falls within a section dealing with the Galatians' experience of God (Gal 4:1–11), which we have discussed earlier in this chapter. The statement that the Galatian Christians are being known by God (Gal 4:8–9) has some interesting contrasts worth keeping in mind. Paul employs the contrasting formulae, “formerly (τότε)..., and now (νῦν);” also he uses the phrase, “on the one hand (μὲν)..., on the other hand (δέ);” and he contrasts, “having come to

know God (γνόντες θεόν)..., with having come to be known by God (γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ).”

Ultimately, Paul calls attention to what was previously true about the Galatians by contrasting it with their present experience as believers. Unlike their previous way of life, when they were ignorant of God, in their present state of life, they have come to know God (v 9a), or all the more, they have become the object of God’s knowledge (v 9b).⁶⁶ Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 8:3b, Paul writes about God’s knowledge of the believer (οὗτος ἐγνωσται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ). By using the adverb μᾶλλον, therefore, Paul intensifies with clarity the divine initiative that has made the Galatians’ current state of life possible. Their current state of life is a relationship of benefaction through the Christ’s event and the free gift of the Spirit. To this end, they have been adopted into the household of God with the rights of inheritance. On this note, Paul’s language of divine initiative in granting favor denies and rejects the tendency for the Galatian Christians “to think that the act of knowing begins with them;”⁶⁷ and the incentives to sustain the act of knowing God depend also on them.

In describing the Galatian Christians’ new found relationship with God, there is an intentionality in Paul’s decision to switch from οἶδα in Galatians 4:8 to γινώσκω in Galatians 4:9. In their wide range of meanings, both verbs stand for being closely acquainted with someone.⁶⁸ But perhaps, Paul switches to the verb γινώσκω in Galatians 4:9 to delineate the

⁶⁶ On the meaning of the syntax, see Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 202; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 180.

⁶⁷ Matera, *Galatians*, 152. Richard N. Longenecker suggest that the adverb μᾶλλον “transfers the emphasis from what has just been said to the superior significance of what is now being said, with the result that while still maintaining the reciprocal relation between the two statements [in v 9], the latter is given greater prominence.” See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 180.

⁶⁸ BDAG, 693–694, 199–201; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 202. John William Franzman adds, “it rather denotes a close acquaintance with something, a thoroughgoing understanding. See John

close acquaintance and the degree of familiarity between God and the Galatian Christians. Bultmann observes that γινώσκειν takes place in the interaction between a person with the environment. It involves “personal acquaintance and friendship with persons; it is the knowledge acquired through experience.”⁶⁹ In the context of Galatians, the benefits enjoyed by the community in their present state of life is made possible by their experience of acquaintance and familiarity with God. For in their present state of life, the “Galatian Christians [have] come to experience God in the intimacy of a family relationship.”⁷⁰ Becoming the subject of God’s knowledge (Gal 4:9b, Rom 8:29) and being called by God (Gal 1:6) are essential aspects of the divine favor that the Galatians now enjoy. Given the fact that God has known them (Gal 4:9b; 1 Cor 8:3b, Rom 8:29a), they have become adopted children (Gal 4:5–7, see Gal 3:26) with Jesus Christ the Firstborn Child (Gal 4:4; Rom 8:29c); and indeed, they belong to God’s household. This family imagery with which Paul defines God’s relationship with the believer undermines Greco-Roman patron-client relationship that generally characterizes the experience of benefaction in the ancient world. Rightly so, a bond has been established by God, and it includes everyone through Christ. Paul attributes this bond between God and believer to God’s initiative, it originates with God and it is sustained by God’s gift of divine favor, demanding only gratitude

William Franzmann, *The Early Development of the Concept of Charis* (Unpub. Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1972) 30.

⁶⁹ Bultmann, “γινώσκω, γινώσις, κτλ,” *TDNT*, I. 690.

⁷⁰ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 180. Brad Eastman is right, “the Galatians’ experience of God [is] that of a family relationship (cf 3:26 “sons of God”), a relationship made possible by God. In God’s “knowing” of the Galatians, [God makes] is possible for them to know him. Without the former, the latter could not have happened.” See Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in Paul’s Letters*, 86.

from believers like the Galatian Christians.⁷¹ Dunn is right to state “that any relation of acceptance by God is of divine initiative. It is a two-way relationship, of acknowledgment and obligation; but the personal knowing of God is made possible only by God’s knowing the person.”⁷²

Another aspect of Paul’s view of the role of God in Galatians to be discussed is God’s election that has placed the Galatian Christians in a position to experience divine favor on account of their oneness in Christ (Gal 3:28d). Their oneness with Christ places them in the same position as any other group of the human family to experience God’s favors (Gal 3:27–28). On this note, Paul makes an important claim about God’s manner of relating with those who have been brought under the canopy of the divine relationship of benefaction. Paul claims that God shows no partiality in dealing with humankind, Jew or Gentile alike (Gal 2:6; Rom 2:11; see Acts 10:34; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1 Pet 1:17). In the Pauline corpus, there are two occasions worth keeping in mind in which Paul calls attention to God’s impartiality.

First, in Galatians 2:6, Paul reminds his auditors of God’s impartiality in granting an equal measure of apostolic favor to Peter and also to himself.⁷³ Secondly, in Romans 2:11, Paul appeals to the principle of God’s impartiality to indicate that God judges equally the conduct of

⁷¹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 180.

⁷² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 225. In another place, Dunn says “human wisdom is inadequate to achieve [the] knowledge [of God] (1 Cor 1:21); to know God is to be known by him, a two-way relationship of acknowledgement and obligation (Gal 4:9). See Idem, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 47.

⁷³ Hans Dieter Betz concludes that it is “proper to render judgment upon the status of people, past or present, while applying the rule of God’s impartiality.” See Betz, *Galatians*, 95. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 54; Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles. Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 81.

both Jews and Gentiles. God is just and impartial, rewards the righteous and punishes the guilty (see Gal 6:7).⁷⁴ In other words, Paul introduces the principle of God's impartiality in his letters to call attention to how God relates with humankind either in choosing an apostle, in administering judgment or in granting divine favor. Consequently, there is no distinction in God's judgement for both Jews and Gentiles (Rom 2:11; Gal 6:7); there is also no distinction in God's choice of an apostle to proclaim the message of God's gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 2:6); and finally, there is no distinction in divine favor and it is freely given to all, Jews and Gentiles alike (Rom 3:22). Jouette M. Bassler suggests, "just as impartiality did not allow God to distinguish between Jew and Gentile in Judgement (Rom 2:9–11), now it does not allow a distinction in grace (Rom 3:22–24)."⁷⁵

For the same God who is an impartial judge of humankind also indiscriminately grants divine favor to all. Paul renders the Hebrew idiom דִּיּוֹן נֶשֶׁן (to lift the face)⁷⁶ into its Greek equivalent πρόσωπον λαμβάνω in Galatians 2:6. But in Romans 2:11, he uses the Greek noun προσωπολημψία . Then, in both Galatians 2:6 and Romans 2:11, the meaning "to show favor" is clearly intended. By employing the term πρόσωπον λαμβάνω , Paul invites the gentile Christians of Galatia to recall the scenario in their social location in which one who is in a position to grant

⁷⁴ For more details, see Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context*, 110–118; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 142–143; Jewett, *Romans*, 209–210; Jouette M. Bassler, "Luke and Paul on Impartiality," *Bib* 66(1985) 546–547; idem, "Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *NovT* 26(1984) 48–49.

⁷⁵ Bassler, "Luke and Paul on Impartiality," 548; idem, "Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans," 54–55.

⁷⁶ One such example is Deut 10:17: "for the Lord, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, accepts no bribes." (NRSV; see also 2 Kings 3:14; 2 Chr 19:7; Mal 1:8; Job 34:19; 42:8; Psalm 82:2; Wis 6:7; Sir 35:12–13).

favor is perhaps “surrounded by a group of competitive suppliants, [then], steps forward to lift the face of one, thus showing favor to that one.”⁷⁷ In this scenario, the suppliants who are less fortunate depart in disappointment and the loss of favor. In the case of God, however, Paul argues that everyone has an opportunity to receive God’s gift of divine favor and no one is left out of God’s gift of divine favor. On this note, Paul insists that God shows favor to everyone; and his role as an apostle, for instance, remains a testament of God’s impartiality (Gal 1:15; see 1 Cor 15:8–11). On the strength of Paul’s argument, the Galatians would have perceived the role of God as the patron that they can ultimately depend on for divine favor.

In the context of the argument of Galatians (whether in defending his apostolic office or, broadly speaking, while arguing in defense of the Galatians new found favor with God through the gospel he proclaimed to them), Paul denies that God uses different standards for Jews and Gentiles. Rather, he conveys the belief that God shows no partiality, and there is no favoritism in the bond of relationship of benefaction God establishes with humankind. As a matter of fact, everyone is treated equally before God because God’s sovereignty is over both Jews and Gentiles. In fact, Paul’s ministry to the gentile nations confirm the status of God as a universal Benefactor. Contextually, Paul’s auditors are no strangers to the knowledge of the impartiality of deities. Seneca is convinced that “God has given certain gifts to the whole human race, and from these no one is shut out (*Deus quoque quaedam munera universe humano generi dedit, a quibus excluditur nemo*).”⁷⁸ Moreover, Seneca provides a list of divine gifts to support the impartiality

⁷⁷ Martyn, *Galatians*, 199; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 118; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 303.

⁷⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 4.28.1–3 (Basore, LCL).

of the deity when he concludes that God “[offers] certain blessing to all.”⁷⁹ Just as the deities of the Greco-Roman world expect devotees to show gratitude for the favor received, likewise God’s gratuitous favors to humanity requires fidelity and loyalty from the recipients. Later in this chapter when we explore the motif of reciprocity in divine-human relationship of benefaction, we shall discuss how Paul articulates the obligation of believers to show gratitude to God.

Taking into account everything we have said so far, one may notice that Paul’s argument in Galatians reveals the apostle’s undiminished belief in Jewish monotheism, “God is One” (Gal 3:20; see 1 Cor 8:5–6; Rom 3:29–30). It is the same God at work in the life of the Galatian Christians that both Paul and his Jewish Christian opponents worship.⁸⁰ For Paul has not for a moment changed his beliefs about God; it is the same God of the people of Israel, the God he has been instructed to honor since his youth in reciting the classical prayer of Jewish monotheism, the *Shema*,⁸¹ that proclaims God’s oneness; and it is the *χάρις* of this same God that is presently at work in the world to put in place the current paradigm of divine favor for all.

The novelty that Paul both introduces and defends in Galatians is his conviction that a new age in divine-human relationship has dawned, a period of God’s free gift of divine favor through the Christ’s event. But Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents resist the new era of divine-human relationship, an era of gratuitous divine favor. Rather, the Jewish Christian opponents of

⁷⁹ Seneca, *Ben.* 4.28.3. Elsewhere, Seneca says that the gods distribute their benefits and blessings to nations and peoples with ‘unbroken uniformity’ because they possess “only the power of doing good.” See Seneca, *Ben.* 7.31.4 (Basore, LCL).

⁸⁰ Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentles*, 82.

⁸¹ “Hear, O Israel Yahweh Our God is one Yahweh” (Deut 6:4; see Mal 2:10). For more details see, Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul. Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 178–182.

Paul prefer to hold firmly to the era of human effort to win God's favor through the observance of the law. But Paul insists that the Law only brings about a curse to those who rely on its prescriptions (Gal 3:10), which has never really been successful. The Christ's event, namely, the death of Christ on the cross remains the prototype of the new era of God's benefaction in which God is ultimately responsible for. For Christ's death on the cross has made God's favor available to all; and the sending of the Spirit in the lives of believers brings to completion God's act of benefaction.⁸²

2.2.1. The Death of Christ

We shall now proceed to examine the meaning of the self-gift of Christ on the cross and the gift of the Spirit as Paul presents these aspects of the manifestation of divine favor in the Letter to the Galatians. Our analysis will propose that Paul sees the event of Christ's life and the gift of the Spirit as the manifestations of divine χάρις in God's relationship with humankind.⁸³ The *locus classicus* of Paul's argument in the Letter to the Galatians is that the observance of the law is no longer mandatory for those redeemed through the death of Christ on the cross (see Gal 2:16) and who consequently have received the Spirit, Jews and Gentiles alike.⁸⁴ The foreground of the

⁸² Hans Dieter Betz notes the link between the death of Christ and the sending of the Spirit in God's redeeming plan for humanity. God's will and decision leads to redemption for humanity (Gal 1:4); the sending of Jesus Christ (Gal 4:4), born of a woman, born under the law (Gal 4:4); Christ's death as a sign of divine benefaction for those called by faith (Gal 1:4; 2:19–21; 3:13; 4:5), and “finally as a separate act of God, the sending of the Spirit (Gal 4:6).” See Betz, “Spirit, Freedom, and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches,” *SEA* 39(1974) 151.

⁸³ Ben Witherington III notes, “the sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit [are] two parts of the purpose and salvific work of God who in both cases is the sender.” See Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 290.

⁸⁴ There is scarcely any consensus on the modern interpretation of the message of Paul in Galatians, yet scholars accept that the role of Christ vis-à-vis the observance of the Mosaic Law is central

story of Jesus Christ in Galatians begins with God's initiative to send Jesus Christ into the world for the benefit of humankind, in what is an extraordinary display of divine favor (Gal 4:4–5). Indeed, at the heart of Paul's portrait of Jesus Christ in Galatians is the claim that God gratuitously is involved in this transformative experience for humanity through the event of Christ's death.⁸⁵ For "the death of Christ provides a new perspective on who God is in relation to humanity."⁸⁶ This is the only gospel (Gal 1:6–9), "the singularity of which consists of the revelation of Jesus Christ as God's Son whose crucifixion inaugurates the new age."⁸⁷ This singular gospel results in an exceptional transformation for believers, who are granted a new identity in Christ (Gal 2:19–21; 3:26–29) and a new life in the Spirit (Gal 3:1–4; 5:16–25).⁸⁸ Toward the end of this chapter we shall examine how the gift of the Spirit validates God's action in this transforming experience of divine benefaction for believers.

What portrait of Jesus does Paul present in Galatians? When he initially proclaimed the gospel to the Galatian Christians does Paul's public portrait of Christ as crucified underscore God's outpouring of divine favor to the Galatian Christians (Gal 3:1–5)? To ask the question

to the message of Galatians. See Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "The Singularity of the Gospel. A Reading of Galatians," in *Pauline Theology* (vol 1, ed. Jouette M. Bassler, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 147.

⁸⁵ Douglas A. Campbell, "The Story of Jesus in Romans and Galatians," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul. A Critical Assessment* (ed. Bruce W. Longenecker, Louisville: Westminster, 2002) 119. David A. deSilva adds, "the death of Jesus on behalf of humankind thus becomes a "demonstration of God's righteousness," showing that God's generosity exceeds all expectations and upper limits and that God needs nothing from the sinner in order to acts in accordance with [God's] own generous character." See deSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity," 53–54.

⁸⁶ Pickett, "The Death of Christ," 734.

⁸⁷ Gaventa, "The Singularity of the Gospel," 149.

⁸⁸ Gaventa, "The Singularity of the Gospel," 149.

differently, does the portrayal of the crucifixion of Christ by Paul in Galatia clearly delineate the role of the death of Christ in God's relationship of benefaction with humanity? In what follows, I will show that Paul's portrait of the crucified Christ is evidence of God's unbounded and gratuitous gift of divine favor to humanity. I will show that Paul understands the death of Christ on the cross as the profound act of divine favor through Christ. I will further argue that Paul describes the death of Christ as an essential aspect of God's favor. Thus, the death of Christ is the means through which humanity has entered into an intimate and lasting relationship with God.

The self-gift of Christ on the cross is, in fact, the means by which the Galatian Christians have received God's gift of divine favor (Gal 2:20: παραδίδόναι ἑαυτοῦ, see Rom 4:25; 8:32). Paul recognizes his own experience of being called by divine favor (Gal 1:15) and receiving the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12). On the basis of his own experience, Paul acknowledges his fidelity to God's gift of divine favor (Gal 2:21a: οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ), so that he may gain the favor which God has granted to humanity through the death of Christ (Gal 2:21c: Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν). Based on Paul's scheme of thought in Galatians, the portrait of Christ's gratuitous death on the cross is integral to Paul's argument on divine-human benefaction. He draws from his own experience to show that the present Christian life is based on faith (Gal 2:20: ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ) in what Christ has done to earn divine favor for believers. For Paul, living in faith is a privilege and also a gratuitous gift of divine favor

through Christ.⁸⁹ Paul recognizes that his new identity is characterized by a different mode of relationship with God that does not include the observance of the law.⁹⁰

The present mode of relationship with God is a favor given to humanity as a gift through the death of Christ (Gal 2:21). On this note, relationship with God is no longer possible through the observance of the law, but only through Christ's self-gift on the cross (see Gal 2:21: εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν; Gal 5:4). For this reason, Paul is concerned that the teaching of his Jewish Christian opponents will undermine Christ's self-gift on the cross (Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν). Paul argues that Christ's death on the cross (Gal 2:20) is a gift (Gal 2:21, see Rom 5:15), a divine favor for the benefit of humankind. Needless to say, Paul's argument on divine-human benefaction is driven by his experience and conviction about what God has accomplished for humanity through Christ. In my opinion, therefore, the phrases ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2:20c), τοῦ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν (Gal 2:20d), τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2:21a), and Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν (Gal 2:21c) reveal that the language of benefaction is the backdrop against which Paul presents the argument of Galatians. How will the Galatian Christians understand the death of Christ as a divine δωρεά (Gal 2:21)?

To identify Galatians 2:21 simply as a refutation of a charge, as several modern scholars have suggested, does not explain in detail its significance to Paul's argument on God's gift of

⁸⁹ de Boer, *Galatians*, 163.

⁹⁰ Ernest De Witt Burton observes that Christ's death on the cross has set humanity free from the observance of the law by "bringing it to an end." See Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 136.

divine favor through Christ.⁹¹ Perhaps, beyond a mere refutation or denial of an accusation against Paul is in fact, Paul's own statement about the nature of God's relationship with humanity. This relationship is based on God's χάρις through Christ, and Christ's δωρεά on the cross; it is not based on the observance of the law (Gal 2:21; 5:4). Stating here the central message of his gospel prepares Paul for the argument of Galatians 3:1–5 on the Galatians' experience of divine favor, which we have earlier analyzed in this chapter. Also, Paul prepares for the argument that right relationship with God is exclusively through Christ with no obligation to observe the law. The excellent reading of J. Louis Martyn proves helpful: "here Paul provides the antinomy that will prove to be fundamental to the entire letter: God's making things right by Christ's cross rather than by the Law."⁹² We shall go into more details on Paul's view on the Mosaic Law in chapter four. In Paul's argument on God's gift of divine favor through Christ, the Galatian Christians will recognize the intended meaning of the term δωρεά (gift). In my opinion, they will recognize that Christ's death is a gift that results in the believer's experience of divine favor. Also, the Galatian Christians will understand that if they accept the message of Paul's Jewish opponents, then, Christ self-gift (δωρεά) on the cross will be of no benefit to them because they completely have fallen out of divine favor (Gal 5:2: Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει; see 5:4).

On account of his death, Christ has shattered the barrier that separates Jews from Gentiles and releases God's boon to both Jews and Gentiles alike. On this note, the singular act of Jesus'

⁹¹ Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 140; Betz, *Galatians*, 126; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 94; Martyn, *Galatians*, 259; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 146.

⁹² Martyn, *Galatians*, 260.

death has made the gentile Christians of Galatia partakers of God's benefits. For at a specific point in time—ὄτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου (Gal 4:4), denoting temporality—God sends the “Son of God” into the world.⁹³ In the immediate context, the fullness of time in Galatians 4:4 temporary corresponds to the “time fixed by the father” in Galatians 4:2. In Paul's scheme of thought both the phrases the “time fixed by the father” (Gal 4:2) and “when the fullness of time has come” (Gal 4:4) find their meaning in the coming of Christ, an act that signals the beginning of God's favor. Some scholars have claimed that Galatians 4:4–5 is an early Christian creedal formula.⁹⁴ Be that as it may, its earliest literary attestation is in fact, in Paul's letters. Paul's comment about a definitive point in time refers to an in-breaking of direct divine intervention at God's sovereign will and appointed time.⁹⁵ Appealing to Romans 5:6, we discern that Paul understands the fullness of time as “the culminating, eschatological time of God's intervention in Christ.”⁹⁶

By mentioning the beginning of God's intervention in human history, Paul wishes to call the attention of the Galatians to the very fact that a new era in God's relationship with the world has dawned. The time of human effort to please God by obedience to the prescriptions of the Law has passed (Gal 2:16c); the time of living under the enslaving powers of the present evil forces of nature also has ended (Gal 4:8; see 4:3b). Presently, it is the time for humanity's

⁹³ One should keep in mind that while the human agents of God's benevolent relationship with humanity are chosen and called from the world and entrusted with their ministry (Gal 1:6, 15; 2:8; 5:8), the divine agents—Jesus and the “Spirit of the Son of God” are sent into the world (Gal 4:4, 6).

⁹⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 166–167.

⁹⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 388–389.

⁹⁶ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 307; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 254–255.

experience of God's boon through Christ. Paul's allusion to a new beginning, namely, a change from the *status quo ante* that ends the perilous ordeal of humanity under the present evil age (Gal 1:4) recalls the era of emperor Augustus. emperor Augustus' policy is "to establish his legitimacy not only by restoring the social order, but also by demonstrating his own supremacy in it through the traditional modes of patronage and beneficence."⁹⁷ During the time under review, Augustus is recognized as the father of the happy life, "the divine saviour of the human race and as the author of peace."⁹⁸ In spite of the seeming similarities between what Jesus Christ accomplishes for humanity with the principate of emperor Augustus, Jesus Christ achieves divine favor for humanity by dying on the cross.

It seems obvious that the propaganda that follows the principate of emperor Augustus is known to both Paul and the Galatian Christians. Augustus is hailed as a significant and an important leader both in Rome and the provinces. His leadership inaugurates a period of abundance in the empire because Augustus was disposed to bring about tremendous changes in

⁹⁷ Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire, Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987) 149; See Pickett, "The Death of Christ," 738.

⁹⁸ Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (trans. Brian McNeil, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 296. A certain representative of the Roman Republic, Titus Quinctius Flamininus is hailed as *soter* and *euergetes* on account of his *arete* and *eunoia* among the Rhodians. "In Chalcis, Cos, Gytheum, Corinth, Scotussa in Thessaly and probably in Phocis" because of his victory over Philip V of Macedonia, the resumption of the Nemean Games, and the return of peace in the provinces he is hailed as a benefactor. See Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (vol. 1., Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984) 167. In gratitude, the Rhodians for instance, dedicate "to him the largest and most beautiful of the votive offerings in their city." See Plutarch, *Titus*, 16; Plutarch, *Lives X*; Livy, 34.41.1–4; Charlesworth, "Some Observations on Ruler-Cult Especially Rome," *HTR* 28(1935) 2. Also, during a period of peace and happy life in Palestine, speaking on behalf of the High Priest, and the elders, a certain attorney, Tertullus addresses the Roman governor "Your excellency because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost *gratitude*" (Acts 24:2–3; NRSV; emphasis added).

the lives of his subjects by ending a period of misery and calamitous civil war in the empire. Under his reign the empire witnessed a reign of deliberate and intentional benefaction that is aimed towards the wellbeing of all. In fact, the Augustan era of abundant benefaction is well known in the regions of Galatia, one of the places where he is honored. The evidence for the popularity of the Augustan era in the regions of Galatia is based on the discovery of all three sources of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* “on the walls of a temple of Rome and Augustus at Ancyra (Angora), the capital of Roman Galatia in Asia Minor. [And] nearly fifty fragments of another Latin copy which has been set up in Antioch, a Roman colony of Augustus in Pisidia, a division of the province of Galatia.”⁹⁹ With this in mind, we could in fact conclude that when the Galatians hear Paul speak about a new beginning with abundant benefaction by one who willingly grants it, they would have been reminded of the Augustan era of great boon willingly bestowed to all in the empire and immortalized in their region. The main difference between the Augustan era of benefaction and the divine gift of God through Christ is that Augustus restores peace, security and harmony in the empire and the world, while God willfully allows Christ to die so that humanity can be liberated from evil and be granted the favor of receiving the Spirit of the Son of God to guide and direct human life.

Jesus Christ is sent as a redeemer (Gal 4:5; see Gal 3:13: ἐξαγοράζω) to free humanity from the crushing experience under the elemental forces of the present age and law observance

⁹⁹ G. A. Harrer, “Res Gestae Divi Augusti,” *SP* 23(1926), 387; P. A. Brunt & J. M. Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) 1–2.

(Gal 3:13; 4:5).¹⁰⁰ For the redeeming work of Christ embraces both Jews and Gentiles. Paul invokes the portrait of Abraham against the exclusive prescription of the Mosaic Law.¹⁰¹ Rightly so, God has sent Jesus Christ “into the malignant orb in which all human beings have fallen prey to powers inimical to God and to themselves (Gal 4:5; see Phil 2:7).”¹⁰² The idea of God sending the “Son of God” has a deep theological meaning in Judaism. In Judaism, the “Son of God” is an honor given to king David and his successors on the throne of Israel’s kingship as confirmed by the oracle of Nathan in 2 Sam 7. In this passage, the divine sonship of the king carries the weight of a divine commitment and/or covenant. So, then, “out of this oracle there emerges the hope held by Israel in every season that there is a coming David who will right the wrong and establish a good governance.”¹⁰³ For God’s favor will be mediated to Israel through the Davidic king.

When Nathan’s oracle (2 Sam 7) is referred to in Psalms 89 and 132, the former adds that the Davidic king will recognize YHWH as “my father” (Pss 89:27) because YHWH has made him “firstborn” (Pss 89:28, see Gal 3:19; 4:4). Being identified as the “Son of God” during his enthronement (Pss 2:7), the king gets a coveted seat at God’s right hand and is assured of victory

¹⁰⁰ For thorough analysis of the relationship between Gal 3:13 and Gal 4:4–5, see Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ. The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 107–111.

¹⁰¹ Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13–14,” *NTS* 32(1986) 94–96.

¹⁰² Martyn, *Galatians*, 390.

¹⁰³ Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Louisville: John Knox, 1990) 257; Donald F. Murray, *Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension. Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5:17–7:29)* (JSOTSupp 264, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 211–226.

against his enemies (Pss 110:1). “The position is not only one of honor, but bespeaks the very close association of the king and the deity.”¹⁰⁴ Under God’s guidance, the “Son of God” is the channel through which God’s χάρις is present and experienced. As such, the “Son of God” discharges the entrusted responsibilities under the guidance and directives of the deity. As the “Son of God,” therefore, Christ undertakes the divine entrusted role by giving himself up to death (Gal 1:4; 2:20: παραδίδόναι ἑαυτοῦ) and hanging on a tree (Gal 3:13). Thus, Christ removes the curse of the Law by taking the curse upon himself (Gal 3:13).

Why did Paul associate the Mosaic Law with a curse? We shall go into more detail on Paul’s view of the Mosaic Law in chapter four. In the immediate context of Galatians 3:13, what is important to keep in mind is that Paul is concerned with how the blessings God has given to Abraham can reach both Jews and Gentiles. It is not, therefore, through the observance of the law, but through the death of the crucified Messiah.¹⁰⁵ By becoming a curse (Deut 27:26), the crucified Messiah redeems Israel from the crushing burden of law observance and their woeful effort to observe all the things written in the Book of the Law (Gal 5:3; 6:13). Paul combines the curse mentioned in Deuteronomy 27:26 with the one in Deuteronomy 21:23 on the basis of an

¹⁰⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God. Divine, Human and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge/UK: Eerdmans, 2008) 16; James Luther Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994) 351.

¹⁰⁵ On one hand, Paul is interested in outlining how by accepting death, Jesus Christ has granted Gentiles access to God’s grace without having to convert to Judaism and observe the Mosaic Law. On the other hand, Jews need not to be worried that they will fell in their obligation to observe the Law and experience all over again the painful curse of the Law. See Christopher D. Stanley, “‘Under a Curse:’ a Fresh Reading of Galatians 3:10–14,” *NTS* 36(1990) 506–507.

ancient Jewish hermeneutical principle.¹⁰⁶ To this end, Paul concludes that Christ has taken upon “himself the curse of Deuteronomy 21:23 and so [overcomes] for believers the curse of Deuteronomy 27:26.”¹⁰⁷ Christ’s messianic death makes it possible for Gentiles together with Jews to inherit the blessings of God. For Christ’s death has smashed completely the barrier wall that divides Jews and Gentiles and makes the flow of God’s favor accessible to both Jews and Gentiles alike (Gal 4:4–5).

I previously have pointed out that Paul makes God the Chief Benefactor in his argument in Galatians. The death of Christ becomes, in Paul’s view, a manifestation of God’s gift of divine favor for humanity’s wellbeing. Thus, in Christ’s self-gift on the cross (Gal 1:4; 2:20; see Rom 4:25; 8:32), divine favor is granted to humankind.¹⁰⁸ In describing the crucifixion of Christ, Paul uses the Greek expression that captures one’s disposition and commitment towards the wellbeing of others, namely, that Christ has given himself up (Gal 1:4; 2:20: παραδίδοναι ἑαυτοῦ) to death for humanity’s wellbeing. To give oneself up (παραδίδοναι ἑαυτοῦ) is an act of nobility undertaken for the benefit of a person or persons. Christ’s self-gift on the cross benefits humanity by becoming the singular act that earned humankind God’s favor. There are numerous accounts of noble acts of self-giving for the sake of others from Greco-Roman context of Paul’s auditors. Those who display such noble acts of self-giving receive honorable recognition from the

¹⁰⁶ A common exegetical principle known to the rabbis as *gezerah shawah* (equal ordinance) is used here by Paul. It involves a situation “where two texts share a common term in a way that each may throw light on the other.” See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 165; Tobin, “What Shall We Say That Abraham Found?” 439.

¹⁰⁷ Tobin, “What Shall We Say That Abraham Found?” 439; Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 286.

¹⁰⁸ Engberg-Pedersen, “Gift-Giving and Friendship,” 26.

community. We shall in a moment draw examples from the Greco-Roman world to support our proposal that *παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ* is an aspect of the conventions of benefaction, an act of favor for the wellbeing of others in a relationship of patronage.

In Galatians 1:4, Jesus dies for our sins, and also delivers us from the present evil age. In fact, in the introductory section of Galatians, Paul introduces the most important aspect of his gospel message, the death of Christ on the cross as an evidence of divine benefaction. We have already discussed Paul's understanding of God's will in the context of Galatians. Here we come to understand that the will of God is for Christ to die for the sins of humankind and to deliver the world from the present evil age. In the context of the Letter to the Galatians, sin is whatever stands in humanity's way of experiencing the full benefits of our relationship of benefaction with God. The present evil age rules the world, prevent humanity's access to God's benefits and thereby denies the human race an experience of God's benefaction. But by giving himself up on the cross, Christ sets us free from the cruelty and high-handedness of the powers of the present evil age. They are enemies of God and humanity, and they cause the human race to submit continuously to sin, eroding their relationship with God. Who are these enemies of God and humanity known as the present evil age (Gal 1:4)? We shall explore in chapter four Paul's description of the powers that stand against humanity's experience of God's favor. Suffice it to state here that in the context of the Letter to the Galatians, whatever power that stands in the way of humanity's relationship of benefaction with God fits the label of the present evil that rules this age.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Some scholars have read apocalyptic framework in this verse. See Matera, *Galatians*, 39; Martyn, *Galatians*, 90–91.

When the benefits or the favor God has given to humanity came under attack in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), Paul then laid down in Galatians 2:15–21 what God has accomplished for humanity through the death of Christ, the gospel of God’s relationship of benefaction with humanity through Christ. In Galatians 2:15–16 Paul outlines the agreements that the early Church, mostly Jewish Christians and perhaps including Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents, reached on the role of Christ as the agent of divine-human relationship. The agreement recognizes that finding favor before God is only possible through faith in Christ self-gift on the cross (Gal 2:16b) and no longer through the observance of the law (Gal 2:16a). Though Jewish Christians have the Law and Gentile Christians do not (Gal 2:15),¹¹⁰ yet both Jewish and Gentile Christians presently are united in search of God’s favor through faith in Christ.

Then in Galatians 2:17–21 Paul rehearses the essential beliefs of early Christianity, pointing out also areas of disagreement and dispute. We shall carefully analyze Paul’s statement on these disputed and controversial aspects of his understanding of God’s gift of divine favor through Christ. Galatians 2:17 is a convoluted and complicated verse that has been variously interpreted. It reads “but if in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not” (NRSV). Here in Galatians 2:17, Paul deals with the possibility that one could fall back into sin without the Mosaic Law as a moral compass, perhaps as his Jewish Christian opponents have claimed. When this becomes the case, does it mean that Paul’s gospel of God’s gift of divine favor through the event of Christ’s death without the observance of the Mosaic Law makes Christ a servant of sin and not a servant of

¹¹⁰ F. F. Bruce observes, “the status of believers of Jewish birth (like Paul, Peter and Barnabas) is different now from what [is use to be] when they lived they lived under the Law. At that time the Law constituted a barrier between them and Gentiles.” See Bruce, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 137.

God's gift of divine favor? How should the Galatian Christians live under God's favor without observance of the law? Shortly, we will shall go into detail to show how the role of the Spirit and the invitation to do good towards one another offer Paul a high moral ground to insist on faith in the death of Christ over the observance of the law.

In Galatians 2:18 Paul is adamant that Galatian Christians are living now in a relationship of benefaction with God through Christ's death. To end the relationship and return to living under the enslaving forces of the present evil age and the Mosaic Law would be an act of ingratitude towards God. Paul says, "but if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor" (Gal 2:18; NRSV). For Paul, his Jewish Christian opponents, the people from James, Peter, the Jews who joined Peter in Antioch, and even Barnabas (Gal 2:11–14) are turning into ingrates. As for Paul, through the death of Christ, he now lives intimately with God (Gal 2:19). His life has taken a Christ-centered dimension so that he might experience the fullness of God's favor. We have seen how Paul's experience is crucial in his understanding of God's gift of divine favor through Christ. While "dying to the Law" means to end one's relationship with the Law, then to be "crucified with Christ" means to have made the decision to enter into a sphere that is defined by one's relationship with Christ.¹¹¹ For Christians worried about not having the Mosaic Law as a moral compass and unsure of their ethical judgment without the Mosaic Law, Paul reminds them that accepting entrance into a relationship with Christ means that one has both died to the dictates of the Law and to one's ego

¹¹¹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91.

(Gal 2:19–20; 5:24).¹¹² In that case, one’s life is utterly lived under the relationship of benefaction with God through Christ.

We have identified earlier that Galatians 2:20–21 is an important feature in Paul’s appeal to the language of benefaction in Galatians. By affirming his current state of life (v 20), Paul describes what he now enjoys through the self-gift of Christ on the cross. It is, therefore, through the death of Christ that he has entered into an intimate bond with God in faith.¹¹³ It is on this note that Paul emphatically declares that his gospel of God’s gift of divine favor cannot be a nullification of God’s favor (v 21) because he consistently preaches the validity of Christ’s self-gift on the cross (v 20: παραδίδόναι ἑαυτοῦ).¹¹⁴ Rather, it is those proclaiming the message of observance of the law who are nullifying God’s favor and denying Christ self-gift on the cross its meaning and efficacy (Gal 2:21). As for Paul, before the Galatian Christians, he publicly proclaimed Christ with vivid demonstration as crucified (Gal 3:1: προαγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος). Paul’s public demonstration of Christ as crucified has a gripping effect on the Galatian Christians. Once again, Paul unwaveringly speaks about Christ’s death to his auditors, ruling out

¹¹² Richard N. Longenecker puts it right when he says, “so in identifying with Christ’s death, both the law and the human ego have ceased to be controlling factors for the direction of the Christian life. Instead, Paul insists, the focus of the believer’s attention is to be on the fact that “Christ lives in me.”” See. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92.

¹¹³ With Brad Eastman, we can say “God’s grace is active and realized through the death of Christ in a way that is not true of the law. For the self-sacrificing death of Christ is the supreme demonstration of God’s grace.” Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, 82–83; Raymond F. Surburg, “Pauline Charis. A Philological, Exegetical, and Dogmatic Study,” *CTM* 19(1958) 734.

¹¹⁴ Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 222.

completely any other means of entering into a relationship of benefaction with God, because Christ has given himself up to death on the cross (παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ).¹¹⁵

Like Paul, so also the author of the Letter to Titus describes the death of Christ to his audience as “our savior Jesus Christ giving himself up for us (2:14: ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν).” Additionally, the author of the Gospel of Luke tells his audience that the body of Christ will be given up for them (Luke 22:19: τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον; See Luke 21:4). Furthermore, the same language of giving up oneself is used for believers. Paul writes about the Macedonians giving up themselves to God, Paul and his companions (2 Cor 8:5: ἀλλ’ ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ; see 2 Cor 12:15; Acts 20:24). Thus, the language of giving oneself up for the sake of others has certainly become common-place in early Christianity. For the phrase παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ is the quintessential way the early church describes Christ’ death. But does this phrase παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ and the language of giving up oneself originate with the early church or Paul? Or does the terminology originate in the Greco-Roman context of Paul’s auditors?

We propose that the phrase παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ is a benefaction terminology from the Greco-Roman world that eventually makes inroads into Pauline Letters and early Christianity. For instance, in a document from the people of Dionysopolis dated in 48 B.C.E, the priest Akornion is praised by his community for his services. When the community was in need of a priest to serve in the temple of Dionysos, the patron of the city, Akornion willingly offered

¹¹⁵ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 101; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 148; Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 221–222.

himself to serve (ἐπέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν).¹¹⁶ Also, during the reign of Byrebistes, one of the Thracian kings, Akornion was an outspoken envoy for his community; he puts his life on the line, risking soul and body for his community (ψυχῆ καὶ σώ[μ]ατι παραβαλλόμενος).¹¹⁷ Similarly, in a town called Sestos, Menas is honored for his service and dedication, risking everything for his city. He is always eager to do something useful to the community (διὰ τῆς ἰδίας σπουδῆς ἀεί τι τῶν χρησίμων κατασκευάζειν). When the city lived under fear of being overrun by Thracians, their neighbor, Menas dedicated himself unreservedly to whatever good cause is for the wellbeing of his people (διδούς ἀπροφασίστως ἑαυτὸν).¹¹⁸

A more influential parallel to Paul's appeal to Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction in Galatians could be seen in the figures of Heracles and Christ. The similarities between Heracles and Christ have been explored and debated in early Christianity and beyond.¹¹⁹ Paul's auditors, perhaps understand the meaning of the death of Christ against the backdrop of some Greco-Roman gods like Heracles. Heracles' complex identity and feats are well documented in

¹¹⁶ SIG 2.762, Danker, *Benefactor*, 77–79.

¹¹⁷ SIG 2.762; Danker, *Benefactor*, 77–79.

¹¹⁸ OGIS 1.339, Danker, *Benefactor*, 92–97. Even Hellenistic Jewish authors like the author of the First Maccabees describes how Simon the son of the Mattathias, sons of Joarib, and his brothers put their lives (Σιμων δὲ υἱὸς Ματθαθίου ἱερεὺς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωαριβ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔδωκαν αὐτοὺς τῷ κινδύνῳ) at risk to defend their holy places, their laws and protect their city from enemies (1 Macc 14:29; LXX).

¹¹⁹ The comparison between Jesus and Heracles remains a subject of debate in Christianity into the second century AD as attested in the writings of Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr notes that Jesus has been often compared with the “sons of Zeus.” One such comparison is with Heracles. See Denis Minnis and Paul Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 219–225.

folktales and myths, in local cults, in literary adaptations and artistic representations.¹²⁰ We shall limit our discussion of Heracles' feats (as a hero or a god) to the similarities with Paul's description of Christ's role in the outpouring of divine favor that may seem obvious to the Galatians. Heracles is recognized as the "savior of the world and of humanity," and he is the god or hero who embodies the philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία) that every king aspires to attain.¹²¹ Heracles is not only portrayed as a philanthropist (φιλανθρωπία), but also as the deity who embodies the notion of divine benefaction through his experience of suffering, putting his life in danger for others.¹²² Dio Chrysostom describes Heracles' life of self-deprivation, altruism and hard work on behalf of humankind. Heracles considers wealth as worthless "save to be given away and bestow to others (ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα ἐνόμιζε τοῦ μηδενὸς ἄξια πλὴν ὅσον δοῦναι καὶ χαρίσασθαι)."¹²³ Similarly, Diogenes Laertius adds that Heracles' protection against evil is sought by devotees.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ David Aune, "Heracles and Christ: Heracles Imagery in the Christology of Early Christianity," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 4.

¹²¹ Aune, "Heracles and Christ," 9. The term savior with which Heracles is identified is a cognate of benefaction in Greco-Roman context. See Werner Foerster, "σώζω κτλ," in *TDNT*, VII.967.

¹²² Aune, "Heracles and Christ," 16.

¹²³ Dio Chrysostom, *1 Regn.* 1.61–62 (Cohon, LCL). In the Euripides plays on Heracles, he is portrayed as exposing himself to human sufferings. See Aune, "Heracles and Christ," 16.

¹²⁴ Diogenes Laertius recounts an example of how Heracles' power to grant protection is invoked by devotees:

"The son of Zeus, victorious Heracles (ὁ τοῦ Διὸς παῖς καλλίνικος Ἡρακλῆς), Dwells here; let nothing evil enter in (ἐνθάδε κατοικεῖ. μηδὲν εἰσίτω κακόν). See Diogenes Laertius 6.50 (Hicks, LCL).

Heracles' fame and benefaction also appears in the *Orphic Hymns*. In the *Orphic Hymns*, Heracles is recognized as lord, supplicatory prayers are offered to him because of his might, and he is known as the all-conquering and helper of the human race. It celebrates Heracles' twelve deeds of valor that many leaders of the ancient world aspire to emulate.¹²⁵ Thus Heracles is invoked to come "O blessed one, bringing all charms against disease, with club in hand drive evil bane away, with your poisonous darts do ward off cruel death."¹²⁶

These few examples from the Greco-Roman world show that the self-giving of Akornion and Menas is done for the benefit and wellbeing of others; and the fame of Heracles is based on his deeds of divine favor to benefit the human race, even with suffering. From these examples, one may discern that these heroes (Akornion, Menas and the god Heracles) are honored for their willingness to risk everything, including putting their lives in danger, in order to protect their respective communities and humankind in general, in the case of Heracles. There is a similarity between Paul's description of Christ in Galatians and the heroes and the god of the Greco-Roman world. For Paul's gentile audience will understand the description of Christ's self-giving for humanity as the ultimate conferral of divine benefaction (Gal 1:4; 2:20–21), just as the heroes and gods of their social location.

Paul urges the Galatian Christians to follow his example and disregard the message of his Jewish Christian opponents because it will invalidate the divine favor already conferred by God through the death of Christ (Gal 2:21a: οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ). For his present state of

¹²⁵ Apostolos N. Athanassaki and Benjamin M. Wolkow, *The Orphic Hymns. Translation, Introduction, and Notes* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2013) 14; see *Orphic Hymns*, 12. 1–11; Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 361E.

¹²⁶ Athanassaki and Wolkow, *The Orphic Hymns*, 15; see *Orphic Hymns*, 12.12–15.

life and dedication to God's gift of divine favor are testament to the fact that Christ did not die in vain (Gal 2:21). But Paul fears that the preaching of his Jewish Christian opponents will replace the free gift (δωρεά) of Christ's death with the observance of the law. If the Galatians yield to their preaching, then the death of Christ will truly be in vain, producing no result in their lives (2:21b: εἰ γὰρ νόμου..., ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν).¹²⁷ But if the Galatian Christians remain in the teachings of Paul (1:8–9, 11), in the χάρις of their calling (Gal 1:6), and in their experience of the Spirit (Gal 3:1–5), then the death of Christ will be of benefit to them (Gal 2:21). With this in mind, the Galatian Christians will recognize from their cultural world the obvious meaning and implication of the term δωρεά with which Paul describe the death of Christ on the cross.

Upon hearing the cognate of the word δωρεά, it is most likely that Paul's gentile audience would immediately recalled that the term δωρεά means the benefactor's bounty, the benefits that are granted to recipients at no cost to them. For example, a certain Tiberius Claudius Apollonios serves his city of Perga as an envoy to Rome freely, without charge (Τιβέριο[ν] Κλαύδιον Ἀπολλωνίου...τρ[ίς] πρ[ε]σβεύ[σαντα] δω[ρ]εὰ[ν] εἰς Ῥώμην...).¹²⁸ Similarly, a certain Adrastos serves as a priest and gymnasiarch during the reign of emperor Tiberius without laying any claim to remuneration that come with these offices (...δωρεὰν καὶ ἀθθαίρετος γυμνασίαρχος καὶ ἱερεὺς τῶν γυμνασίων θεῶν κατεσκεύασεν).¹²⁹ On this basis, Christ's death is a free gift of God that serves as God's divine favor to humanity. But the maneuvering of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents threatens the value of the gift of Christ's death on the cross in the life of the Galatian

¹²⁷ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 248.

¹²⁸ *IGRR* 796.5, 14–15; Danker, *Benefactor*, 333.

¹²⁹ *IGRR* 933.8; Danker, *Benefactor*, 333; see *OGIS* 229.102–103.

Christians (Gal 2:21). Evidently, Paul hopes that his argument in appealing to the benefaction conventions of their cultural world will persuade them against the teaching of his Jewish Christian opponents.

2.2.2. The Gift of the Spirit

Another manifestation of divine favor in divine-human relationship of benefaction that needs to be examined is the meaning of the gift of the Spirit within Paul's language of χάρις in Galatians. Paul understands the death of Christ to precede the gift of the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal 4:6); but both the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are one act of God's gift of divine favor towards humanity. We shall show that the gift of the Spirit brings to fulfillment God's activity of benefaction in divine-human relationship. God has sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross, and Christ's death and humanity's faithful acceptance of this extraordinary self-gift of Christ leads to the outpouring of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Accepting the gift of the Spirit requires that humanity reciprocates this act of divine favor through a way of life worthy of God, the Chief Benefactor, who has granted the gift of the Spirit to all.¹³⁰ Therefore, Paul's description of the gift of the Spirit includes: (1) evidence of God's outpouring of the gift of the Spirit on the Galatians (Gal 3:2, 5,14), and (2) the effects of the Spirit in the lives of the Galatians (Gal 5:22–23). We shall proceed to show that the believer's faith in the death of Christ leads to the gift of the Spirit that prompts and empowers the believer to reciprocate God's favor with gratitude.

¹³⁰ Paul consistently ascribes the gift of the Spirit only to God (Gal 4:6; 1 Cor 2:12; 2Cor 1:21–22; 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8, see Eph 1:17).

2.2.2.1. *The Reception of the Spirit*

Paul writes about the gift of the Spirit in the context of his discussion on what God has accomplished for humanity through the death of Christ (Gal 3:1–5). Speaking directly to the Galatian Christians for the first time in the letter, he uses a series of rhetorical questions to appeal to their experience of receiving the Spirit in the context of his preaching on the death of Christ (Gal 3:1; see 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2). In Galatians 3:1–5, Paul insists that it is by hearing through faith (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως)¹³¹ that the Galatian Christians received the divine gift of the Spirit during his proclamation of the death of Christ.¹³² Paul hopes that this is an experience that they will easily relate with on a personal level. The following terms: (1) προεγράφη in Galatians 3:1; (2) ἐλάβετε in Galatians 3:2; (3) ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως in Galatians 3:2 show that the Galatian Christians received the Spirit. Besides, by using the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε, Paul seems to confirm that the Spirit actually has been granted by God to the Galatian Christians as a gift (Gal 3:2; see 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 1:22; Rom 5:5). Indeed, the Galatians' reception of the Spirit shows that they have accepted Paul's message of God's offer of relationship of benefaction through the death of Christ and not through the observance of the law (Gal 3:2).

The argument of Galatians 3:10–14 includes the reception of the Spirit by the Galatian Christians. Paul states that Christ's redemptive death opens the path for the Galatians' admittance into the blessing of Abraham so that they will receive the promise of the Spirit.¹³³

¹³¹ For the various translations of this phrase, see David John Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power* (SBL 49, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1978) 55.

¹³² Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit. A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988) 44.

¹³³ See Sam K. Williams, "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," *JSNT* 29(1987) 91; Bruce, "The Spirit in the Letter to the Galatians," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes. Studies in Honor of Howard*

While in Galatians 3:1–5 Paul invokes their experience of being given the Spirit, in Galatians 3:10–14, he appeals to Scripture, invoking the faithfulness of Abraham to support his argument that God’s gift of the Spirit is not only to the Galatians but to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike. The blessing and the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham “is the gift of the Spirit to those who have come to believe in Jesus Christ.”¹³⁴ The Galatians’ experience of the Spirit indicates that God has deemed them worthy and ready for the gift of the Spirit on account of their faith in Christ. With the Galatians’ faith in Christ, then comes the gift of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit demands an active lifestyle from them, as we shall shortly discuss.

Paul continues to appeal to the story of Abraham by creating an allegory of the family of Abraham (Gal 4:21–31) to remind the gentile Christians of Galatia that like Abraham’s son Isaac, they too are the children of the Spirit (Gal 4:29). In this allegorical interpretation, Paul links Isaac, who is the son of the “freed woman,” with the Spirit by identifying his birth as the fulfillment of a promise through the Spirit (Gal 4:21, 28–29). In other words, Paul links the birth of Isaac to the Spirit (Gal 4:29:) and interprets it as the fulfillment of God’s promise. Likewise, Paul identifies the Galatians’ experience of receiving the gift of the Spirit with the fulfillment of God’s promise (Gal 3:14). Like Isaac, therefore, the Galatians are children of the promise; and they enjoy the freedom of the children of God through the gift of the Spirit. On the contrary, they are not the children of the flesh like Hagar’s son Ishmael (Gal 4:22), and they are not under slavery (Gal 4:31). With this allegorical interpretation, Paul elaborates on the argument in

M. Ervin Presented to him by Colleagues and Friends on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday (ed. Paul Elbert, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985) 36–37.

¹³⁴ Betz, “In Defense of the Spirit,” 110.

Galatians 3:6–4:7 that God’s promise to Abraham has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in the gift of the Spirit. Then Paul prepares for the exhortation in Galatians 5:16–6:10 that the Galatian Christian should embrace the leadership of the Spirit in their lives. In both cases, the gift of the Spirit undergirds Paul’s message of the Galatians’ experience of divine favor.

In Galatians 4:1–7 the gentile Christians of Galatia are the adopted children of God (see Rom 8:15–17, 23) through Christ’s redemptive death on the cross. The same God who sends Jesus Christ to die for humanity, also sends the Spirit of Christ “into the hearts of those who, like the Galatians, [live] in hopeless and inescapable imprisonment” by the present evil age (see Gal 1:4; 3:23; 4:1–10).¹³⁵ As adopted children of God and heirs of the promise, God has sent the Spirit of Jesus Christ into the hearts of every believer. As a result of God’s gift of divine grace, the Galatians are confidently able to call God “Abba Father.” Why are the Galatian Christians able to call God “Abba Father?” It is certainly through the divine gift of the Spirit that their relationship of benefaction with God reaches its fullness, attaining an intimate bond between them and God. It is on this basis that the Galatians confidently call God “Abba Father.” As Longenecker rightly notes, calling God “Abba Father” epitomizes the Galatians’ “new relationship with God, ...giving expression to their new realization of a more intimate relationship with God, a truly filial relationship with God that displaces the legal relationship” through the Mosaic Law.¹³⁶ Seen in this way, “Abba Father” is an acclamation of gratitude to

¹³⁵ Betz, “In Defense of the Spirit,” 110.

¹³⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 174–175. Ben Witherington III contends, “what greater proof could there be that they already had, through the Spirit, all the benefits of an intimate and loving relationship with God they ever could need or ask for without having to submit to the Mosaic Law?” See Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 291. James D. G. Dunn adds that in case the Galatians might have forgotten, Paul reminds them “that their reception of the Spirit [is] not simply a single event in the past, but [has] been

God, who has sent Jesus to die and has freely given to the Galatian Christians the divine gift of the Spirit. The acclamation is an acknowledgment of the superiority of the Galatian Christians' filial relationship of benefaction with God to their relationship with the elemental spirits of the world or the obligation to observe the Mosaic Law.¹³⁷

Throughout Galatians, Paul is convinced of one thing; namely, that the Law is inherently unable to give life (Gal 3:21). We shall go into more details about Paul's view of the Law in chapter four, but for the moment, suffice it to state here that Paul argues that God has resolved the inadequacy of the Law by letting Jesus die on the cross and making available to every believer the power of the Spirit through faith. For this reason, God's gift of divine favor reaches its fullness in the gift of the Spirit with "immediate consequences in their daily living (Gal 5:16–25; see Rom 8:1–17)."¹³⁸ For God is "the one ultimately responsible both for the gift of the Spirit and thus for the work of the Spirit in their midst."¹³⁹ It is available to those who express faith in Jesus Christ, like the Galatian Christians when Paul preached to them. It is for this reason, therefore that Paul calls them "the people of the Spirit" (Gal 6:1: οἱ πνευματικοὶ). They have received the Spirit, they have entered into an intimate relationship of benefaction with God, and

the beginning of a continuing relationship with God sustained by [God] through the Spirit (see 1 Cor 6:17)." See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 158.

¹³⁷ There are however, some opposing views on the meaning of "Abba Father." Ben Witherington III suggests that it is a relic of an old early Christian prayer. See Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 29. David John Lull argues that "Abba Father" is an ecstatic acclamation from one who is possessed by the Spirit. See Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia*, 69–70; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 221; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 199.

¹³⁸ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 153.

¹³⁹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 388.

their current lifestyle is permeated by the Spirit. Therefore, their present relationship with God, which is based on God's gift of divine favor, cannot be supplemented with the observance of the law (Gal 5:1–12). Because in this relationship, all the elements necessary for right relationship with God are present: they have faith in Christ; they are spiritual people, children of God, heirs of God's promised inheritance; they have risen above the demands and the authority of the Mosaic Law; and they are liberated from the present evil age.¹⁴⁰ Unlike the Mosaic Law, the Spirit is sent into the heart, engaging “the believer at the center of his or her existence.”¹⁴¹

Indeed, taken together, Paul identifies the Galatian Christians with the “Jerusalem above” (Gal 4:26), “the Kingdom of God” (Gal 5:21), “the household of faith” (Gal 6:10), and “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16) because they possess the Spirit. The Galatian Christians bind themselves in an intimate relationship with God because of the gift of the Spirit. Paul describes the way of life required of those who have received the gift of the Spirit and entered into a relationship with God. We shall show below that Paul's description of the divine gift of the Spirit in the life of the Galatian Christians underscores the ethos of reciprocal obligation on account of their experience of divine favor.

2.2.2.2. Reciprocation of God's Gift of the Spirit

Next we shall turn to examine how Paul expects the Galatians to reciprocate God's gift of the Spirit. What does God's gift of the Spirit mean in the Galatians' relationship with God? What

¹⁴⁰ Betz, “In Defense of the Spirit,” 106. Gordon D. Fee puts it in this way: “Christ and the Spirit mark the turning of the ages; and therefore “life in keeping with the flesh” and “life by the Spirit” are mutually incompatible options, just as “faith in Christ” and “works of the Torah” have been argued in 2:15–5:6 to be mutually exclusive options.” See Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 431.

¹⁴¹ Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia*, 66.

way of life is expected of the Galatian Christians ever since their faith in Christ has led to the outpouring of the Spirit? We shall see that the so called ethical section of the letter (Gal 5:1–6:10) includes an invitation to the gentile Christians of Galatia to respond appropriately to their relationship with God. It is an invitation to the Galatians to walk in the ways of God, the Chief Benefactor, by being mindful of God’s divine gifts to their way of life. For God’s relationship of benefaction demands recognition and honor from each and every believer. While God acts in the gift of divine favor, the believer befittingly responds in gratitude.¹⁴² God’s favor, namely, the Spirit, is an enabler; it is a force that moves the believer towards intimacy with God and with others. Thus, both Paul and the Galatians know that the gift of the Spirit does not involve a passive submission but ultimately requires an active and conscious effort to produce the “fruits of the Spirit.” Accordingly, the manifestation of the “fruits of the Spirit” in the life of the believer stands as an evidence of the believer’s acceptance of God’s gratuitous gift of divine favor.

The divine gift of the Spirit presupposes an active involvement in the life of the community of believers; the Spirit is an empowering gift of God that is granted to those who have faith in Christ. Betz discusses whether the giving of the Spirit brings about an immediate manifestation of the “fruits of the Spirit” or whether the giving of the Spirit motivates and enables the Galatian Christians to produce the “fruits of the Spirit” in their lives.¹⁴³ Whatever the case maybe, the reciprocation of divine favor manifests itself, in Paul’s view, in a way of life that mirrors the “fruits of the Spirit” in the believer’s life. In other words, the Galatian Christians are

¹⁴² Engberg-Pedersen, “Gift-Giving and Friendship,” 27–28.

¹⁴³ Betz, *Galatians*, 287.

exhorted in Galatians 5:16–25 to return God’s favor of the gift of the Spirit through the manifestation of the “fruits of the Spirit” in their lives. How can the Galatians manifest the “fruits of the Spirit” in their daily living? Having received the Spirit on account of their faith in Christ, the Gentile Christians of Galatia have the obligation to live out the “fruits of the Spirit.” For in their relationship of benefaction with God, they have received God’s gift of the Spirit of God’s Son (Gal 4:6); it is a divine enabling that obliges them to reciprocate this divine favor through a way of life worthy of God, the Chief Benefactor.

In fact, if the Galatian Christians “walk by the Spirit” they have no need of the Law to regulate their lives (Gal 5:16; see Rom 8:4). The exhortation to “walk by the Spirit” (πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε) is an invitation to a way of life that is nothing like living under the observance of the law. Because to “walk by the Spirit means to allow the καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος [the fruit of the Spirit], that is ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραΰτης, ἐγκράτεια [love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control] to fill out the life” that the Galatian Christians, individually and as a community, are gifted by God to live.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, taken together, to submit to the leadership of the Spirit will free the Galatian Christians from the authority of the Law (Gal 5:18: εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον). Paul does not just advocate for the end of the authority of the Law over those who have received God’s gift of the Spirit; he outlines the obligation that comes with the reception of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–25). It means completely to be under the leadership of the Spirit.

Concerning Paul’s argument on the “desires of the flesh” and the “fruits of the Spirit,” he seems to exhort the gentile Christians of Galatia to allow themselves to be under the control of

¹⁴⁴ Betz, “Spirit, Freedom, and Law,” 158.

the Spirit rather than the personified flesh (Gal 5:16b-17).¹⁴⁵ Paul knows that the desires of the flesh hinders one's growth in relationship with God and stymies the relationship of benefaction that God establishes with the individual through the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. Paul speaks about God's relationship of benefaction with the gentile Christians of Galatia in affectionate terms: they have become adopted children (Gal 4:5; see Rom 8:15), and confidently call God "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6; see Rom 8:15), and they are heir of God's promised inheritance (Gal 4:7).¹⁴⁶ What kind of relationship with God does Paul invite the gentile Christians of Galatia to embrace? Paul exhorts them to enter and to experience God's relationship of benefaction through the Spirit and not through the precepts of the Mosaic Law (Gal 5:18).

One who chooses to live under this new way of relationship with God through the guidance and direction of the Spirit overcomes both the impulse of the flesh and the authority of the Law. For such a person is enabled "to do what is good, with the expression of that goodness being for the benefit of others."¹⁴⁷ For the barrier-building works of the Law (Gal 2:11-14) and the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21) have been replaced with "the fruits of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23). We are fortunate to have remarkable commentaries on Paul's catalogues of vices and virtues

¹⁴⁵ Contra Martyn, *Galatians*, 483-484.

¹⁴⁶ P. J. Gräbe notes, "being children of God does not mean that Christians may act with autonomous freedom. Being children of God entails service of God (Rom 6:22; 7:25; 1 Thess 1:9), Christ (Rom 12:11; 14:18; 16:18; Col 3:24) and the neighbor (Gal 5:13) in the new life of the Spirit (Rom 7:6), as well as righteousness (Rom 6:17, 18, 19)." In making this point, Gräbe seems implicitly to allude to the reciprocity motif that seems to be part of the benefaction language of Galatians without providing details. See P. J. Gräbe, "Paul's Assertion of Obedience as a Function of Persuasion," *Neot* 2(1992) 354.

¹⁴⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 247.

(Gal 5:19–23),¹⁴⁸ for this reason, we shall not rehearse here commentators’ remarks on the catalogue of vices and virtues. Our focus is limited to explaining how the catalogue of virtues, in particular, namely, the “fruits of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22–23) support our thesis.

Paul contrasts the “works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19–21) and “works of the law” (Gal 2:16; 3:2, 10) with the “fruits of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22–23). C. K. Barrett rightly suggests: “if Paul had headed his second list (Gal 5:22–23) “works of the Spirit” it would not only have led to a clash with “works of the law,” but it would have been positively misleading.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the contrast that drives Paul’s logic in the Letter to the Galatians is between human initiative and effort to please God and God’s initiative in providing humanity with divine favor and the incentive to respond appropriately to the divine gift of the Spirit. On this note, since God has given the Spirit to the Galatians (Gal 3:1–5) and has granted them adoption as children of God ever since the Spirit was sent into their hearts (Gal 4:5–6), then, they are expected to show gratitude for the divine gift of the Spirit by honoring their relationship of benefaction with God and by a loving relationship with one another indicative of their harvest of the “fruits of the Spirit.” Paul pointedly urges the Galatian Christians to a way of life worthy of the divine gifts they have been given. He says, “if we live by the Spirit, [then] let us also walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:25).

¹⁴⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 283–289; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 301–313; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 252–264; G. F. Wessels, “The Call to Responsible Freedom in Paul’s Persuasive Strategy: Galatians 5:13–6:10,” *Noet* 26(1992) 461–171.

¹⁴⁹ C. K. Barrett, *Freedom & Obligation. A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster, 1985) 77.

It remains only for us to note that Betz has suggested a threefold classification for the “fruits of the Spirit.” He says, “the structure of the catalogue is such that three sets of three concepts follow each other, the most important of which are placed at the beginning and at the end” (Gal 5:22–23).¹⁵⁰ But it seems to me that the only significance in the order with which Paul lists the “fruits of the Spirit,” is in the emphasis he places on the first item, namely, love (ἀγάπη). Why does Paul begin his catalogue of the “fruits of the Spirit” with love? It seems to me that Paul begins the catalogue of the “fruits of the Spirit” with love because it is an element of benefaction. For instance, because Christ died out of love for humanity (Gal 2:20c), then faith in Christ must be expressed through love of one another (Gal 5:6). Since the commandment is fulfilled in love of neighbor as oneself (Gal 5:14), Paul exhorts the Galatian Christians then to serve one another out of love (Gal 5:13c). On this note, Paul identifies divine-human and human-human relationships of benefaction as a bond of love (Gal 5:13c-14, 22; see 1 Cor 13:13b). We shall examine in chapter three how Paul expects the Galatians to relate to one another through love in human-human relationship of benefaction. Suffice it to mention here that in the context of Galatians, the term love encapsulates the “disregard of self” for the sake of others, which is, in fact, what Jesus has done by giving himself up to death (Gal 1:4; 2:20: παραδίδόναι ἑαυτοῦ). By means of Jesus’ loving act of death on the cross, God’s divine favor is readily available to humanity.

Did Paul remind the Galatian Christians of the consequences of ingratitude towards God’s gift of the Spirit in Galatians 6:7–9? Did the Galatians recognize that in Galatians 6:7–9, Paul is talking about the implication of not reciprocating God’s gift of the Spirit? Galatians 6:7–9

¹⁵⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 287–288.

belongs to the section in the letter where Paul lays down the importance of relationships, either divine-human or human-human (Gal 5:25–6:18).¹⁵¹ He presents these relationships against the backdrop of the conventions of benefaction in Greco-Roman context. In fact, Betz suggests that this section contains an “eschatological warning” that rejecting God’s redemption in Christ brings down God’s wrath on the individual.¹⁵² To despise (Gal 6:7: *μυκτηρίζω*) God in the context of Paul’s language of benefaction means that one has come to faith in Christ and has received God’s divine gift of the Spirit, yet one is consciously negligent of the gift and the obligation to honor the Giver. Accepting the message of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents turns the Galatians into ungrateful recipients of God’s gift of divine favor. On this note, Paul cautions the Galatians against the message of his Jewish Christian opponents by appealing to a well-known agricultural maxim. He hopes that this will persuade them to reciprocate the gifts they have received and to dissuade them from being ungrateful recipients of God’s favor. He says, “one reaps what one sows (Gal 6:7b).”¹⁵³ The intended meaning of Galatians 6:7 is found in Galatians 6:8, namely, the reward of destruction (*φθορά*) for the one who sows in flesh, and eternal life (*ζωὴν αἰώνιον*) for the one who sows in the Spirit.

Here in Galatians 6:7–8, Paul explains the reward of the contrasting forces of the desires of the flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:17) in the life of a believer. These passages (Gal 5:17; 6:7–9) seem to underscore the apparent disposition of the Galatian Christians to take up the “yoke of

¹⁵¹ Richard N. Longenecker identifies a unit in Gal 6:7–9. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 279.

¹⁵² Betz, *Galatians*, 306–307.

¹⁵³ Betz, *Galatians*, 307; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 329; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 264; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 280.

slavery” or the “works of the flesh” against harvesting in their lives the “fruits of the Spirit.” They seem to have been convinced by Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents that they can earn God’s favor through human effort by the observance of the Mosaic Law, ritual activities (Gal 4:10) and food Laws (Gal 2:11–14). But Paul’s gospel message is against human effort to earn God’s favor. For Paul, God alone provides the incentives for the relationship of benefaction with humanity through the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. On their part, humanity ought to actively respond to God’s gift of the Spirit by harvesting in their lives the “fruits of the Spirit.” On this note, Paul’s rhetoric of either faith in Christ or the observance of the law includes also his argument that either one embraces God’s gift of the Spirit or one takes up the “works of the flesh.” Accepting God’s gift of the Spirit and harvesting the “fruits of the Spirit” will lead to an everlasting relationship with God. But relying on human effort and the resultant “works of the flesh” excludes one from enjoying eternal relationship with God. Over all, Paul is still optimistic that the Galatian Christians will remain in his gospel of God’s relationship of benefaction with them; hence, he exhorts them to keep on doing good (Gal 6:9).

In this section where Paul wrestles with the possibility of the Galatian Christians turning into ungrateful recipients of God’s gratuitous gift of the Spirit, he underscores the future aspect of divine-human relationship (Gal 6:9). The Galatian Christians would recognize the social implication of the language of Galatians 6:9: that is, ingratitude to God’s favor excludes them from future reward but their act of gratitude guarantees them the future reward of eternal life (Gal 6:8). In Paul’s scheme of thought, the gift of the Spirit demands a reciprocal action from the gentile Christians of Galatia. Betz insightfully observes that Paul uses the terminologies of “sowing” and “reaping” to remind the Galatians about the necessity of reciprocity. For “the gift of the Spirit is an enabling power which makes them fulfil the divine law (cf Gal 5:14, 22–23;

6:2).”¹⁵⁴ Though the gentile Christians of Galatia will recognize the social implication of Paul’s message of divine favor, Paul also maintains that their experience of the relationship of benefaction with God has implications for future life. The possibility of a future life with God will be judged by their expression of gratitude to God for the gift of divine favor that they have received.

The gentile Christians of Galatia know from their social location that ingratitude severs the tie of patronage in a relationship of benefaction. Seneca remains one of the strongest voices in the ancient world on the importance of being grateful for the favor one has received. He maintains that the ethos of reciprocity is an essential aspect of the relationship of benefaction. To neglect to acknowledge the favor one has received and “not to return gratitude for benefits is a *disgrace*” (emphasis added).¹⁵⁵ Seneca further observes that the reason behind the act of ingratitude is the feeling that one is not under obligation or responsibility.¹⁵⁶ He suggests that the act of reciprocity is voluntary, yet a wise person knows the importance of gratitude for the favor one has received because it is the means through which relationship is built and maintained.¹⁵⁷ Most importantly, Seneca suggests that it is unthinkable not to show gratitude to the gods for

¹⁵⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 307–308.

¹⁵⁵ Seneca, *Ben.* 3.1.1 (Basore, LCL).

¹⁵⁶ Seneca, *Ep.* 98.11. I think that the comment of Krister Stendahl on importance of Paul’s message in the context of his auditors is worth keeping in mind. Stendahl cautions that the theological message of Paul’s view on faith has meaning in the context of Paul’s Gentile audience, and not in Western theology, and particularly, in Reformation theology. I agree with Stendahl that to neglect the context of the Paul’s Gentile audience and promote one’s theological agenda, distort the message of Paul. See Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 25–30.

¹⁵⁷ Seneca, *Ben.* 81.9–10; see *idem*, *Ben.* 4.18.2–3.

their unconditional benefaction, especially when the benefaction of the gods is based on their own initiative, as Paul has portrayed God in Galatians. Indeed, Seneca thinks that it is absolute madness not to show gratitude to the gods, and to deny the gift of the god by being ungrateful.¹⁵⁸

Conclusion

We have seen that Paul's language of the relationship of benefaction in Galatians is based on God's gift of divine favor through the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. Paul indicates that this era of divine favor is wholly based on God's initiative, who grants favor to both Jews and Gentiles. God is an impartial Benefactor, who grants the divine gift of adoption to Jews and Gentiles alike without the obligation to take up Jewish identity through observance of the law. By portraying God as an impartial Benefactor, Paul identifies God with an important quality of patronage within the Greco-Roman system of benefaction, especially among the deities of the Greco-Roman world.

For Paul, the role of Christ is to make God's relationship of benefaction available to Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul presents the death of Christ as the end of human effort to earn God's favor and inaugurates God's initiative to bring the human race into the relationship of benefaction with God. It is a relationship that makes God's boon available to all, Jews and Gentiles, on the basis of faith in Christ alone. Paul's auditors would have recognized Paul's use of the term δωρεά and παραδίδόναι ἑαυτοῦ as aspects of the language of benefaction in their social location. The gentile Christians of Galatian would easily have noticed in Paul's portrait of Jesus similarities with Greco-Roman deities like Heracles. Also, they would have recognized the

¹⁵⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 6.23.7; *idem*, *Ep.* 74.11; 93.8.

similarities between God's inauguration of an era of divine favor through Christ with the era of benefaction during the principate of emperor Augustus.

Accordingly, the Galatian Christians will recognize Paul's argument about the divine gift of the Spirit as an aspect of the patronage system in their social location. As the Patron in this relationship of benefaction, God gives the Spirit to anyone who has faith in the death of Christ (Gal 3:1–5). Paul equally appeals to Scripture and to the experience of Abraham to support his argument that the gift of the Spirit fulfills God's promised relationship of benefaction with humankind, Jews and Gentiles alike. We have seen that the "Abba Father" acclamation validates the experience of the power of the Spirit in the life of the believer. For unlike the Law, the Spirit engages the believer from the heart, from within. It is based on this interior interaction between the Spirit and the believer that the manifestation of the "fruits of the Spirit" becomes a reality. By beginning the list "fruits of the Spirit" with love Paul makes the virtue of love crucial in this relationship of benefaction that he presents in Galatians. For just as God's love is manifested in the death of Christ on the cross, so also believers' love for one another should be manifested in their disposition to do good towards one another, looking out for the wellbeing of all.

By appealing to the cultural meaning of χάρις from the context of his auditors, Paul couched the argument of Galatians with the features of the Greco-Roman system of benefaction. By recognizing God's patronage, the gentile Christians of Galatia will appreciate the demand to show gratitude to God, who has given them divine gifts in Christ's death and the giving of the Spirit. These divine gifts have put the gentile Christians of Galatia in a position to inherit God's promise of eternal life. To one who is a patron of your wellbeing, you are obliged to show gratitude as an essential element in the patron-client relationship. The expression of gratitude is

indicative of the client's loyalty towards the patron. Also, the client's loyalty is based on the fact that the patron could be relied upon to deliver on the promise made to the client.

2.3. Experience of Divine χάρις and the Motif of Reciprocity.

In the Greco-Roman world, the terminology of πίστις is used in the context of patron-client relationship of benefaction to underscore the necessity of loyalty and dependability between the client and the patron respectively. In other words, a patron needs to be someone, a nation, or a deity that is reliable and faithful “in providing the assistance” promised; also, the client needs faith “in the sense of showing loyalty and commitment to the patron.”¹⁵⁹ The client's faithfulness, loyalty and commitment shows that the client is indebted to gratitude towards the patron. Therefore, we shall examine how Paul appeals to πίστις in the argument of Galatians against the backdrop of patron-client relationship of the Greco-Roman world. In this section, we shall show that the experiences of Paul, Abraham and the Gentile Christians of Galatia in their relationships with God include the obligation to reciprocate the divine favors they have received. This obligation of reciprocation is determined by the very fact that a divine-human relationship of benefaction has been established between them and God. Paul, Abraham and the Galatian Christians have experiences of God as the gratuitous divine Benefactor.

In the rhetorical style of Galatians, Paul, Abraham and the Galatians put their trust in God on account of the favor that has been granted to them. Paul engages the benefaction undertones of the Greco-Roman terminologies of χάρις and πίστις in the gospel he proclaims to the Galatians. We have already shown that the gift of the Spirit obliges the Galatians to acknowledge

¹⁵⁹ deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” 46. Paul employs the term πίστις and its opposite ἀπιστία to speak about God and the believer respectively in a patron-client relationship (Rom 3:3).

God's gift by manifesting in their lives the "fruits of the Spirit." For the daily harvest of the "fruit of the Spirit" in their lives shows that (1) they have acknowledged God's gift; (2) they are bound to God their Benefactor and to no other divine being or power; (3) and ultimately, their daily lives in the Spirit is a testament of their gratitude to God, whose favor has guaranteed them the hope of a better life now and in the future.

On the basis of what we have so far outlined, it remains only to consider the meaning of πίστις in Paul's argument in Galatians. Abraham's relationship with God is an important feature of Paul's language of divine favor in Galatians. Perhaps the critical role Paul's appeal to the example of Abraham plays is to argue that the promise to Abraham and his descendants is a divine favor that demands only faith in God. Abraham's faith is integral to his relationship of benefaction with God (Gal 3:6: Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην, see Rom 4:3). On what basis does Abraham express faith in God? In other words, why did Abraham show trust, fidelity and loyalty to God? The text of Genesis 15, which Paul quotes in Galatians, offers us an understanding of Abraham's relationship of benefaction with God. Nahum M. Sarna notes that the background of Genesis 15 is the reaffirmation of God's promises to Abraham after a series of trials and danger (Gen 13:14–14:24). Then with the language of prophetic pronouncement (Gen 15:1), God reassures Abraham of divine favor, in this case, of divine protection. God says to Abraham, "fear not, I am your shield" (Gen 15:1, NRSV; μὴ φοβοῦ, ... ἐγὼ ὑπερασπίζω σου, LXX).¹⁶⁰ As a patron, God pledges to grant Abraham the favor of divine protection, the protection that Abraham is unable to provide for himself. In responding to God in v 2, Abraham, as Sarna observes, addresses God with a title that suggests a master-

¹⁶⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 112.

servant relationship: “O Lord God” (Δέσποτα Κύριε, LXX).¹⁶¹ God reinforces the divine promise to Abraham by pointing to the number of the stars in the heavens as indicative of the multitude of Abraham’s descendants (v 5), which in fact, dispels Abraham’s doubts. When we turn to Genesis 15:6a (καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ, LXX), a verse that Paul quotes in Galatians 3:6a (...Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ), we see that a conversation which began with Abraham’s expression of fear and, in effect, uncertainty about the direction of his relationship with God, ends with Abraham’s reaffirmation of his faith in God (Gen 15:1–6).¹⁶² The result of God’s reassurance of divine promise to Abraham (Gen 15:5) is Abraham’s trust and loyalty, namely, Abraham’s faith.¹⁶³

In the same vein, the background of Paul’s faith and loyalty to God and Jesus Christ is both in his experience of his calling (Gal 1:15: καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ) and his vision of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:16: ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί). Paul’s loyalty and faith in God and Jesus Christ becomes so strong that he tenaciously remains unwilling to add the observance of the Mosaic Law to his faith-based relationship of benefaction with God and Jesus Christ (see Gal 2:16, 20–21). The same is true about the content of his preaching to the gentile Christians of Galatia (see Gal 1:8–9, 11; 5:11). First, Paul’s preaching about Christ to the Galatian Christians

¹⁶¹ Karl Heinrich Rengstorff offers some insightful nuance on the meaning of the term δεσπότης. Among others, he explains that in the Greco-Roman world, the term is used for a “ruler,” for one who has “power,” and to refer to the “master of a household.” He notes that in using the term δεσπότης “in Gen 15:2, 8 Abraham is appealing to the omnipotence of God.” See Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “δεσπότης, οἰκοδεσπότης, κτλ,” *TDNT*, II.44–49.

¹⁶² Sarna, *Genesis*, 113.

¹⁶³ Contra J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul. A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 183–185.

is accompanied with a public display of the crucifixion of Christ (Gal 3:1: οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοῦς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος). Second, as a result of Paul's preaching, the Galatians entered into a relationship with God through Christ by their "hearing through faith" (Gal 3:5c: ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως) and not by "works of the law" (Gal 3:5b: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου). Based on Paul's scheme of thought, God does not respond with a gift of divine favor to one's obedience to the Law, but only to one's loyalty and faith (Gal 2:16).

In the Roman Republic, nothing better underscores the character of the relationship of patronage (between individuals, individual and the state, the Roman state and its client states/allies, or deities and their devotees) than the term πίστις.¹⁶⁴ Erich S. Gruen supports this observation by noting that the Greek πίστις denotes a quality of "harmonious relationship and mutual obligations existing between superior and inferior powers."¹⁶⁵ Differently stated, πίστις means "faithfulness, or honesty in one's dealings with one's fellows."¹⁶⁶ With this in mind, πίστις then denotes reliability, dependability, trustworthiness; πίστις has meaning in a friendship

¹⁶⁴ John Rich, "Patronage and interstate relations in the Roman republic," in *Patronage in Ancient Society* (ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, London: Routledge, 1989) 128. Matthias Gelzer notes, "the entire Roman people, both the ruling circle and the mass of voters whom they ruled, [is], as a society, permeated by multifarious relationship based on *fides* and on personal connections... These relationships determine the distribution of political power. To maintain their rights citizen and subjects alike [are] constrained to seek the protection of powerful men, and the beginner in politics [has] need of a powerful protector to secure advancement." See Matthias Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility* (trans. Robin Seager, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969) 139.

¹⁶⁵ Erich S. Gruen, "Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*," *Athenaeum* 60(1982) 64. Also, Gruen adds, Roman *fides* underscores "from its origin fundamental moral and social overtones, an expression of mutual ties between patron and client... [It means the] acknowledgement of the superior partner, the exercise of patronage by the stronger over the weaker." See Gruen, "Greek *pistis*," 64.

¹⁶⁶ William Henry Paine Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith in its Relation to Jewish and Hellenistic Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917) 32.

relationship.¹⁶⁷ In Galatians, Paul uses the noun πίστις more than its verbal equivalence πιστεύω.¹⁶⁸ In the Greco-Roman world, the friendship relationships of benefaction are maintained and fostered by loyalty and πίστις. A benefactor ought to give the beneficiary the confidence that the promises made will be delivered.¹⁶⁹ The beneficiary ought to show loyalty, commitment and gratitude to the benefactor for the favor received. Therefore, the relationship of patronage demands that the client trusts “the goodwill and ability of the patron”¹⁷⁰ whom the client depends on to deliver the promise. Also, the patron ought to trust that the client will act with nobility through a gesture of gratitude.¹⁷¹

In the Greco-Roman world, “belief, trust, and confidence [are] salient and characteristic features of the mystery type of religion.”¹⁷² We see this very clearly in the cult of Isis and Osiris where initiates like Lucius express fidelity to the goddess Isis and, thereafter, to the god Osiris.

¹⁶⁷ Bultmann, “πιστεύω κτλ,” *TDNT*, VI.177; deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” 46. The verbal form πιστεύω means “to trust, to rely on, to believe.” See Bultmann, *TDNT*, VI.177–178; Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 32.

¹⁶⁸ The noun πίστις appears more than 20 times in Galatians (Gal 1:23; 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 14, 22–26; 5:5–6, 6:10) than the verb πιστεύω (Gal 2:16; 3:6, 22). See Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 31. By and large, David M. Hay provides a list of the number of times Paul uses πίστις and its equivalence in the undisputed seven letters. “These letters use the noun πίστις 91 Times, the verb πιστεύω 42 Times, and the adjective πιστός nine times.” David M. Hay, “Paul’s Understanding of Faith as Participation,” in *Paul and His Theology* (vol. 3, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Leiden: Brill, 2006) 46.

¹⁶⁹ Seneca insists that benefactors imitate the gods. Devotees have confidence that the gods will deliver on their promises. Then by imitating the gods, benefactors ought to give their client the confidence to trust that what is promised will be delivered. See Seneca, *Ben.* 3.15.4.

¹⁷⁰ deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” 46.

¹⁷¹ deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” 46.

¹⁷² Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 73.

Lucius' fidelity to Isis is because the goddess promises divine favor to Lucius beyond his earthly life. For this reason, the goddess demands fidelity and worship from devotees like Lucius.¹⁷³ For Lucius is richly blessed by the goddess; it is on account of his fidelity that "he has earned such remarkable patronage from heaven (...*fideque meruerit tam praeclarum de caelo patrocinium*)."¹⁷⁴ Lucius attributes his success as an attorney in Rome to the goddess' favor and his fidelity to her cult. He says, "through the bountiful care of heaven I was comfortably provided for by the income I earned as a lawyer (*liberali deum providential iam stipendiis forensibus bellule fotum*)."¹⁷⁵ Overall, Lucius commitment and dedication to the cult of Isis reveals the depth of his trust and confidence that devotion and fidelity to Isis hold out some benefit for him. For this reason, Lucius pledges eternal fidelity to the goddess.¹⁷⁶ The evidence shows that for devotees of the goddess like Lucius, trust and fidelity is an essential aspect of their experience of divine benefaction. For this reason, therefore, Lucius' metamorphosis and the cult of Isis require detailed study for the conventions of benefaction in divine-human relationship, which is beyond the scope of this present study.

In Galatians, Paul argues that πίστις is the believer's faithful acceptance that the death of Christ on the cross has brought about the believer's wellbeing.¹⁷⁷ In other words, as a patron,

¹⁷³ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.6.

¹⁷⁴ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.16 (Hanson, LCL).

¹⁷⁵ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11. 30 (Hanson, LCL).

¹⁷⁶ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.25.

¹⁷⁷ But when we analyzed Paul's portrait of Abraham in Rom 4:16–22 we discerned that Abraham's faith in God is based on the trust that God will fulfill God's promise of divine favor to Abraham (Rom 4:16). In spite of the fact that Abraham is advanced in years and Sarah is barren, Abraham hold onto his faith in God's promise (Rom 4:18–20). In his relationship with God, Abraham, as

Christ already has acted for the benefit of the believer; and as a client, the believer's faith is the proof of gratitude and reciprocity. For πίστις is the believer's trusting commitment to God's favor, which is a response to God's action through Christ (see Gal 2:20).¹⁷⁸ Paul also expresses this point of view in his other letters. For instance, in the Letter to the Philippians, Paul describes Christ self-gift on the cross as the content of Christian faith (Phil 2:6–11) in Christ and also in God who sends Christ to die for humanity (Rom 4:24). Ultimately, it is faith in Christ alone, in Paul's view, that will bring about the believer's experience of salvation (Rom 10:9).

Perhaps Paul expects that the Galatian Christians would recognize the social implication of his appeal to their own fidelity to God through the death of Christ as nullifying the argument of his Jewish Christian opponents on the observance of the law. The Galatian Christians would understand the reciprocal obligation of Paul's message to include not only a way of life under the leadership of the Spirit, but also an expression of faith in God's gift of divine favor through the death of Christ. Their faith in God and Jesus Christ requires that they embrace a way of life of loyalty and reciprocal obligation to God and Jesus Christ. For Christ accepts the obligation to give himself up for believers (Gal 1:4). Then, through Christ's death, believers are led to a life of faith so that they can receive the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit prepares believers for a life of unity with one another (Gal 3:28) and a future life with God (Gal 6:8–9). In other words, through

Paul observes, is "fully convinced that God will do what God has promised" (Rom 4:21). Therefore, Paul both heightens "the depth of Abraham's faith and the power of God to keep the promise made to Abraham." See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context*, 152. It is important to keep in mind that in Paul's letters as in Galatians, the believer's faith is a response to God's favor through the Christ's event. But when Paul appeals to the faith of Abraham in Romans, he identifies Abraham's faith to be based on trust that God will fulfil God's promise to him.

¹⁷⁸ Bultmann, *TDNT*, VI.219.

Christ's faithfulness unto death, believers enter into union of faithfulness and loyalty with God in a divine-human relationship of benefaction.

In the relationship of benefaction, the believer's πίστις is an expression of obedience to God through Christ. For Paul links obedience to his message about God's relationship of benefaction with the believer's expression of faith in what is heard (Rom 10:16: ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ... ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν, see Gal 3:2c: ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως). It is important that Paul calls the believer's attention to the fact that the relationship of benefaction is certainly God's initiative through Christ. Therefore, the believer's faith ought to be a testament of one's obedience to God's act of divine benefaction for the believer's wellbeing. Also, just as faith is critical in a relationship of trust in the Greco-Roman world of Paul's auditors, likewise, in his argument, Paul links faith with the expression of trust that through the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, God has put in place the relationship of benefaction with the believer leading to eternal life in the future (Gal 6:8–9; see Rom 9:33; 10:11).¹⁷⁹ Therefore, the believer's faith is an expression of trust that God will grant the final reward of eternal life to the believer who consistently has shown faith in God's relationship of benefaction through Christ.

Observe that in his letters Paul seems to remind his gentile Christian audience that "trust in God is very closely related with hope."¹⁸⁰ For instance, in Rom 4:18, Paul speaks about Abraham's hope as a sign of his unwavering faith in God (ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν). Also in Galatians, Paul persuades the gentile Christians of Galatia to recognize that their faith in God

¹⁷⁹ Paul's appeal to the figure of Abraham (Gal 3:6–18; Rom 4:1–12) become so critical as it concerns the relationship between faith and trust in one's relationship with God through Christ.

¹⁸⁰ Bultmann, *TDNT*, VI.207.

demands that they wait in hope for the final reward of their relationship of benefaction with God (Gal 5:5: ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα; see Gal 6:8–9; Heb 11:1). By linking faith with hope, Paul draws the attention of the Galatian Christians to the eschatological dimension of their relationship of benefaction with God. Taken together, therefore, faith is the action of the believer in recognition of God's act of divine favor for the overall wellbeing of the believer.¹⁸¹ On this note, Paul exhorts the believer to have faith (Rom 14:22; Phlm 5), to be in faith (2 Cor 13:5), and to stand firm in faith (1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24).

Conclusion

We have shown that in the Letter to the Galatians, Paul identifies God as a Patron of the Galatians' experience of divine favor. As a Patron, God sends both Jesus Christ to die and the Spirit of Christ into the hearts of the Galatians. Moreover, God calls Paul, Abraham and the Galatians into a relationship that is undergirded by divine favor. Therefore, in return for God's act of benefaction, the Galatians are obligated to express faith in God through Christ. For Christ's death on the cross proves that God has put in place an era of divine favor. We have shown that Paul's portrait of Christ in Galatians supports his argument about God's gratuitous gift of divine favor. Although the examples of the benefaction of the Augustan era, the city luminaries, Isis and Heracles provide a context for Paul's language of benefaction in Galatians, yet the benefaction of Christ, who has given himself up to death is superior and unique. Moreover, the superior character of God's favor through Christ is linked also with the sending of

¹⁸¹ See Bultmann, *TDNT*, VI.217–218. Two forms of recognition are pertinent here. First the recognition of what God has done through the death of Christ and in the gift of the Spirit in God's relationship of benefaction with the believer. Second, it is a recognition of the believer's obligation in this relationship of patronage.

the Spirit of Christ into the hearts of believers. As the Spirit engages the Galatian Christians in their daily life, it creates an opportunity for them to show gratitude for the divine benefits received. Paul wants the Galatian Christians to know that the harvest of the “fruits of the Spirit” in their life is a testament of their relationship of benefaction with God.

Just as the harvest of the “fruits of the Spirit” is a proof of the believer’s reciprocal obligation to God’s favor, likewise the expression of faith proves that the believer requites God’s gift of divine favor. Like the faith of Abraham as Paul presents it, the faith of the Galatian Christians in God through Christ remains an essential part of their experience of divine favor in the relationship of benefaction. With this in mind, faith is not a passive expression of loyalty; faith requires an active effort to honor God by a way of life worthy of God’s divine gifts. The active expression of the believer’s faith in God through Christ, as we have demonstrated, could be recognized by Paul’s gentile Christians of Galatia.

The Galatian Christians would understand the social implication of the term πίστις as Paul uses it together with the term χάρις in his message to describe their relationship of benefaction with God. They would recognize their faith in Christ as an integral part of their expression of gratitude in their relationship with God through Christ’s gift of himself on the cross. Evidently, the Galatian Christians will discern Paul’s argument within the system of benefaction of their social context. We shall proceed in the next chapter to show also how Paul uses the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction in human-human relationship in Galatians.

CHAPTER THREE

LANGUAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN HUMAN-HUMAN BENEFACTION

Introduction

The strength of Paul's argument in the Letter to the Galatians lies in his strategy to appeal both to the Greco-Roman context of divine-human and human-human relationships of benefaction in persuading the Galatian Christians to accept his message against the message of his Jewish Christian opponents. Differently phrased, Paul's argument in defense of his gospel message comes full circle in his appeal to the Greco-Roman friendship conventions in human-human relationship. In the preceding chapter, we showed how Greco-Roman benefaction conventions and the ethos of reciprocity provided the background for Paul's argument concerning divine-human relationship. The same is true also about Paul's argument on human-human relationship of benefaction as our analysis of the letter will show. We shall suggest that Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman matrix of friendship in defending the aspect of his gospel message that deals with the relationship among believers. Our evidence proves that Paul presents the friendship relationship of giving and receiving benefits among believers on the principle of love, fellowship and equality rather than on the patronage system. We shall show that in discussing human-human benefaction, Paul subverts the patronal system of benefaction, which is based on a socially superior patron placing a socially inferior client under obligation.¹ The demand of

¹ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 322.

reciprocity that comes out of this hierarchical structure of the Greco-Roman system is subverted by Paul with an appeal for the kind of Greco-Roman gift exchange that is based on love (*ἀγάπη*), fellowship (*κοινωνία*) and a sense of equality (*ἰσότης*) among believers.

So far, modern scholarship has done very little to recognize the significant role that Greco-Roman language of *χάρις* plays in Paul's argument in Galatians, especially, in human-human relationship of benefaction. But Paul's argument, indeed, betrays an appeal to elements of the Greco-Roman appreciation of the mutual and reciprocal goodwill that exist among friends. We will demonstrate that Paul's understanding of Greco-Roman friendship conventions influences his description of his relationship with the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:12–20); it influences his illustration of the relationship of mutual benefit among the Galatian Christians in the community as he exhorts them to do what is noble (Gal 6:9: τὸ καλὸν), to do what is good (Gal 6:10: τὸ ἀγαθὸν), and to work for the good of all (Gal 6:10: ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας); and finally, it profoundly influences his project of collecting money from gentile Christians, like the Christians in Galatia, to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10). Perhaps, the gentile Christians of Galatia are the first Pauline community to receive an instruction on how to carry out this act of benefaction, namely, to share their resources with the Christian community in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1–4).

We shall proceed to analyze the Letter to the Galatians for Paul's appeal to the conventions of the Greco-Roman friendship system. But in the meantime, we shall briefly examine how in the Greco-Roman world of Paul's auditors, friendship is described as an experience in mutual act of goodwill towards one another. Does the ancient world understand friendship as a relationship of mutual benefit among persons? Are friends described as being in a relationship of shared interest and disposition for the well-being of one another?

3.1. Friendship and Benefaction in the Greco-Roman World

In the Greco-Roman world, the basic meaning of friendship between persons is an experience in mutual acts of kindness and goodwill towards one another. Besides friendship, of course, there are family or kinship relationships in which relatives, parents and their children, and siblings share all good things in mutual benefit with one another. Nevertheless, we shall concern ourselves only with the aspect of relationship among friends in the Greco-Roman world who are not related by family or kinship ties.

The people of the ancient world are willing to provide whatever benefit one can for a friend because what one does for a friend is the surest evidence of the depth of the friendship between them.² Those who enter into a friendship relationship in the Greco-Roman world do so with the disposition to act for the wellbeing of one another in giving and receiving benefits. Aristotle notes that the “mutual reciprocity of affection and purpose towards one another (φανερὸν δ’ ἐκ τούτων ὅτι ἡ πρώτη φιλία, ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἐστὶν ἀντιφιλία καὶ ἀντιπροαίρεσις πρὸς ἀλλήλους)” is the basic meaning of friend.³ For this reason, it is better to have as friends those from whom one receives services and for whom one performs an act of favor in return.⁴ Furthermore, Cicero elaborates on why humankind is socially disposed for friendship relationship. He says that humanity forms bonds of friendships so that “the common interest may

² Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1977) 56.

³ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236b (Rackham, LCL).

⁴ See Xenophon, *Mem.* II.9.8.

be furthered by mutual services.”⁵ Elsewhere, he defines friendship as “a desire to do good to someone simply for the benefit of the person who one loves, with a requital of the feeling on his part (*amicitia voluntas erga aliquem rerum bonarum illius ipsius causa quem diligit cum eius pari voluntate*).”⁶

When Idomeneus sought the help of his friends, he did so with the conviction that they will rally around him for the sake of their friendship (δεῦτε φίλοι, καί μ’ οἴω ἀμύνετε, emphasis added).⁷ For the sake of their mutual interest and friendship relationship, Idomeneus’ friends “having one heart in their breasts, stood close by one another, leaning their shields against their shoulders (οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἓνα φρεσὶ θυμὸν ἔχοντες πλησίον ἕστησαν, σάκε’ ὁμοίσι κλίναντες) to protect their friend from his adversary. In other words, they were willing to do whatever was possible for the wellbeing of Idomeneus even if it included putting their own lives in danger.⁸ In this manner, therefore, the friends of Idomeneus display the devotion to friendship relationship of the Greco-Roman. Rallying his friends on his side in search of their help shows that Idomeneus appreciate the cultural value of the ancient world about friends looking out for the good of one another. In the ancient world, the true sign of devotion and affection towards one another lies in the action one takes to benefit a friend.

When we turn to the Letter to the Galatians we shall see that Paul’s argument on human-human benefaction show that he appeals to the experience of friendship relationship among

⁵ Cicero, *Rosc. Amer.* 38.111 (Freese, LCL).

⁶ Cicero, *Inv.* 55.166.

⁷ Homer, *Il.* 16.219.

⁸ Homer, *Il.* 13.487–488 (Murray & Wyatt, LCL).

persons in the Greco-Roman world, which involves doing what is good for the benefit of one another, to persuade the Galatian Christians to accept his message. Based on Paul's conviction on the significant role that the matrix of friendship play in the cultural world of his auditors, he writes to the Galatian Christians reminding them about the friendship they share with him, which involves the experience of giving and receiving benefaction (Gal 4:12–20); likewise, he appeals to the friendship system of the Greco-Roman world to exhort the Galatian Christians to a way of life as a Christian community that involves genuine love for each and everyone in the community. He exhorts them to promote a community of love that will manifest itself in a life of mutual giving and receiving of benefaction for the good of the household of faith (Gal 6:10). And, finally, Paul appeals to the Greco-Roman cultural value of friendship of mutual benefit to persuade the gentile churches to enter into fellowship with the Jerusalem church through his campaign for a collection to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10; Rom 15:25–28; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9). The collection serves to establish a bond of friendship among the churches in Jerusalem and in the gentile world as a community of shared interest and fellowship. At the very least, therefore, the Galatian Christians will recognize the social implication of Paul's appeal to the cultural value of friendship in their context as an experience in mutual benefit towards one another. We shall proceed below to show how the Greco-Roman understanding of friendship as an experience in mutual acts of kindness is the background against which Paul presents his gospel message on human-human benefaction in Galatians.

3.2. Experience of χάρις in Human-Human Benefaction

In chapter two, we observed Paul used the understanding of χάρις and πίστις from the Greco-Roman world in his argument about God's gift of divine favor through Christ. Here in chapter three we will discern that Paul paints a vivid picture of a relationship of friendship among

believers, including his relationship with the Galatian Christians and also his project of collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem, by drawing from the friendship system of the social world of his auditors. In our analysis of the sections of Galatians that deal with friendship among believers, we shall illuminate our discussion with examples from Greco-Roman world to support our position that Paul appeals to the social world of the Galatian Christians in the argument of the letter.

3.2.1. Paul and the Galatians

In the Greco-Roman world, the relationship of gift exchange between the one who gives the gift and the one who receives it with gratitude is fostered by a sense of friendship. This in turn creates an opportunity for a future gift-sharing occasion and lasting friendship. In chapter two, we saw that Paul's own experience of divine favor is the background for his understanding of God's gift of divine favor through Christ in divine-human relationship (Gal 1:15). Similarly, Paul's own experience of friendship with the gentile Christians of Galatia (Gal 4:12–20) is central to his argument on human-human relationship of benefaction.

Turning to Paul's appeal to his relationship with the Galatian Christians, one will notice that this section of the letter has frustrated many modern commentators about the purpose of the passage (Gal 4:12–20). Many commentators, in fact, have struggled to make sense of the role this section plays in Paul's overall argument in Galatians. For instance, Ernest De Witt Burton commented that this section of Galatians (4:12–20) is a "dropping argument, the resumption of which in vv 21–31 is probably an after-thought, the apostle [turning] to appeal, begging the

Galatians to take his attitude towards the Law.”⁹ Moreover, Dunn specifically identifies and places in groups “verses 12c/12d, 16/17, 18/19, and 19/20” as where Paul’s erratic thought in this section of the letter is more vivid.¹⁰ In fact, the struggle with this passage in modern scholarship is because scholars have not appreciated enough the central message of the Letter to the Galatians within the Greco-Roman context of Paul’s auditors and how this passage is in harmony with the central message of the letter. Betz summarizes the opinions of modern scholars when he says, “all commentators point out that the section 4:12–20 presents considerable difficulties. The style seems erratic. Paul seems to be jumping from one matter to the next, without much consistency of thought.”¹¹ Two significant views proposed by modern commentators on Galatians 4:12–20 can be identified.

First, most modern scholars propose a psychological interpretation for Galatians 4:12–20 as more attention is given to Paul’s emotional expression. For instance, in his commentary on Galatians Schlier describes this passage as an argument of the heart, which is presented with a strong emotion, in a manner that betrays an erratic train of thought “(es ist ein Argument des Herzens, das mit starkem Affekt vorgetragen wird, wie der sprunghafte Gedankengang verrät).”¹² Moreover, Franz Mussner agrees with Schlier that in this section, Paul’s scheme of thought is undergirded by his inner emotions, which is lacking in any objective theological

⁹ Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1928) 235.

¹⁰ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 231.

¹¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 220.

¹² Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 208. Contra Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 306.

argument. He says, “Paulus arbeitet in diesem Abschnitt nicht mehr mit sachlich-theologischen Argumentum, sondern mit ganz persönlichen, die seine starke, innere Bewegung nicht verbergen können.”¹³ Not even the insightful effort of Betz to defend the significant role of this section of the letter (Gal 4:12–20) is without its own limitations because his proposal falls short of understanding this section in the light of the language of favor from the Greco-Roman world with which Paul presents his argument in the letter. Betz observes that Galatians 4:12–20 is “entirely in conformity with Hellenistic style,” which he claims allows “for a change between heavy and light sections and which would require an emotional and personal approach to offset the impression of mere abstractions.”¹⁴ However, it seems to me that the only change between this section (Gal 4:12–20) and most of Galatians 1:1–4:11 is that Paul’s argument here focuses on human-human relationship of benefaction. Therefore, the suggestion that this section (Gal 4:12–20) gives Paul an opportunity to soften the rhetorical tone of the previous sections (Gal 1:1–4:11) misses the opportunity to understand the extent to which the conventions of benefaction from the Greco-Roman world drives Paul’s argument in Galatians.¹⁵

Second, among modern scholars, attention to the rhetorical character of Galatians 4:12–20 is the most influential and insightful interpretation of the passage. Betz achieves the

¹³ Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974) 304. Frank J. Matera adds, “Paul leaves the lofty heights of theological argumentation and appeals to the strong ties which once united him and the Galatians. If his theological arguments do not persuade them, perhaps a recollection of the Galatians’ former affection for him as the founder of their community will deter them from their disastrous course.” See Matera, *Galatians*, 162. Richard N. Longenecker admits that Gal 4:12–20 “is a passionate and emotionally charged section.” See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 188. Ben Witherington III suggests, “it is an emotional appeal to experience.” See Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 304.

¹⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 221.

¹⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 221; Matera, *Galatians*, 163.

breakthrough in rhetorical interpretation of this passage and the whole of the letter. He says, “[What] Paul offers in the section is a string of *topoi* belonging to the theme of “friendship” (περὶ φιλίας).”¹⁶ In other words, Paul’s argument in Galatians 4:12–20 is against the backdrop of Greco-Roman style of a personal appeal to friendship.¹⁷ Additionally, Witherington suggests that the rhetorical character of this section (Gal 4:12–20) includes Galatians 4:8–11. He says, “we need to see 4:8–11 and 4:12–20 as two parts of a well-integrated and rhetorically effective appeal to experience, drawing heavily on emotional language to persuade the audience.”¹⁸ Betz is right to notice that Paul’s argument in the letter is couched against the backdrop of Greco-Roman style with an appeal to its social convention on friendship as in Galatians 4:12–20. What is missing from Betz’s important observation on the role of Greco-Roman friendship *topoi* is the lack of further elaboration on how the theme of friendship undergirds the argument Paul makes in the letter.

Suffice it to say that the argument of Galatians 4:12–20 is deeper than just an emotional outburst that lacks a rhetorical or argumentative dimension as scholars who present a psychological interpretation of this passage claim. Rather *pathos* and reason coalesce in this

¹⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 221.

¹⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 221. Contra Matera, who suggests that the argument of this section is not a mere appeal to the “relationship between two friends.” Rather, it is an appeal to the relationship between a community and the founder. See Matera, *Galatians*, 163.

¹⁸ Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 304. Ben Witherington III notes that commentators have neglected to notice the “rhetorical force and persuasive power of an emotional appeal to experience” that underscore this section of the Letter to the Galatians. See Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 304. Furthermore, he says that Gal 4:12–20 “is a touching of all the major emotional bases in a masterful way, by using all the rhetorically appropriate sort of key terms listed under *pathos* and the tactics listed in the literature on appeals to *pathos* or the deeper emotions.” See Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 306.

section, which proves Paul's mastery of Greco-Roman styles of persuasion, to win back the friendship and trust of the Galatian Christians in his gospel message on divine favor. The scholars who follow Betz's initial observation are right to notice the rhetorical character of this section, which includes Paul's strong appeal to *pathos* to persuade the Galatian Christians to accept his message against the message of his Jewish Christian opponents. The Galatian Christians will likely recognize how Paul's rhetorical appeal in Galatians 4:12–20 is presented with *pathos*. We shall not go into any significant length to explain here how the ancient rhetorical aspect of *pathos* supports Paul's argument in Galatians 4:12–20. Nevertheless, Paul's argument in Galatians 4:12–20 is consistent with the view that the Galatian Christians could easily be "moved to action as much by the affections as by logic."¹⁹ Because they are aroused by Paul's emotional speech, the judgement they are going to make to either embrace Paul or to loathe him will determine the effectiveness of Paul's appeal to *pathos*.²⁰ To the logical argument of Paul in Galatians 1:1–4:11, where he outlines most of his argument on divine-human relationship, Paul adds an argument from *pathos* in human-human relationship by appealing for an emotional reaction from the Galatian Christians towards his message.

The Galatian Christians will perhaps both recognize and appreciate the emotional argument of Paul in Galatians 4:12–20. When the hearers are affected by the orator's emotional appeal, this creates a deep connection between them. In this state of emotional connection, the hearers are motivated to act on the emotion-laden persuasive argument of the orator. This is

¹⁹ Thomas H. Olbricht, "Pathos as Proof in Greco-Roman Rhetoric," in *Paul and Pathos* (ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 7.

²⁰ See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.5–6.

because *pathos* often prompts those connected by the feeling of emotion, namely, the speaker and the hearers, to act for a common interest. Paul knows that the situation that has given rise to the letter could be settled with the kind of personal appeal that he makes in Galatians 4:12–20 and elsewhere. Cicero notes that there are some problems that can be better resolved by an appeal to *pathos*, like “love [*amor*], . . . than by reality, or authority, or any standard, or judicial precedent, or statute.”²¹ Like most ancient rhetoricians, Paul knows that connecting with the Galatian Christians on an emotional level may cause an appreciation for his gospel message, which in turn will lead to an acceptance of the message. Seen through the lens of the overall argument of Paul in Galatians, it seems sensible to conclude that in Galatians 4:12–20, Paul recalls to the Galatian Christians the depth of intimacy that they once shared with him; and the recollection of past relationship between Paul and the Galatian Christians is integral to Paul’s appeal to the friendship conventions of the Greco-Roman world.

Paul’s personal appeal to his relationship with the Galatian Christians in Galatians 4:12–20 reveals the power of emotion (*πάθος*) to “connect us with other human” because “the feelings that we have about other people are primary impulses that prompt us to begin deliberation about a course of action.”²² Therefore, the context of the argument of Galatians 4:12–20 is a sense of *πάθος* that leads both Paul and the Galatian Christians to act for their mutual interest. For the emotional connection between Paul and the Galatian Christians is both the reason they were disposed for Paul’s wellbeing and, in turn, it is the reason Paul proclaimed to them the gospel

²¹ Cicero, *De or.* 2.42.178 (Sutton & Rackham, LCL).

²² Steven J. Kraftchick, “Πάθη in Paul: The Emotional Logic of “Original Argument,” in *Paul and Pathos* (SBL 16., eds. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 45.

message of God's gift of divine favor through Christ. Steven J. Kraftchick's comment is instructive, "emotions give rise to actions. Once an emotion is felt and once it causes thought to occur, then it can also cause us to act."²³ We shall proceed to analyze how the emotional connection between Paul and the Galatian Christians is part of his argument in the letter.

Turning to his relationship with the Galatians, Paul invites them to remember the circumstances of their initial encounter, the beginning of their friendship relationship. Paul believes that his relationship with the gentile Christians of Galatia, like their relationship with God through Christ, is what sets him and his message apart from his Jewish Christian opponents and their message. Paul was cared for by the Galatians when he was physically challenged by an illness; and they were exceptional in caring for Paul, a foreigner. As a result of their generous care, Paul regained his health in their midst, and he returned their generosity towards him by sharing with them the message of God's of divine favor through Jesus Christ (Gal 4:13–14; see Gal 3:1–5). Paul's illness presented a real test to their social understanding of hospitality and friendship, and they did not disappoint in their compassion for Paul; they unreservedly cared for Paul (Gal 4:14). Their treatment of Paul was exceptional, they welcomed him as an "angel of God (Gal 4:14c: ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ), as Christ Jesus (Gal 4:14c: ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). Paul claimed to have been treated with the reception reserved for an angel or Christ.

The identification of Paul as "an angel of God" or "Christ Jesus" likely happened in the context of his proclamation of the gospel with accompanying divine gifts of the Spirit to the Galatians (Gal 3:1–5; see Acts 14:8–11). These phrases "an angel of God" and "Christ Jesus," rhetorically highlight Paul's appreciation of the extraordinary generosity of the Galatian

²³ Kraftchick, "Πάθη in Paul," 45.

Christians. He is convinced of the depth of their concern for him, and he rates so high the care that he received from the Galatian Christians that he compares it with the care given to an angel or even Jesus Christ. Betz rightly observes that Paul's statement is the same as the language of praise common among friends in the ancient world.²⁴ Plutarch notes that people are inclined to become friends with those who praise and extol their actions rather than with those who do not.²⁵

Indeed, the Galatian Christians' sense of pity for Paul turns into the generous act of caring for Paul's wellbeing (Gal 4:13–14). Betz recognizes Paul's language as an appeal to the theme of friendship.²⁶ The gentile Christians of Galatia respond to Paul's illness by acting in a manner that showcases one of the social values of the ancient world, namely, to act kindly and generously towards a friend in need. Although, Paul's illness could have been a good reason for the Galatian Christians to reject him, yet they refrain from doing so. As Longenecker notes, "they could easily have been tempted to dismiss both Paul and his message because of his illness."²⁷ Instead, they took care of Paul as one would do for a friend. Paul recalls this noble act of kindness by the Galatian Christians towards him when he says, "though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me" (Gal 4:14; NRSV). Indeed, they grant to Paul the generous gift of wellbeing. What friendship value of the ancient world can be recognized in the treatment of Paul by the Galatians?

²⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 226; see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 192.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 12.

²⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 224; Alan C. Mitchell, "Great the Friends by Name: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman *Topos* on Friendship," in *Greco-Roman Perspective on Friendship* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997) 227–231.

²⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 191; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 209.

In the Greco-Roman world of the Galatian Christians, as Xenophon remarks, “a good and sincere friend (εἶη φίλος σαφῆς καὶ ἀγαθός)” is the most precious possession; it is considered as the “greatest blessing [or good] (μέγιστον ἀγαθόν)” above any material possession.²⁸ For example, in Lucian’s *Toxaris*, during the war between the Sauromatae and the Scythians, the Sauromatae ravaged the land of the Scythians. But seeing the noble display of friendship between the Scythians, Dandamis and Amizoces, the people were heartened that not all their greatest treasures had been looted and destroyed by the enemy. For the enemy did not destroy their greatest of possessions, namely, loyalty or fidelity to friendship (ἢ πρὸς τοὺς φίλους πίστις).²⁹ In the words of Aristotle, friendship is a virtue or involves a virtue (ἔστι γὰρ ἀρετὴ τις ἢ μετ’ ἀρετῆς).³⁰ The Galatian Christians choose virtue and act generously toward Paul because they know that if a friend or a servant is ill, for the wellbeing of a friend or servant, a doctor is called in. The people of the ancient world take great pride in providing whatever care is possible and at their disposal to contribute to the recovery of a sick friend or servant.³¹ Overall, Paul’s relationship with the gentile Christians of Galatia was born in adversity. Yet, it has produced their admittance and participation in God’s gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 3:1–5; 4:8–

²⁸ Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.4.3 (Marchant, LCL); Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.2.

²⁹ Lucian, *Tox.* 41 (Harmon, LCL).

³⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1.

³¹ Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.4.3. Noticing the depressed mood of Aristarchus, Socrates says to him “you seem to have a burden in your mind. You should let your *friends* (emphasis added) share it; possibly we can do something to relieve you.” See Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.7.1 (Marchant, LCL). Aristotle adds, “in poverty or any other misfortune men think friends are their only resources.” Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.2 (Rackham, LCL); see Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.22.12–13.

11). Also, it has produced a relationship of mutual benefit among the Galatian Christians, and with the poor in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4).

The phrase δι' ἀσθένειαν (Gal 4:13a) indicates that Paul was ill, and his illness presents a real test to the Galatian Christians' understanding of friendship in their context. But it is impossible to determine from the text what kind of illness Paul suffered from while he was in the regions of the Galatia.³² That said, Paul recognizes the challenges that his illness presents to the Galatians and acknowledges that they display a spirit of true friendship through his recovery and the preaching of the gospel to them. Aristotle notes that perfect friendship is attained when both parties “receive from each other the same or similar benefits.”³³ In the context of Galatians, it seems to me that through the generosity of the gentile Christians of Galatia, Paul regains his health; through their kindness, the threat that the illness presents to Paul's life is overcome. On his part, and in the spirit of reciprocity, Paul preaches to them the gospel of God's gratuitous gift of divine favor to humanity that guarantees eternal life with God (Gal 6:8-9).

Although Paul's experience of favor from the gentile Christians of Galatia happened in the past, when he was ill and in need of help, yet a lasting relationship of friendship has been

³² Paul's illness has been identified as malaria, epilepsy, ophthalmia or some other eye infections. Hence, F. F. Bruce says, “the infirmity may have been one of these three, or it may have been something quite different; it may have been identical with the ‘splinter’ of 2 Cor 12:7, or it may not.” See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 208–209; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 191; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 236. To identify Paul's illness, Hans Dieter Betz links the phrase ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου in Gal 4:14a with a similar phrase σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί in 2 Cor 12:7c. On the strength of this connection, Betz concludes that we are dealing here with a metaphor that identifies Paul's illness as demon possession, “an evil demon residing in his body. In speaking about his illness Paul does not use medical, but metaphorical and demonological language.” See Betz, *Galatians*, 225. George Lyons suggests, “the precise meaning of ἀσθένεια . . . may indicate persecution rather than illness as the reason.” See George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography. Toward a New Understanding* (SBL Diss 73., Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985) 166.

³³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.4.1 (Rackham, LCL).

established between Paul and the Galatian Christians. This relationship is significant for the overall argument of the letter about their bond of unity with God through the gift of divine favor. Just as Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that they have become the recipients of God's gift of divine favor (Gal 3:1–5), likewise, Paul reminds them of their generous and favorable disposition to care for him until his recovery and the consequent proclamation of the gospel message to them. From Paul's point of view, therefore, this experience of benefaction between the Galatian Christians and himself is an integral aspect of the argument at hand because it sets Paul's relationship with the Galatian Christians apart from the Galatian Christians' relationship with Paul's Jewish Christian opponents.

Paul acknowledges that the gentile Christians of Galatia have the option to scorn him, despise him, and eventually treat him in less friendly way (Gal 4:14). Instead, they welcomed Paul, cared for him, and, consequently, were themselves happy (Gal 4:15: ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν) to have the privilege of receiving Paul's gospel message of divine favor through Christ. In other words, the Galatian Christians are happy to have the privilege of hearing the message of God's gift of divine favor through the ministry of Paul (Gal 3:5). In the convention of benefaction in the Greco-Roman world, the joy of one who received the favor of a benefactor is variously designated with the term μακάριος. A case in point is Pindar's account on Karrhotos, son of Alexibius. Pindar recounts, "it is fitting to greet one's benefactor Son of Alexibius, the fair-haired Graces are setting you ablaze. *Blessed* [emphasis added] are you in having a memorial of finest words of praise (πρέπει νόω τὸν εὐεργέταν ὑπαντιάσαι Ἀλεξιβιάδα, σὲ δ' ἠύκομοι φλέγοντι Χάριτες. μακάριος, ὃς ἔχεις καὶ πεδὰ μέγαν κάματον λόγων φερτάτων μναμῆν)."³⁴ In

³⁴ Pindar, *Pyth.* 5.43–48 (Race, LCL). Xenophon and a friend come to the following conclusion, "they came to an agreement according to this last suggestion and proceeded to act upon it. And the one

the Book of Genesis, Leah rejoices; she is rejoicing because her maids have given her sons (Gen 30:13: καὶ εἶπεν Λεῖα Μακαρία ἐγώ, ὅτι μακαρίζουσίν με αἱ γυναῖκες, LXX). Another example of the use of the term μακάριος worth keeping in mind is the remark of the Queen of Seba on the feeling of joyfulness among Solomon’s wives (μακάριαι αἱ γυναῖκές σου), and children (μακάριοι οἱ παῖδές σου) for the privilege of listening to Solomon’s wisdom (1 Kings 10:8; 2 Chr 9:7; LXX).³⁵

Based on these examples, we can discern that the term μακάριος is often used to underscore the joy of one who is a beneficiary of a favor given by another person. Likewise, in Galatians 4:15, Paul uses the term to remind the Galatian Christians about the joy they felt when he regained his health and then proclaimed the gospel message to them. Paul tells them everything about God’s gift of divine favor through Christ, which they embrace with joy. On this note, I assume that Paul’s question “ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν;” (Gal 4:15) seeks to know where is the joy the Galatian Christians felt when he first proclaimed the gospel to them. In other words, Paul seeks to know what has happened to the Galatian Christians, who recently were

thought that he has been made a happy man because he had command of great riches, while the other considered himself most blessed because he was to have a steward who would give him leisure to do only whatever was pleasant to him (καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίουν. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἠγείτο εὐδαίμων γεγενῆσθαι, ὅτι πολλῶν ἤρχε χρημάτων ὁ δ’ αὖ ἐνόμιζε μακαριώτατος εἶναι, ὅτι ἐπίτροπον ἔξοι, σχολὴν παρέχοντα πράττειν ὁ τι ἂν αὐτῷ ἠδὺ ἦ).” See Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.3.48 (Miller, LCL).

³⁵ Ceslas Spicq, “μακάριος, οὐαὶ,” *TLNT*, 2.434. In the religious context, μακάριος becomes “the distinctive religious joy which accrues to [someone] from his [or her] share in the salvation of God.” See Hauck, “μακάριος,” 367. For instance, in Luke 1:48, Mary will be known as blessed by all the generation of men and women (μακαριοῦσίν με πᾶσαι αἱ γενεαί; see Luke 11:27; Matt 5:3–11; Luke 6:20–22; Rom 4:6, 9). In the same vein, a recipient of kindness and gift is counted as blessed (ὡς ἂν τίς σε συναντόμενος μακαρίζοι). Homer, *Od.* 15.538; Epictetus, *Diss.* III.17.5.

happy (μακάριος) to embrace him and his message. The joy they felt in receiving him and his message has produced the friendship they share with Paul.

Speaking about his friendship with the Galatian Christians, Paul compares the Galatian Christians' enthusiastic commitment to his wellbeing with the willingness to gouge their eyes for Paul's sake (Gal 4:15b: εἰ δυνατόν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι). With this description, Paul expresses his deep conviction of the Galatians' genuine concern for his wellbeing and the integrity of the friendship that has grown out of this experience.³⁶ Danker is right to note that Paul recognizes the Galatian Christians as his benefactors in Galatians 4:15. He says, "Paul addresses [the Galatian Christians] in Galatians 4:15 as benefactors whom he can attest to their total commitment when he first labored among them."³⁷ The Galatian Christians display "personal involvement, giving true friendship to a stranger, and doing it at great personal risk."³⁸ Modern commentators have noted that Paul uses the human organ regarded in the ancient world to be the most precious and delicate organ of the human body to express the nature of his relationship of benefaction with the gentile Christians of Galatia.³⁹ In the words of Aristotle, the Galatian Christians are willing to subject themselves to some discomfort for the sake of Paul,

³⁶ Christopher C. Smith notes, "Paul relies on the good relationship between himself and the Galatians, a relationship which, to this point at least, has not been violated (4:12b). On the contrary, they have exhibited great hospitality toward Paul and receptivity to the gospel he has preached (4:13–14). Indeed, their devotion has been unsurpassed (4:15)." See Christopher C. Smith, "Ἐκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17: the Motif of the Excluded Lover as a Metaphor of Manipulation," *CBQ* 58(1996) 493.

³⁷ Danker, *Benefactor*, 444.

³⁸ Dieter Mitternacht, "Foolish Galatians?—A Recipient-Oriented Assessment of Paul's Letter," in *The Galatian Debates. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) 423.

³⁹ See Betz, *Galatians*, 227.

whom they consider as a friend.⁴⁰ There are stories in the Greco-Roman world on the extraordinary display of friendship to the point of incurring personal discomfort or pain for the sake of a friend.

The story of friendship like the one between the Scythians Dandamis and Amizoces provides support to Paul's analogy on the Galatians' willingness to put themselves in some considerable discomfort for the sake of Paul. Sauromatae commence a brutal war against the citizens of Scythian that includes violence and the looting of properties. The Sauromatae take Amizoces captive, and his friend Dandamis crosses the enemy's line to rescue his friend. Dandamis willingly gives himself up as a captive so that his friend Amizoces will be set free. When the Sauromatae ask for his eyes as a ransom, at once, Dandamis allows them to be gouged out, and his friend Amizoces consequently is set free. While Dandamis' display of true friendship encourages the Scythians, it frightens the Sautomatae, who fled at night leaving behind their fleets. Unable to bear the sight of his blind friend, who allowed his eyes to be torn out for his freedom, Amizoces tears out his own eyes too in gratitude to his friend Dandamis.⁴¹ This story about Dandamis and Amizoces obviously is an extreme example of a mutual gesture of benefaction among friends in the ancient world. Yet, it is an example of the depth of one's disposition to do anything for a friend, even if it comes down to ripping out one's eyes, or losing one's precious possession. Likewise, in the context of the Letter to the Galatians, Paul writes

⁴⁰ See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.8.9.

⁴¹ Lucian, *Tox.* 40–41; Richard I. Pervo, "With Lucia: Who Needs Friends? Friendship in the *Toxaris*," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997) 174–175.

about the Galatian Christians' commitment to his wellbeing, reminding them of their unalloyed fidelity in providing him with the care he needs.

Paul's rhetorical question in Galatians 4:16 (ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;) continues the theme of friendship in two ways: (1) Paul alludes to the friendship topos of telling the truth to a friend; and (2) Paul's question indicates that he returned the favor granted to him by the Galatians when he proclaimed the truth about God's gratuitous gift of divine favor through Christ to them. The Galatians will recognize Paul's rhetorical question to include his conviction that he has now proclaimed to them the truth of the gospel (see Gal 2:5, 14: ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) of God's relationship of benefaction with humanity through Christ. Paul and the Galatian Christians know that a genuine friend tells the truth (ἀληθεύω) rather than flatters (κολακεύω). A friend engages in truth-telling, in frankness of speech (παρρησία), while the flatterer (κόλαξ) does not. In other words, while "candor is the sign of the genuine friend, the pretender gives himself away by a self-interested adulation that is exploitative rather than altruistic."⁴² In the context of Galatians, Bruce observes, "in telling them the truth Paul is their friend. The truth he is now telling them is the same as what he told them when first he came among them, and on that occasion, it won their friendship for him. For this truth is nothing other than the good news of divine grace."⁴³

⁴² Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness and Flattery," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996) 7. Elsewhere, David Konstan observes, "where there are inequalities in status and wealth between friends, there is room for exploitation." See Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness," 10.

⁴³ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 211.

The people of the ancient world know that it is unbecoming of a friend to engage in flattery, since it is an act that is in itself completely devoid of truth.⁴⁴ Originally, flattery arises out of the inequality of status and of wealth in of the ancient world that creates a culture whereby the less privileged members of society ingratiate themselves with social luminaries or a socio-economically advantaged friend.⁴⁵ In other words, in a world of socio-political and economic inequalities, persons of lower standing in the pyramid of privilege and status would ordinarily profit by seeking favor from superiors, often by means of flattery. By and large, the flatterer always gain status by questionable means disguised as sincere.

In the context of Galatians, does Paul describe his Jewish Christian opponents as gaining status from their ministry to the Galatian Christians through pretentious means? Does Paul really associate his Jewish Christian opponents with the act of flattery? In other words, does Paul actually think that his Jewish Christian opponents belong to the class of people that engage in flattery in order to gain status and reward as missionaries to the Galatian Christians? Indeed Paul accuses his Jewish Christian opponents of self-serving ministry to the Galatian Christians. He alleges that they will boast about the Galatians' obedience to the Law (Gal 6:13b) for their self-serving benefit. In the ancient world, a flatterer is self-serving, and exploitative.⁴⁶ Everything a flatterer does is for self-benefit and for self-centered goals. In chapter four, we shall examine in more detail Paul's view of his Jewish Christian opponents. In the immediate context of Paul's accusation against his Jewish Christian opponents, it is pertinent to keep in mind that perhaps

⁴⁴ See Cicero, *Amic.* 24.89–90; 25.91–92 (Falconer, LCL).

⁴⁵ See Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness," 10.

⁴⁶ See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.6.9.

credit for the successful persuasion of gentile Christians like the Galatians to take up Jewish identities such as circumcision, law observance, and perhaps dietary regulations. Paul's Jewish Christian opponents seem to be interested in their self-image among the Jewish Christian communities. If they could persuade gentile Christians like the Galatians to live like Jews through circumcision and law observance (Gal 2:15), they will carry their successful ministry in the gentile world among other Jewish Christians missionaries as a badge of honor.

In line with Paul's scheme of thought, the enemy (Gal 4:16: ἐχθρός) of the Galatian Christians' experience of God's gratuitous gift of divine favor through Christ is his Jewish Christian opponents. The gentile Christians of Galatia clearly will discern the contrast Paul introduces between his friendship with them and their alleged friendship with his Jewish Christian opponents. Paul labels the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents as not beneficial, that is, as lacking the expectations of an honest, friendly gesture that involve the giving and receiving of favor (Gal 4:17a: ζηλοῦσιν οὐ καλῶς).⁴⁷ To strengthen his position against his Jewish Christian opponents, Paul brands their ministry as self-serving (Gal 4:17: ἀλλὰ ἐκκλεῖσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν, ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε; see Gal 6:13b).⁴⁸ Seen through the lens of Paul's argument, the Jewish Christian opponents of Paul are neither true friends of the Galatian Christians nor interested in the Galatian Christians experience of God's gratuitous gift of divine favor through Christ. For Paul, therefore, their ministry to the gentile Christians of Galatia is to embolden their own self-serving interest and ego. Kraftchick rightly notes that Paul's description of the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents has "no semblance of reciprocity, as they [the Jewish

⁴⁷ See BDAG, 505.

⁴⁸ Contra Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 238–239.

opponents of Paul] seek only their own benefit.”⁴⁹ As a result of the ministry of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents, the Galatian Christians will sever ties of friendship with Paul, and they will fall out of their relationship of benefaction with Christ (Gal 5:4: τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε).⁵⁰

Unlike his Jewish Christian opponents, Paul’s relationship with the Galatian Christians is a genuine gesture of friendship, and it is an experience of a relationship of benefaction for both Paul and the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:18a: καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ πάντοτε). A comment of Plutarch might help one to understand Paul’s statement in Galatians 4:18a. Plutarch concludes that the current coin of friendship (νόμισμα φιλίας) is goodwill and favor with a combination of virtue (εὐνοια καὶ χάρις μετ’ ἀρετῆς).⁵¹ On this note, Paul seems to suggest that his friendship with the Galatian Christians is characterized by goodwill and favor (εὐνοια καὶ χάρις). Yet the zeal of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents brings no benefits to the Galatian Christians (see Gal 4:17a: ζηλοῦσιν οὐ καλῶς). Rather the zeal of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents for the Galatian Christians is self-serving undermining the true sense of friendship in the ancient world. For it is truly the understanding of genuine friendship in the ancient world to do what is good to benefit a friend (see Gal 4:18b: καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ πάντοτε).

Paul’s view on seeking the good of a friend also finds support in a comment of Aristotle. Aristotle notes, “let friendship then be wishing for anyone the things which we believe to be good (ἔστω δὴ τὸ φιλεῖν τὸ βούλεσθαι τινι ἃ οἶεται ἀγαθὰ), for [the friend’s] sake but not for our own. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return, and those who think their relationship is of

⁴⁹ Kraftchick, “Πάθη in Paul,” 65.

⁵⁰ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 211–212; Matera, *Galatians*, 161.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93F.

this character consider themselves friends.”⁵² It seems clear that Paul’s relationship with the Galatian Christians is motivated by the understanding of friendship such as the one espoused by Aristotle. For the broader context of Galatians 4:12–20 indicates that Paul recovers from illness on account of the Galatian Christians’ generous care. Then, Paul reciprocates their friendship by proclaiming to them the gospel of divine favor, a benefit they have received through Christ (Gal 4:13–14; see 3:1–5). Betz insightfully notes that Paul knows the Greco-Roman “principles of true friendship: good courting must be done in a good way and continuously. This principle is, of course, the opposite of ζηλοῦσιν οὐ καλῶς (“courting in a bad way”) described in v 17.”⁵³

A comment of Cicero’s also helps to explain the distinction drawn by Paul between himself and his Jewish Christian opponents. In his *De Amicitia*, Cicero describes the social implication of the language of friendship such as Paul uses to describe the difference between his relationship with the Galatian Christians and their relationship with Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents. Cicero notes that a true friend is “frank, sociable and sympathetic (*simplicem praeterea et communem et consentientem*), one who is likely to be influenced by the same motives as yourself.”⁵⁴ The opposite of this will be one who by “nature is full of [trickery and

⁵² Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.4.2–3 (Freese, LCL).

⁵³ Betz, *Galatians*, 231.

⁵⁴ Cicero, *Amic.* 18.65 (Falconer, LCL). Similarly, the principle with which Cicero identifies the contrast between those who are genuine friends and those who pretend to be true friends might have provided the background for Paul’s comment in Gal 4:17–18. Cicero notes, “feelings are won over by a man’s merit, achievements or reputable life, qualifications easier to embellish, if only they are real, than to fabricate where nonexistent. But attributes useful in an advocate are a mild tone, a countenance expressive of modesty, gentle language, and the faculty of seeming to be dealing reluctantly and under compulsion with something you are really anxious to prove. It is very helpful to display the tokens of good nature, kindness, calmness, loyalty and a disposition that is pleasing . . . , and all the qualities

twisting (*ingenium et tortuosum*)]; and indeed, one who is untouched by the same influences as yourself and is naturally unsympathetic.”⁵⁵ On the strength of Cicero’s comments, therefore, Paul’s friendship relationship with the Galatian Christians is built on *pathos* and frankness.

The friendship theme in Galatians 4:18 is further supported by the remarks of Plutarch, which perhaps, Paul’s gentile auditors would recognize. The Galatian Christians know that what keeps friends in close fellowship is their mutual acts of kindness (φιλοφροσύνας) towards one another.⁵⁶ Elsewhere, Plutarch outlines the three elements that fosters true friendship as “virtue as a good thing, intimacy as a pleasant thing and usefulness as a necessary thing (τὴν ἀρετὴν ὡς καλόν, καὶ τὴν συνήθειαν ὡς ἡδύ, καὶ τὴν χρείαν ὡς ἀναγκαῖον).”⁵⁷ The good deed that Paul and the Galatian Christians did towards one another is a sign that they chose virtue and their actions were useful for the good of one another.

Paul’s statement that “not only when I am present with you (Gal 4:18b: μὴ μόνον ἐν τῷ παρεῖναι με πρὸς ὑμᾶς) continues, as Betz observes, with the friendship *topoi* that underscore this section of the letter. Paul’s friendship with the Galatian Christians, apparently, is tested by physical separation.⁵⁸ Paul dismisses the effect of his absence from the community and the void it has created for the subsequent ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents among the Galatian

belonging to men who are upright, ... and are powerful in winning goodwill; accordingly, the very opposites of these qualities must be ascribed to our opponents.” See Cicero, *De or.* 2.43.182.

⁵⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 18.65.

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 95A.

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 94B.

⁵⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 232.

Christians. Paul appeals to the image of a mother and her children in describing his relationship with the Galatian Christians to diminish the void that has been created by his absence from the community (Gal 4:19).⁵⁹ For both Paul and the Galatian Christians know far too well that physical separation does not diminish the love of a mother and her child. In chapter two, we noted that the Galatians have become adopted children of God (Gal 4:5–7), members of God’s household and heirs to God’s favor through Christ (Gal 3:29). It is for this reason that Paul addresses them several times as ἀδελφοί, kinsmen/women (Gal 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18).⁶⁰ Indeed, the family imagery between God and the Gentile Christians of Galatia is based on the relationship of benefaction which God gratuitously granted to them. Likewise, Paul identifies his relationship with the Galatian Christians with family imagery because he has become a benefactor of their experience of God’s favor (Gal 4:19).

What is unique about Paul’s family image in Galatians 4:19a is the idea of Paul’s “motherhood.” He identifies himself as a woman in labor (Gal 4:19a: ὠδίνω) until the Galatian Christians fully appreciate God’s gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 1:4; 2:20–21). In 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul identifies his ministry among the Thessalonians as the tender care of a nursing mother for her own children (ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα). It seems to me that there is a level of intentionality in Paul’s appeal to the relationship of a mother with her children

⁵⁹ Contra Betz, *Galatians*, 233. Betz suggests, “one should assume that the sentence in v 18 is anacoluthic.” On the contrary, Paul seems to support what he said in v 18 by appealing to the family imagery of intimacy and bond to underscore the relationship he has with the Galatian Christians.

⁶⁰ Meeks notes that Christians call one another “brothers” and “sisters.” The term appears “far more frequently in the Pauline letters than anywhere else in the earliest Christian literature. [It] appears sixty-five times in the undoubtedly authentic letters.” See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (2nd ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003) 87.

to describe his own relationship with the Galatian Christians. Both a mother and her children share an intimate love for each other that includes looking out for the welfare of one another. Likewise, Paul and the Galatian Christians share a friendship that involves doing what is good towards one another. It is pertinent to keep in mind that in Galatians 4:14–15 Paul acknowledges that he is favorably treated by the Galatian Christians and they are the benefactors of his wellbeing. Then, in Galatians 4:19, Paul reveals his role as a benefactor to the Galatian Christians with the imagery of motherhood. While the identity of the Galatian Christians as ἀδελφοί in Galatians 4:12 is about to be compromised by the teaching of Paul’s Jewish Christians opponents, then, Paul writes to them as a mother concerned for her children would have done (Gal 4:19: τέκνα μου). Beverly R. Gaventa is right to note that “the goal of Paul’s anguish, in this instance, is that Christ be formed within the communities of believers in Galatia.”⁶¹

Moreover, by appealing to the relationship of a mother and her children, Paul seems to support his argument that physical absence should not affect his relationship with the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:18). He pledges to continue his ministry of proclaiming the gospel of God’s favor through Christ to the Galatian Christians. In fact, the Galatian Christians will recognize the implication of Paul’s appeal to the bond of intimacy between a mother and their children in describing his relationship with them. Indeed, in antiquity friendship is described with imagery of the relationship between parents and their children. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle

⁶¹ Gaventa, “The Maternity of Paul: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:19,” in *The Conversation Continues. Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (eds. Robert T. Fortna & Beverly R. Gaventa, Nashville: Abingdon, 1990) 191.

describes friendship in terms of the affection parents have for their children.⁶² Parents show affection to their children by being favorably disposed for their wellbeing.⁶³ In the same vein, Paul is affectionately disposed for the good of the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:18a) until they embrace fully the gratuitous favor of God through Christ Jesus. As a mother, Paul is genuinely committed to their experience of God's gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 2:5).

Paul further expresses his deep commitment to the wellbeing of the Galatians Christians by stating his desire to be physically present with them (Gal 4:20a). The phrase ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου (Gal 4:20b) indicates Paul's strong desire to be physically present in the community and to reiterate the gospel of God's gift of divine favor which he previously proclaim to them and which they receive with joy.⁶⁴ Accordingly, Paul's longing for physical presence with the Galatian Christians to speak to them supports his commitment to their experience of God's gift of divine favor through Christ. On account of his longing for the Gentile Christians of Galatia, Paul expresses a genuine concern for their growth in their relationship with God (Gal 4:20; see Gal 4:11).

Betz suggests that the phrase ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν (I am perplexed about you, Gal 4:20c) betrays the fact that Paul's strong "emotional plea ends with a confession of helplessness and the admission of defeat in the argument."⁶⁵ But how can Paul's consistent and strong desire for his

⁶² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.3 (Rackham, LCL).

⁶³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.8.3; Cicero, *Amic.* 27; see Pliny, *Pan.* 26.3–4.

⁶⁴ Betz explains that by appealing to the epistolary expression "exchange the voice," Paul suggests "that he could talk to the Galatians better orally than by the poor substitute of the letter." See Betz, *Galatians*, 236.

⁶⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 236–237.

message to find firm ground among the Galatian Christians be an admission of defeat? In other words, why will Paul write so persuasively and passionately if he has accepted defeat in the argument against his Jewish Christian opponents for the faith of the Galatian Christians? Observe Paul's strong argument in the letter in which he appeals to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction as an ardent desire to win back the Galatian Christians to his brand of gospel message about God in relationship with humanity.

A closer reading of Galatians 4:12–20, especially vv 18–20 shows that Paul is determined to persuade the Galatian Christians to remain in the gospel of God's gift of divine favor through Christ which he proclaims to them. On the basis of our analysis of vv 18–20, one may discern that Paul's perplexity in Galatians 4:20c captures his feeling of surprise that the gentile Christians of Galatia are about to abandon God's gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 3:1–5) which he proclaimed to them for the teachings of his Jewish Christian opponents, which cuts them off from the relationship of divine favor that God has established with humanity through Christ (Gal 5:4). Indeed taken together, Paul expresses an urgent desire to be with them once again and to reinstruct them on the truth (ἀλήθεια) of his gospel of divine favor through Christ.⁶⁶ Moreover, the terms with which Paul describes his friendship with the Galatians in Galatians 4:12–20, namely, brethren (v 12: ἀδελφοί), gift-exchange (v 14), mutual benefit (v 15, 18), and maternal love (vv 19–20), show that their relationship is an integral aspect of his appeal to the language of benefaction against the backdrop of Greco-Roman world.⁶⁷ Furthermore, he will appeal to the gift exchange experience among friends in the Greco-Roman world, as we will

⁶⁶ Contra Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 241.

⁶⁷ See Smith, “Ἐκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17,” 497.

demonstrate below, to exhort the Galatian Christians to a life of mutual benefit towards one another in the community.

3.2.2. Doing Good to One Another

When we examined divine-human relationship in chapter two, we pointed out that the ethical section of the letter (Gal 5:1–6:10) includes an invitation to believers, in particular to the Galatian Christians, to reciprocate in their relationship of benefaction with God through acts of loyalty and fidelity. In this same ethical section of the letter, Paul outlines the necessity of a relationship of benefaction among the members of the Christian community in Galatia. In Paul's scheme of thought, the Galatian Christians' experience of God's gift of divine favor as well as their fidelity and loyalty to God are the rationale behind their relationship of benefaction with one another in the community. Hence, Paul repeatedly appeals to members of the community to perform acts of favor towards one another. Paul exhorts them to a mutual service of love (Gal 5:13, 14; 1 Thess 3:12; Rom 12:9–10; Phil 2:1–2), he encourages them to gently admonish a wrongdoer (Gal 6:1; Rom 15:1–2), he exhorts them to be supportive of the one who is experiencing some challenges (Gal 6:2), he encourages them always to share good things with everyone (Gal 6:6), and to be willing to do good towards one another (Gal 6:10). To foster this relationship of friendship in the community, Paul then urges them to avoid harmful behavior towards one another (Gal 5:15) and unhealthy competition against one another (Gal 5:26). Needless to say, the Galatian Christians will recognize the social implication of the message of Paul on community cohesion since he is drawing from the friendship system of their cultural world. We shall go into some detail in our analysis to show how Paul's argument is congruent with the relationship of benefaction of the Greco-Roman world. We have consistently

maintained that the Galatian Christians will recognize that Paul is drawing from the values of their cultural location in persuading them to embrace his message.

We noted in chapter two that Paul deliberately identifies the Galatian Christians' relationship of benefaction with God through Christ as a bond of love. For Christ died out of love so that humanity might experience God's favor (Gal 2:21). Differently phrased, Christ's self-gift on the cross (Gal 2:20: παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ) is a manifestation of the essence of God's love and favor to humanity (Gal 1:4), benefits Jews and Gentiles both enjoy. Therefore, Paul exhorts the Galatian Christians to imitate Christ's love for humanity by serving one another through love (Gal 5:13c: διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις). This is because they have experienced the freedom to love through Christ's loving act of liberating humanity from the present evil forces (Gal 1:4) so that the human family can enjoy God's favor.⁶⁸ On this note, Paul contrasts the unrewarding service under the Law (Gal 5:1: καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας, see Gal 3:23–24) and the elemental spirits of the world (Gal 4:8: ... ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς) with loving service of one another (Gal 5:13: ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις) made possible by God's favor through Christ's death. In Paul's view the relationship under the Law and the elemental spirits of the world is burdensome, submissive, involuntary, unfriendly, not beneficial and non-reciprocal. In contrast, the loving relationship of benefaction with God and the members of the community is selfless, free, voluntary, mutual, beneficial, and rewarding.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ This is the position that we have taken when we examined the meaning of freedom in Galatians in chapter two. We concluded that freedom in Galatians is the distinctive feature of a way of life under God's favor or χάρις. The gift of freedom comes from the liberating death of Christ on the cross.

⁶⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 274.

The invitation to serve one another through love is also an aspect of Paul's overall appeal to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction because to do good for the sake of someone else is an essential aspect of the meaning of friendship in antiquity. This point of view finds support in the thought of Cicero, who notes that friendly relationship (*amicitia*) between persons is as a result of true love (*amor*). True love creates the context for the sharing of benefits (*beneficia*) in a spirit of reciprocity.⁷⁰ If there is any law that ought to be fulfilled, it is, in Paul's view, the law of love (Gal 5:14; see Gal 6:2), the law of mutual acts of kindness, looking out for the wellbeing of the other in total self-giving. "This love fulfils the requirements of the Law and is the wellspring from which all acceptable ethical activity and all valid social relationship stem."⁷¹ In this way Paul redefines the meaning of the Law for his gentile audience by stating that to give oneself for the wellbeing of the other in a friendship relationship is, in fact, the singular requirement of the Law (Gal 5:14). To this end, while the Mosaic Law requires the fulfillment of every single tenet of the Law (Gal 3:10, 12, 5:3; 6:13), the Law of Christ is summed up in the singular invitation to love and give oneself for others just as Christ loves us and has given himself up for humanity (Gal 2:20: παραδιδόναι ἑαυτοῦ).⁷² For Paul, therefore, the only Law that is binding and obligatory is the Law of Christ (Gal 6:2b: τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ), which requires that the members of the community in Galatia look out for the wellbeing of one another in a total gift of themselves in love.

⁷⁰ Cicero, *Amic.* 8.26–27.

⁷¹ Nickle, *The Collection*, 103.

⁷² Betz, *Galatians*, 275.

Paul's appeal to the Galatian Christians to love one another parallels his invitation to the community to bear the burden of one another (Gal 6:2a: ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε). Paul knows that the willingness to bear one another's burden must come from genuine love. There are examples of willingness to bear the burden of another in the ancient world, and these make it possible for the Galatian Christians to recognize not just Paul's theological message but even more so the social implication of his argument. For instance, in the conversation between Socrates and Aristarchus as Xenophon recounts it, we are presented with what apparently is an example from the social context of the Greco-Roman world similar to Paul's invitation to the Galatian Christians to take very seriously their relationship of looking out for the wellbeing of one another. Xenophon describes Socrates as one who looks after the interest or wellbeing of a friend in need of advice or material support. When Aristarchus showed visible signs of being troubled by the realities of life around him noticing Aristarchus' apparent anxiety, Socrates urges Aristarchus to share with his friends the burden he is carrying in his mind. Socrates pledges to Aristarchus that his friends, including Socrates himself, will do whatever is necessary to alleviate the burden their friend bears (Ἔοικας ἔφη, ὃ Ἀρίσταρχε, βαρέως φέρειν τι. χρὴ δὲ τοῦ βάρους τοῖς φίλοις μεταδιδόναι. ἴσως γὰρ ἂν τί σε καὶ ἡμεῖς κουφίσαιμεν).⁷³ As the conversation progresses, it becomes clear that Aristarchus faces the challenge of finding a solution to the plight of his kinswomen (ἀδελφαί), who are being left behind on account of the wave of civil unrest in the city (ἔστασίασεν ἡ πόλις). The economic hardship caused by the civil unrest has created acrimony between Aristarchus and his kinswomen.⁷⁴ In spite of the apparently strained

⁷³ Xenophon, *Mem.* II.7.1.

⁷⁴ “[Y]ou don’t like these women and they don’t like you; you think they’re a drain on you and they see that you consider them a burden (οὔτε σὺ ἐκείνας φιλεῖς οὐτ’ ἐκεῖναι σέ, σὺ μὲν ἠγοούμενος αὐτάς

relationship between Aristarchus and his kinswomen, Socrates counsels him that remembering past favor (μεμνημένοι τὴν ... χάριν) could potentially strengthen their failing relationship.⁷⁵ Suffice it here to say, it is only in the Greco-Roman convention of giving and receiving favor that Aristarchus and his kinswomen will rediscover their experience of friendship with one another in the community (ἐκ τούτων φιλικώτερόν τε καὶ οἰκειότερον ἀλλήλοις ἔξετε).⁷⁶

In the above example, one may notice a parallel between Paul's exhortation to the Galatian Christians to look out for the wellbeing of one another and Xenophon's account of Socrates' conversation with Aristarchus. Socrates shows genuine concern for the wellbeing of his friend Aristarchus. His concern for Aristarchus produces the wise counsel given to Aristarchus on how he should handle the apparent disharmony with his kinswomen. Similarly, Paul encourages the Galatian Christians to show genuine concern, and be sensitive to the needs of one another in the community. When necessary, to be willing to do whatever is possible to alleviate the pain of one another in the community. Paul uses the phrases τὸ καλὸν ποιῶντες (Gal 6:9a: doing what is noble) and τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐργαζώμεθα (Gal 6:10b: doing what is good) to encourage the Galatian Christians to be mindful of the wellbeing of one another.

By doing what is noble (τὸ καλὸν ποιῶντες) and what is good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐργαζώμεθα) the Galatian Christians uphold the friendship convention of mutual wellbeing towards one another. To do what is noble and good involves restoring a transgressor in the community (Gal

ἐπιζημίους εἶναι σεαυτῶ, ἐκεῖνα δὲ σὲ ὀρῶσαι ἀχθόμενον ἐφ' ἑαυταῖς)." See Xenophon, *Mem.* II. 7. 9 (Marchant, LCL).

⁷⁵ Xenophon, *Mem.* II.7.9.

⁷⁶ Xenophon, *Mem.* II.7.9.

6:1), bearing the burdens of each other (Gal 6:2), “sharing materially with those who teach the gospel message (Gal 6:6),” and participating in the collection to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10).⁷⁷ By and large, it involves taking the opportunity at all times to do good (Gal 6:10b: ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως). Danker notices that the one doing what is good, namely, a good man (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός), is also known as a benefactor (εὐεργέτης).⁷⁸ For instance, Menelaos provides equipment of war to the people of Athens against Chalkidia and Amphipolis. On account of this act of benefaction for the security of Athens the Council decrees that Athenians should recognize Menelaos as a good man (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός). He should be recognized as someone who has done what is good for the people of Athens (ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός ἐστὶν καὶ ποιεῖ ὅτι δύναται[ι ἀγ]αθὸν τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων).⁷⁹

Walter Grundmann observes that the terms καλὸς and ἀγαθός play such an important role in the Greco-Roman world of friendship conventions that these terms variously occur “in the form καλὸς τε καὶ ἀγαθός, καλὸς κἀγαθός, and καλὸς τε κἀγαθός. From there derives the noun καλοκἀγαθός.”⁸⁰ Among the range of meanings assigned to the term καλοκἀγαθός,⁸¹ the one that stands out is found in Demosthenes’ *De Corona*. Demosthenes identifies the καλοκἀγαθός as one

⁷⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 281.

⁷⁸ Danker, *Benefactor*, 318.

⁷⁹ *SIG* 174.14; *Michel* 96.14; Danker, *Benefactor*, 87.

⁸⁰ Walter Grundmann, “καλός,” in *TDNT*, III.538.

⁸¹ Grundmann, *TDNT*, III.536–343.

who is interested in the welfare of the state and not in personal gains.⁸² Such a person is, in fact, a benefactor of the state. Honorific inscriptions provide accounts of the public honor bestowed to a patron on account of “merit and goodness (ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν καὶ καλοκάγαθίας).” Such was a decree issued in Delos by a group of merchants honoring a καλοκάγαθός “with a gold crown in the sacrifices celebrated for Poseidon.”⁸³ And as Harrison observes, city-states promoted the return of gratitude and praise towards those recognized as καλοκάγαθοί.⁸⁴ In an inscription of 48 BCE honoring the priest Akornion, for example, the people of Dionysopolis give honor to benefactors (εὐεργετοῦντας) such as Akornion because he belongs to the class of good people (τιμῶν τοὺς καλο[ῦ]ς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς ἀνδρας). They honor him with a golden crown (χρυσῶ στε[φά|ν]φ) and a statue in the agora (ἀνάστασιν ἀνδρι[ά]ντος τό|πον τὸν ἐπιφανέστατον τῆ[ς] ἀγορᾶς).⁸⁵

In the social milieu of Paul’s auditors, a benefactor, such as a καλοκάγαθός, usually receives a public display of gratitude from the city-state, from the community, or from a guild. The καλοκάγαθός wins public recognition, “friendly relations or alliances,”⁸⁶ and his status is enhanced in the community as a benefactor. This is because as a noble and good person he is concerned for the welfare of the *polis*. When Paul exhorts the Galatians to do what is noble and

⁸² see Grundmann, *TDNT*, III.539; Demosthenes, *Cor.* 18.278.

⁸³ See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 301.

⁸⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 176. As one of the highest honors in the ancient world. see Danker, *Benefactor*, 321.

⁸⁵ *SIG* 762.42–45; *IGRR* 662.42–45; Danker, *Benefactor*, 78.

⁸⁶ Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 23., Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck): 1987) 2.

good towards one another, he exhorts each one of the them to be a καλοκάγαθός towards others. He wants their acts of nobility and goodness towards one another to be a symbiotic experience for the benefit of one another. In other words, in this relationship of mutual acts of kindness the Galatian Christians have the opportunity to grant favor, to show gratitude towards one another, and to be recognized as οἱ καλοὶ τε κἀγαθοί. By appealing to the terminology of doing noble and good (καλός τε καὶ ἀγαθός) deeds towards one another, Paul expects the Galatians Christians to recognize his gospel message as couched in the language of friendship from their cultural world of giving and receiving benefits.

An important caveat to keep in mind is that based on the broader context of the Letter to the Galatians, the ability to do what is noble and good towards others comes from the enabling power of the Spirit (Gal 3:1–5). As we have discussed in chapter two, to follow the Spirit, to be guided by the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 18a, 25) empowers the Galatian Christians to do good and noble deeds towards one another. This is because the one who has received the Spirit possesses the freedom to love and has the right disposition of a καλοκάγαθός or a benefactor.⁸⁷ For the believer's willingness to be favorably disposed towards others' wellbeing makes him or her a true friend who loves (*amor et amicitia*).⁸⁸

Paul's invitation to the one who is taught the word (Gal 6:6a: ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον) and the one who is the teacher of the word (Gal 6:6a: τῷ κατηχοῦντι) should share in all good things (Gal 6:6b: ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς). It is a *classicum exemplum* of how the Galatian Christians ought to live in a community of mutual benefaction, looking out for the wellbeing of one

⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.1.12–13 (Rackham, LCL).

⁸⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 81.12.

another, both in spiritual and material matters. In the broader context of the Letter to the Galatians, the gentile Christians of Galatia are the ones who have been catechized regarding the word (Gal 3:1–5) and Paul is the catechizer of the word (Gal 1:11; 2:9; 4:13, 19).⁸⁹ The suggestion that the mutual benefaction between the catechized and the catechizer (Gal 6:6) is an appeal to “some kind of educational institution as part of the life of the Galatian churches” does not explain the significance of Paul’s statement within the conventions of a friendship system of giving and receiving benefits and with which he presents the argument of the letter.⁹⁰ In my opinion, Galatians 6:6 is an integral part of Paul’s appeal to the Greco-Roman language of benefaction. Paul seems to encourage a mutual sharing of benefits between the one who has been catechized regarding the word and the catechizer of the word. He encourages the Galatian Christians to be disposed to share all good things, spiritual and material, in a spirit of shared interest with one another. This is because they shared every good thing with Paul when he was the catechizer and they were the catechized as recounted in Galatians 4:12–20. For this reason, Paul urges both the teachers in the community and those who receive the word to live in fellowship of mutual benefaction.

It remains only to examine the behavior, in Paul’s view, that is incongruent with the Gospel message of the friendship of mutual favor that he proclaimed to the Christian community in Galatia. In Galatians 5:19–21 Paul outlines a particular way of life that could potentially

⁸⁹ Perhaps, Paul is drawing from a well-known practice between a teacher and a student among the Greco-Roman philosophical schools. In this practice, the student holds in high esteem, and with gratitude, the teacher who is the architect of the students’ knowledge. See for example, the Hippocratic “covenant” in Betz, *Galatians*, 305.

⁹⁰ see Betz, *Galatians*, 305–306.

stymie one's relationship of benefaction with God and with others in the community. This way of life, which Paul calls the "works of the flesh" is selfish, unloving, and doing the "works of the flesh" will benefit no one in particular but the individual who engages in them. In other words, Paul and the Galatian Christians know that no one becomes a benefactor, and no one receives gratitude by engaging in "fornication, impurity, licentiousness, envy, drunkenness, carousing, etc (Gal 5:19–20). And in Galatians 5:15 (εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε) and Galatians 5:26 (ἀλλήλους προκαλοῦμενοι), he warns the Galatian Christians about a way of life that can cause harm to their mutual relationship of benefaction with one another. Acting in a destructive manner towards one another (Gal 5:15, 26) will erode the gains that the community has made in its relationship of benefaction with God and, particularly, in their relationship with one another in the community. Such harmful or destructive behavior is the opposite of looking out for the well-being of one another. For this reason, Paul warns the community on the potentially destructive way of life of loveless choices, and selfish attitudes that affect community cohesion.

Paul urges the Galatian Christians to foster mutual help and favor in the community through a spirit of gentle restoration of a transgressor (Gal 6:1). The Galatian Christians' ability to discern and then to seize the opportunity to do good toward one another (Gal 6:10; Rom 2:10) by serving one another (Gal 5:13–14) and bearing one another's burden (Gal 6:2) will certainly be tested by the apparent transgression (Gal 6:1: παράπτωμα) of a member of the community. While the precise meaning of the word προλαμβάνω in Galatians 6:1 is difficult to determine in this context Paul uses the term to envision a scenario of wrongdoing by someone in the community. Nevertheless, Paul urges the community to do what is noble (τὸ καλὸν ποιοῦντες) and good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐργαζώμεθα) in rehabilitating the transgressor (see Rom 15:1; 1 Cor 7:40).

Paul insists that rehabilitation must be undertaken in a “spirit of gentleness” (Gal 6:1b: ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος; see Gal 5:23) because each one of them is liable to behaviors that can harm the community’s mutual bond of unity and love. Bruce’s comment is very instructive. He says, “the realization of one’s personal vulnerability to temptation should prevent self-righteousness in the treatment of those who have yielded to it.”⁹¹

3.2.3. Jerusalem Collection

Turning to Paul’s campaign to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem, one will notice that just as Paul encourages the relationship of giving and receiving benefits among members of the Christian community in Galatia, he equally creates an opportunity for the Galatian Christians to build their friendship with the Jerusalem church through the collection for the church in Jerusalem. We shall proceed to examine how Paul builds friendship among Jewish and gentile Christians with the project of collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem.

It is in Paul’s campaign to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem that one comes to appreciate one of the most important aspects of Paul’s ministry to the gentile churches he founded in the Greco-Roman world (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:1–9:15; see Rom 15:25–28). Paul uses the collection to establish friendship (φιλία), equality (ἰσότης) and fellowship (κοινωνία) between Jewish and gentile Christians. The account in 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 reveals that the gentile Christians in Galatia participated in this gratuitous act of sharing their material resources with the poor in Jerusalem. Paul draws the attention of the Galatian Christians to their profound act of benefaction on behalf of the poor in Jerusalem by mentioning the collection in Galatians 2:10. He remembers this goodwill (εὐνοία) of the Galatians in the context of retelling

⁹¹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 260.

the friendship agreement he reached with the representatives of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:1–10). Although, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem seems to have come up as a request from the “pillars of the Church” in Jerusalem, Paul quickly adds that it has been something he was disposed to do, namely, to encourage the gentile churches to be generous with their resources, particularly to help the poor in Jerusalem.

At the Jerusalem Council both Paul and the “pillars of the Church” discuss how Paul may persuade his converts to Christianity from the Greco-Roman world to contribute money for the poor in Jerusalem (Gal 2:1–10).⁹² Paul’s most extensive discussion of the Jerusalem collection is in 2 Corinthians 8–9. Harrison has provided a summary of the history of interpretation of the Jerusalem collection in modern scholarship. He divides the most influential studies into three main categories, namely, interpretations that are eschatological, ecumenical, or based on obligation.⁹³ We shall not reproduce here the scholarly views that already have been examined by Harrison. Nevertheless, Harrison’s survey shows that modern scholars have failed to appreciate the significance of the Greco-Roman context of Paul’s campaign for money for the Jerusalem church. He strongly suggests that modern scholars “underestimate the complexity of Graeco-Roman reciprocity conventions in regard to the collection.”⁹⁴ In other words, modern commentators have failed to recognize that the Greco-Roman context of giving and receiving favor, which produces mutual obligation between the benefactor and the beneficiary, is the

⁹² See Jouette M. Bassler, *God & Mammon. Asking for Money in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991) 89.

⁹³ See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 304–310; Nickle, *The Collection*, 100–143.

⁹⁴ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 311.

backdrop against Paul's campaign for the Jerusalem collection. In fact, in the Greco-Roman world of Paul's auditors, relationships such as the one that Paul wishes to establish between gentile Christians and their Jewish counterparts in Jerusalem, are nurtured and maintained by the convention of benefaction.

What motivates Paul to make collecting money from gentile churches to benefit the Jerusalem church a priority of his ministry? As Jouette M. Bassler says, "the primary understanding of the collection must have been an act of benevolence, ... latent within the collection [is] a message of solidarity between the two wings of the Christian mission."⁹⁵ For Paul, and perhaps also the "pillars of the Church," know that the Greco-Roman world understands and appreciates the social value of giving and receiving favor. Stephan Joubert's comment is illuminating:

Since his communities [are] well versed in the basic principles and obligations inherent to gift exchange that permeated most forms of social interaction in the Graeco-Roman world, this social exchange relationship [is] the obvious choice, by means of which to come to terms with the nature and organisation of the collection.⁹⁶

On this note, Paul is confident that his gentile churches will happily share their resources with the poor in Jerusalem. This is based on the fact that the justification to support this project are present already in their cultural world in the notion of gift exchange through which most friendship relationships are cultivated and fostered.

⁹⁵ Bassler, *God & Mammon*, 93.

⁹⁶ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 74. Elsewhere on the Greco-Roman context of the Jerusalem collection, Stephan Joubert notes that Paul utilizes "principles inherent in Graeco-Roman benefit exchange, which provided the basic interpretative framework of this project." See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 131.

The letters of Paul betray different ways that the apostle describes the campaign of collecting money for the Jerusalem church. In 1 Corinthians 16:2 he identifies the campaign with a term that carries the meaning of an official collection of money, like the collection of taxes (λογεῖα). In 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13 and Romans 15:26, Paul calls the collection an act of mutual fellowship (κοινωνία), and in 2 Corinthians 9:1, 12, 13, Paul identifies the campaign as a service (διακονία) rendered by the gentile churches for the benefit of the Jerusalem church. Finally, in 2 Corinthians 9:12 and Romans 15:27, he calls the collection a ceremonial service (λειτουργία), and harvest of righteousness (τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης) in 2 Corinthians 9:10. These various ways that Paul employs to describe the project have garnered scholarly investigations with very little consensus.

The only consensus there is concerns the interpretation of the term λογεῖα. Gerhard Kittel observes that in the Greco-Roman world, the commonplace meaning of the term λογεῖα is “tax,” “collection” or “collection of money” in a religious context.⁹⁷ But when we turn to Paul’s use of the term in Galatians, we discover that scholars agree that the collection for Jerusalem is a free gift from the gentile churches; it is never a tax imposed on the gentile churches. Fitzmyer agrees: nothing in the text will support any interpretation that identifies the collection for Jerusalem as a tax levied on the gentile churches (1 Cor 16:2).⁹⁸ Rather, Fitzmyer suggests, Paul is acquainted with the custom where “new converts and sympathizers” to Judaism give a donation as a mark of “unity and solidarity with God’s people, and as a means of expiation for sins (Sir 3:30; Tobit

⁹⁷ Gerhard Kittel, “λογεῖα,” *TDNT*, IV.282. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

⁹⁸ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 613; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1318.

4:7–11).”⁹⁹ It seems a bit strained to suggest that the sin offering of “new converts and sympathizers to Judaism” is the context of Paul’s campaign for the Jerusalem collection. Fitzmyer’s claim is that Paul wishes to use this custom in Judaism to bring together Jewish Christians and their gentile Christians counterparts.¹⁰⁰ It seems to me that Paul is rather appealing to the conventions of gift exchange in a friendship relationship that is recognizable to his auditors in the Greco-Roman world to build unity, equality, fellowship, and friendship among Jewish and gentile Christians.

Therefore, we shall insist that gentile Christians like the Galatians will recognize Paul’s request against the backdrop of their social value of fostering a friendship through gift exchange and sharing of resources. In fact, the terms of χάρις (1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:4, 19), κοινωνία (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4), διακονία (Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1; Acts 11:29), and εὐλογία (2 Cor 9:5) make Paul’s request easily recognizable to the gentile Christians on the basis of the social implications of these terms in antiquity. They will appreciate the message of Paul as a mark of his sensitivity to their shared cultural values and as a mark of appreciation for the role their cultural values play with respect to their newfound favor with God, with one another and with Christian community in Jerusalem. For this reason, therefore, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem will garner cooperation and enthusiasm from Paul’s gentile Christians.

Turning to the text of 1 Corinthians 16:1–4, we see that Paul instructs the Corinthian Christians with the same instruction he had previously given to the Galatian Christians on completing the collection for Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1). This is not the only instance where Paul

⁹⁹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 613.

¹⁰⁰ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 613.

asks a Christian community to follow the lead of another community elsewhere in the empire. For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, Paul asks the Thessalonian Christians to follow the lead of the Judean churches.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Paul asks the Corinthian church not only to follow the same instruction he gave to the Galatian Christians, but also to hasten the completion of the collection with the same eagerness the Christians of Macedonia had (2 Cor 8:1–5). Conversely, Paul reveals that the eagerness of the Corinthian church to complete the collection has inspired the Macedonian church (2 Cor 9:2). Did Paul create competition among his gentile churches in order to encourage the generous completion of the collection for Jerusalem? In other words, based on the Greco-Roman custom of giving and receiving favors, what level of pride does Paul’s language of using one community’s generous contribution to encourage another community create among his gentile churches?

Obviously, the instruction given to the Galatian Christians on how to complete the collection for the poor in Jerusalem was successful. For this reason, Paul replicates the instruction in his campaign for the collection among the Corinthian Christians, by encouraging them to follow the example of the Galatian church (1 Cor 16:1).¹⁰² By and large, the collection

¹⁰¹ Contrariwise, some scholars have concluded that reference to the Judean churches is un-Pauline. See Richard, *First and Second Thessalonian*, 119.

¹⁰² Joseph Fitzmyer assumes that Paul exhorts the Galatian Christians to undertake the collection for the Jerusalem church during his second visit to the region. See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 613. However, in post-Jerusalem council missionary activities of Paul, he visited the regions of the Galatia during a series of missionary activities known in scholarship as Paul’s Second Missionary Journey. See Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul*, 27–30. Indeed, Paul’s decision to encourage his Gentile converts to contribute money for the poor in Jerusalem is publicly revealed for the first time at the Jerusalem council (Gal 2:1–10). With this in mind, it is likely that Paul mentioned the collection for the poor in Jerusalem to the Galatian Christians during his first visit to the region, and perhaps, during the same visit, he gave instructions on how the collection should be undertaken. See Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 43–47; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 78. Nickel observes that Paul “appears to have devoted a large part of his so-

for the Jerusalem church “takes place throughout the whole of Paul’s missionary territory.”¹⁰³ In other words, Paul establishes solidarity not only “between those who give and those who receive but also the co-solidarity of the wider community of givers in their common recognition of the need for support for the Jerusalem church.”¹⁰⁴

The instruction given to the Galatian church, which Paul replicates in Corinthians requires, according to an individual’s resources, members of the community to put aside weekly one’s gift for the Jerusalem church. Paul anticipates that this strategy will increase each person’s monetary gift so that it becomes “a fitting gift for the poor in Jerusalem.”¹⁰⁵ Literally, the Greek verb εὐοδόω means to “go along a good road.”¹⁰⁶ But Paul uses it figuratively to mean one’s professional success or prosperity (1 Cor 16:2).¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, the collection is based on an individual’s financial capabilities. In other words, in this instruction given to the Galatian Christians and others, Paul wants one’s contribution to be determined by one’s resources or ability (see 2 Cor 8:3; 2 Cor 9:7). The churches of Macedonia (2 Cor 8:1: ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας), for example, show great interest in participating in the relief of fellowship (2 Cor 8:4: τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν) for the saints. Paul is prepared to travel to Jerusalem with their

called ‘third missionary journey’ (Acts 18:23–21:16) to its promotions and collection.” See Nickel, *The Collection*, 13.

¹⁰³ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

¹⁰⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1320.

¹⁰⁵ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 615.

¹⁰⁶ BDAG, 410.

¹⁰⁷ BDAG, 410.

generous gift for the saints (1 Cor 16:3: τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ). In 2 Corinthians 8:19, he recommends that a delegation, which perhaps includes himself, will deliver their bountiful/generous service (τῆ χάριτι ταύτη τῆ διακονουμένη) to Jerusalem (see Rom 15:25, 31; Acts 11:30).

Observe that in Paul's elaborate discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8–9, he does not only identify the favor that the churches of Galatia, Macedonia and Corinth give to the Jerusalem church with the term *χάρις*. Also, Paul links Jesus' self-gift on the cross for humanity, as we have discussed in chapter two, with the term *χάρις*. By mentioning Christ's gratuitous gift of himself to humanity in the same breath with his discussion of the Jerusalem collection (2 Cor 8:8–9), Paul presents Christ as an exemplary benefactor, whose gift to humanity serves as an example to the gentile churches to become benefactors of the poor in Jerusalem. In other words, just as Christ gratuitously (τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) enriched believers with divine favor by giving himself on the cross (2 Cor 8:9), likewise Paul exhorts the Corinthians to show their generosity towards the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:7 ἐν ταύτη τῆ χάριτι περισσεύετε). According to Paul, the Macedonians are already being emboldened by their experience of divine favor (2 Cor 8:1: τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ). As a result, in spite of their limited resources, they show remarkable generosity by sharing their riches (2 Cor 8:2: ἢ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν) through their contribution to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:4: τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους).¹⁰⁸ This is because the Macedonian Christians have been enriched by Christ (2 Cor 8:9: δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῆ ἐκείνου πτωχεία πλουτήσητε), and they have given

¹⁰⁸ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 136–137.

themselves to Christ and to Paul and his companions as intended by God (2 Cor 8:5: ἐαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ).¹⁰⁹ By giving themselves to Paul and his companions, the Macedonian Christians have accepted the divine origin of Paul’s message, and they have embraced God’s gift of divine favor through Christ.

The similarity between Christ’s self-gift to humanity (Gal 1:4; 2:20–20) and the gentile churches’ generous gift to the saints in Jerusalem, as Paul presents it, is that both are an act of love. For just as the death of Christ is an act of love (Gal 2:20: τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ; See Rom 5:8), likewise the gentile churches’ share of their resources with the Jerusalem church is a proof of their love (2 Cor 8:24: ἔνδειξις τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν, see Gal 5:13–14; 6:6, 9–10). We should keep in mind that “by speaking about the self-gift of Christ [Paul is] not urging them to reproduce the function which Christ [has] already accomplished once and for all, but rather they [are] to emulate the selflessness of their Lord.”¹¹⁰ In sum, both the Gentile and the Jerusalem churches are united in a fellowship of mutual favor on account of God’s favor, which they have received (2 Cor 9:13–15; Rom 15:26–27).¹¹¹ We have pointed out in chapter two that Paul’s language of divine favor underscores God’s initiative in bringing Jews and Gentiles under one bond of unity. The sharing of material

¹⁰⁹ See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 296–297. Stephan Joubert adds, “the Macedonians are described as ideal partners in the reciprocal relationship with Jerusalem because of their acceptance of Paul’s motivation of the nature of the collection. They responded exactly as grateful beneficiaries should, by giving verbal expression to their gratitude and their eagerness to become involved in their reciprocal relationship.” See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 139, 176–179.

¹¹⁰ Nickle, *The Collection*, 120.

¹¹¹ See Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7., ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999) 586.

and spiritual resources among the gentile and Jerusalem churches respectively, builds and fosters their family ties in the household of God (Gal 3:26; 4:5–6).

The agreement between the Jerusalem church, represented by the “pillars of the Church” and the gentile churches represented by Paul and Barnabas, establishes a bond of fellowship between the churches. For when the council recognizes the divine favor given to Paul, the “pillars of the Church” extend to Paul “the right hand of fellowship” (Gal 2:9). Betz suggests that the agreement of fellowship reached by the representatives of the Churches is “between equal partners.”¹¹² This is because they recognize the χάρις of God at work in their respective ministries to the churches in Jerusalem and in the Greco-Roman world. As a result, both Paul and the “pillars of the Church” share the right hand of fellowship (Gal 2:9: δεξιᾶς ἔδωκαν ... κοινωρίας), and agree to a friendship of giving and receiving benefits among the respective churches they represent (Gal 2:10). For the Jerusalem collection completes the agreement reached by the representatives of both churches, which makes the churches indebted to each other in a reciprocal relationship (see 2 Cor 9:13–15; Rom 15:27). But elsewhere Betz assumes that the collection for the poor in Jerusalem is “supplementary, a concession,” and not an integral part of the agreement reached by Paul and the “pillars of the Church.”¹¹³ There are reasons in the Letter to the Galatians and other letters of Paul where the collection is discussed to believe that the collection for Jerusalem is an essential part of the agreement and a mark of the burgeoning

¹¹² Betz, *Galatians*, 100.

¹¹³ Betz, *Galatians*, 101. Betz says, “Paul clearly plays down this additional request, saying that there was only this one, and it was supplementary, unrelated to the main points of the debate, and immaterial to the present crisis in Galatia. From Paul’s words, it appears that what had been requested and granted was a kind of philanthropic gesture.”

relationship of fellowship between the Jerusalem and the gentile churches. Besides, Paul's ardent commitment to the collection is a testament that he takes the agreement very seriously.

Our evidence shows that Paul does not seem, for a moment, to consider the collection for the poor in Jerusalem as a supplement to his ministry to the Gentiles, but rather as an integral part of his ministry to the gentile world. From Paul's writings, we know about three communities (Galatians, Corinthians and Macedonians communities) that undertake the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Perhaps, other communities that Paul founded in the Mediterranean world, like that of Ephesians, might have participated in the contributions to benefit the Jerusalem church. To encourage the gentile churches that he established to contribute money for the Jerusalem church means that Paul considered the collection as an important aspect of his ministry. In fact, like the other communities, by completing the collection, the Galatian Christians become executors of the agreement reached at the Jerusalem council to support the poor in Jerusalem.¹¹⁴ The collection for the poor in Jerusalem is part of the agreement; and the Galatian Christians, influenced by the motif of friendship in their cultural world, share their resources with the poor in Jerusalem.¹¹⁵ Paul looks forward to a delegation of gentile Christians—whom the Corinthians Christians will choose, including Titus and himself—to deliver the collection to Jerusalem, the symbol of fellowship between gentile and Jewish Christians. When the collection arrives in Jerusalem, it will validate the success of Paul's ministry and ultimately prove that Gentiles have accepted the gospel message and are disposed to enter into fellowship with the Jerusalem church. In Paul's scheme of thought, a relationship of friendship is established and the unity of believers,

¹¹⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 101.

¹¹⁵ See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 50–51.

Jews and Gentiles alike, has been achieved through Christ (Gal 3:28–29). Therefore, “Christian fellowship as such [is] possible only as a result of the fellowship of believers with the resurrected Christ.”¹¹⁶

In the Greco-Roman world, the term *κοινωνία* is used to describe partnership among people with shared interest like business partners. First-century Judaism is well integrated into Greco-Roman social values, and, in particular, the Greco-Roman conventions of giving and receiving favor in friendship relationships. Harrison provides evidence to support the view that first-century Judaism, both in Palestine and the diaspora, is well integrated into the practices of the Greco-Roman system of benevolent relationships.¹¹⁷ For instance, Paul and the “pillars of the Church” use the common Greco-Roman term for partnership (*κοινωνία*) to describe their agreement that Paul should go to the Gentiles while they continue to minister to the Jews (Gal 2:9) and his project of collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:4; 9:13; Rom 15:26). So also, pleading on behalf of Onesimus, Paul uses the same term *κοινωνία* to urge Philemon to remember their partnership and welcome Onesimus back (Phlm 17: εἰ οὖν με ἔχεις κοινωνόν, προσλαβοῦ αὐτὸν ὡς ἐμέ; see 2 Cor 8:23). And in Philippians, Paul uses the compound of the term (Phil 4:14: πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε *συγκοινωνήσαντές* μου τῇ θλίψει; see Heb 10:33, emphasis added) to acknowledge the partnership of the Philippian Christians in sharing in his distress.

Thus, Paul’s extensive use of the term *κοινωνία* paints the picture of friends sharing their resources in mutual benefits with one another. For example, Paul uses the term *κοινωνία* to

¹¹⁶ Nickle, *The Collection*, 105.

¹¹⁷ Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 97–166.

commend the Christian community in Philippi for the friendship of giving and receiving benefits (Phil 4:15: ἐκοινωνήσεν ... δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως). Paul brags about the Macedonian eagerness to share their resources with the Jerusalem church in a genuine display of friendship and favor (2 Cor 8:3–4: τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν). By using the term *κοινωνία* to describe the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, Paul is clearly emphasizing that this project is a “direct expression of Christian fellowship” between the gentile and Jewish churches.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Paul claims that this friendship has led to the sharing of both material and spiritual benefits between the gentile and Jewish Christians, respectively (2 Cor 9:13–14; see 1Cor 9:11; Rom 12:13; 15:16, 26–27; Heb 13:16).¹¹⁹ The excellent observation of Joubert is worthy of note: there is no reason to downplay the value of the material gift of gentile Christians against the spiritual gift of the Jerusalem church.¹²⁰

Observe that in 2 Corinthians 9:8, Paul links God’s favor with the fellowship being established among gentile and Jewish Christians by means of the collection for the saints. They are motivated by their experience of God’s favor through Christ for their commitment to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Likewise, Epictetus suggests that humanity’s relationship with God makes it possible for humanity to be in fellowship with one another in the society.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Nickle, *The Collection*, 106.

¹¹⁹ Contra Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 324. He does not think that 2 Cor 9:14–15 is an act of reciprocity between the Jerusalem and Gentile churches.

¹²⁰ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 132.

¹²¹ Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.9.4–5.

For it is God who has given the human person companionship (κοινωνοὺς ἔδωκεν).¹²² Seen in this way, Paul links God's gift of favor to humanity with humanity's disposition to act favorably towards one another. This point of view is central to the argument of Galatians. As we see in Galatians 2:1–10, Paul uses the term κοινωνία to describe the agreement reached between him and the “pillars of the Church” at the council in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9) to proclaim the gospel message to gentile and Jewish Churches, respectively. One may surmise on the strength of these observations that both Paul and the “pillars of the Church” have a vision of Christian unity as an experience of fellowship (κοινωνία). To say the least, Paul seems to have a vision of the collection for the poor in Jerusalem as a κοινωνία in giving and receiving favors.¹²³

Paul's auditors in the Greco-Roman world would recognize that κοινωνία involves the giving, receiving and returning of favors among friends. A typical Greco-Roman household offers us an example of a life of mutual relationship of benefaction. For in the household, “κοινωνία requires mutual assistance and the sharing of all things among its members.”¹²⁴ Similarly, Aristotle notes that κοινωνία demands from friends, relatives and citizens of a state “sociability, communality, interdependency, and solidarity, thereby placing [them] under the common obligation to assist one another.”¹²⁵ On this note, it seems that this is what Paul sets out to accomplish with his ministry of campaigning for money to benefit the poor in Jerusalem. Paul

¹²² Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.12.16; 1.22.11–13.

¹²³ I depend on Keith F. Nickle insightful observation for this analysis. See Nickle, *The Collection*, 123.

¹²⁴ Julien M. Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity,” *NTS* 58(2012) 372; see Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.3.12–19.

¹²⁵ Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία,” 372.

uses the collection and his gospel message of divine benefaction to bridge the divide between the Jewish and gentile churches.

Conclusion

To this point, we have presented Paul's argument on the relationship among believers against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman convention of friendship and a relationship of giving and receiving benefit. We outlined this point of view by examining the relationship (1) between him and the Galatian Christians, (2) between members of the Christian community in Galatia, and (3) between gentile and Jewish Christians. These relationships contain the reciprocal outlook that is an integral part of the benefaction system of Greco-Roman world. What manner of reciprocity or showing gratitude does Paul encourage believers to practice? We shall proceed in the next subsection to provide insights and evidence on how Paul engages the ethos of reciprocity of the Greco-Roman world.

3.3. Evidence of Friendship, Benefaction and Reciprocity in Galatians

The social value of friendship (φίλος/φίλια) is well documented in the literature of the ancient world. However, it is not until Aristotle that the idea of friendship receives a thorough discussion. We shall not replicate here the entire view of Aristotle on friendship because it is not possible to do so within the scope of this present work. But suffice it to say that Aristotle outlines the following as conditions for friendship: (1) goodwill towards each other, (2) awareness of each other's goodwill, and (3) desiring the good for the sake of the other.¹²⁶ On this note, fellowship (κοινωνία) between persons is the term that best describes friendship. Consequently,

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, 8.2.3–4; see Konstan, "Reciprocity and Friendship," in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (ed. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 284.

Aristotle notes, “every friendship consists of fellowship” (ἐν κοινωνίᾳ μὲν οὖν πᾶσα φιλία ἐστίν).¹²⁷ This kind of friendship is marked by “communality or shared purpose.”¹²⁸ Similarly, discussing the relationship between Cleomenes the Spartan with Ptolemy Euergetes, for example, Polybius describes their friendship as a partnership of shared interest and purpose (ἐποιήσατο τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν πραγμάτων).¹²⁹ Gerald W. Peterman suggests that Cleomenes the Spartan entered into partnership (κοινωνία) with Ptolemy Euergetes hoping that with Ptolemy’s help, he would regain leadership, the mantle of power.¹³⁰ In fact, partnership is established (κοινωίαν ποιησάμενοι) and cities are built (πόλιν φέκισαμεν) because humankind is naturally disposed to share with each other the good things of our labor (ἀλλήλοις μεταδώσουσιν ὧν ἂν ἕκαστοι ἐργάζωνται; see Gal 6:10).¹³¹

Without the partnership (κοινωνία) of shared interest in the giving and receiving favors, then there is no experience of friendship in the real sense of the word. John T. Fitzgerald points out that friendship will not exist without the experience of gift-giving and the reciprocation of favor that one has received.¹³² One excellent example to illustrate this point is the friendly

¹²⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.12.1. Similarly, “φιλία [friendship] is naturally κοινωνία.” See Gustav Stählin, “φιλέω, καταφιλέω, κτλ.,” *TDNT*, IX.149.

¹²⁸ Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 69–70.

¹²⁹ Polybius, 5.35.1. Elsewhere, Polybius describes friendly relationship between friends as φιλίαν ἐποιήσαντο. See Polybius, 21.30.5.

¹³⁰ Gerald W. Peterman, “Romans 15:26: Make a Contribution or Establish Fellowship?” *NTS* 40(1994) 459.

¹³¹ Plato, *Rep.* 371b.

¹³² John T. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed., J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003) 326.

exchange between Telemachus and the flashing-eyed goddess Athena. Eager to depart on her way, Telemachus insists on granting a favor to Athena, a gift worthy of a friend (οἶα φίλοι ξεῖνοι ξείνοισι διδοῦσι).¹³³ Athena requests to receive Telemachus' gift on her return journey, saying “whatever gift your heart bids you give me, give it when I come back, . . . , it shall bring you its [i.e., the gift] worth in return (δῶρον δ' ὅτι κέ μοι δοῦναι φίλον ἦτορ ἀνώγη, αὖτις ἀνερχομένῳ δόμεναι, . . . , σοὶ δ' ἄξιον ἔσται ἀμοιβῆ).”¹³⁴ Indeed, giving and returning favor build and foster the experience of friendship and build partnership (κοινωνία).

In the Letter to the Galatians, the returning of the favor received among believers is articulated by Paul in outlining his relationship with the Galatian Christians, their relationship among one another and in their participation for the collection for Jerusalem. First, Paul arrives in Galatia in need of help against his illness, and the Galatians willingly provide for his needs. They have the choice to either despise Paul (Gal 4:14a) or welcome him (Gal 4:14b). They choose to welcome Paul and to treat him with genuine friendship, which Paul characterizes as the reception reserved for an angel or Christ Jesus (Gal 4:14b). Above all, Paul acknowledges that the Galatian Christians are pleased to provide for his wellbeing by all means possible (Gal 4:15). He says, “I can testify that had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given

¹³³ Homer, *Od.* 1.314. In the *Iliad*, the hostility between Diomedes, son of Tydeus, and Glaucus, son of Cronos is abated upon the recollection of the relationship between their parents. Speaking to Glaucus, Diomedes acknowledges, “you are a friend of my father’s house of long standing. . . [our parents] gave one another fair gifts of friendships.” Though Diomedes and Glaucus did not know each other, they enter into a pact of friendship by exchanging armor with each other, so that they may declare themselves “to be friends from [their] fathers’ days.” Homer, *Il.* 6.212–236 (Murray & Wyatt, LCL); see Arthur W. H. Adkins, “Friendship and Self-Sufficiency in Homer and Aristotle,” *CQ* 1(1963) 36–37.

¹³⁴ Homer, *Od.* 1.317–318 (Murray & Dimock, LCL); see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (trans. Ian Cunnison, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967) 55.

them to me.” With these words, Paul describes the favor granted to him by the Galatian Christians. On his part, Paul reciprocates their generosity by proclaiming to them the truth of God’s gratuitous gift of divine grace through Christ (Gal 4:15–16; see 3:1–5), which the Galatian Christians accepted with joy. As a genuine friend, he tells them the truth, and he is determined to play the role of a mother until Christ is present in them (Gal 4:19). In this way, Paul shares the same commitment and willingness to labor for their spiritual growth as they had to labor for his physical wellbeing. “The metaphor of Paul’s motherhood in 4:19 conveys his own loyalty, deep and unshakable like that of the Galatians themselves in 4:15.”¹³⁵

Second, Paul’s language of mutual benefit is evident in the exhortation for community cohesion (Gal 5:13, 14, 15, 26; 6:1, 2, 6, 9–10). What kind of giving and receiving of favor does Paul envision for the community? In other words, how does Paul articulate the ethos of reciprocity in the relationship of benefaction among the Galatian Christians? The answer is that Paul expects the community to practice mutual generosity. Based on the friendship system of the ancient world with which Paul articulates his argument, each one in the community should be generous with their resources and be open to receive favor from others. For Paul, their experience of giving, and receiving favor is based on friendship, it is not based on the superior/patron, and inferior/client relationship that characterizes most of the benefaction relationships in antiquity.¹³⁶ That is why Paul urges the Galatian Christians to serve one another (Gal 5:13: δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις) through love. We have noted already that one of the terminologies Paul uses for the Jerusalem collection is service (Rom 15:31; 2Cor 8:4; 9:1; Acts

¹³⁵ Smith, “Εκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17,” 498.

¹³⁶ See Cicero, *Off.* 2.69; Seneca, *Ep.* 94.14–16; deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” 34.

11:29: διακονία; see 2 Cor 4:5). So too, Paul uses the term κοινωνία to encourage the spirit of gift exchange between the one who is taught the message and the one who teaches the message (Gal 6:6: κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς). I have pointed out that by using the term κοινωνία, Paul encourages the experience of shared interest and goodwill (εὐνοία) among believers. With this in mind, it seems proper to conclude that Paul's language of friendship in Galatians includes the demand that believers show gratitude, namely, reciprocity.

The Jerusalem collection is the third and final way that Paul encourages reciprocity among believers in their relationship of benefaction. We have pointed out that both parties (“the pillars of the Church,” Paul and Barnabas) during the Jerusalem council discuss Paul's campaign to benefit the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:1–10). As we have pointed out in chapter one, Harrison claims that Paul undermines the Greco-Roman reciprocity convention particularly in the Jerusalem collection. He claims, “Paul's language of grace subtly undermines the social expectations aroused by the Graeco-Roman reciprocity system. A case in point is the Jerusalem collection.”¹³⁷ The weakness of Harrison's view lies in the exclusion of the Letter to the Galatians from detailed analysis. For it is in the Letter to the Galatians that we learn about the initial discussion on benefiting the Jerusalem church by Paul's Gentile Christians. Paul recounts the decision to benefit the poor in Jerusalem while describing the fellowship he shares with the “Pillars of the church,” and the appreciation of God's gift of divine favor in their respective ministries to the Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, the instruction that Paul gives to the Corinthians church, and perhaps, to other gentile churches, originates from the churches in Galatia. Another

¹³⁷ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 323.

weakness of Harrison's view lies in the close reading of passages where Paul discusses extensively the Jerusalem collection (2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15:25–27).

Paul's discussion of the Jerusalem collection betrays an interaction with Greco-Roman ethos of reciprocity (2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15:25–27). Our analysis revealed a detailed effort by Paul to persuade, in particular, the Corinthian Christians to complete (2 Cor 8:6, 11: ἐπιτελέω) the collection. He reminds the Corinthian Christians of the gratuitous favor of Christ (2 Cor 8:9: τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; see 2 Cor 8:1–4; 1 Cor 16:1–4), which becomes a strategy of encouragement to follow through with their commitment to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:24). The collection is a mark of fellowship (2 Cor 8:4: κοινωνία) and love (2 Cor 8:7, 8, 24: ἀγάπη) between the gentile and Jewish Christians. In Romans 15:25–27, Paul confirms the gentile churches' generous gift to the Jerusalem church; and he defends the ethos of reciprocity in the giving and receiving of favor between the churches (see 2 Cor 8:14).¹³⁸ Bassler notes, "the gentile churches owe the Jerusalem saints this material gift because they have received from them, that is, from the Jewish Christians, a share in their spiritual blessing. The basic notion here is reciprocity."¹³⁹ Ceslas Spicq is very direct in his observation that the gentile churches, "are paying off their spiritual debt to their brothers in Jerusalem, and that in this act of beneficence there is established an equilibrium, a harmony, between the gentile and Jewish Christian churches."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 52.

¹³⁹ Bassler, *God & Mammon*, 94. Stephan Joubert suggests that Paul's statement in Rom 15:25 captures "the nature of this project as a concrete service to fellow believers within the framework of reciprocal responsibilities to one another." See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 128.

¹⁴⁰ Spicq, *TLNT*, 2.231.

Their fellowship and mutual partnership is developed, and sustained through reciprocity, which has been established by their experience of divine favor in Christ.¹⁴¹ For the friendship of the Jerusalem church (Rom 15:27b: τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη) is generously acknowledged by the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia (Rom 15:27c: ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς; see 2 Cor 9:13–14), which they are pleased to reciprocate (Rom 26: εὐδόκησαν ...κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι).¹⁴² Needless to say, the collection of the gentile Christians of Galatia (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16–1-4) carries the same reciprocal relationship with which Paul describes the collection of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia in Romans 15:26. Although Paul uses the term ὀφείλω to describe the gift exchange between Jewish and gentile Christians, yet it does not diminish the fact that the generosity of the latter will not be coerced but is an act of freewill (2 Cor 8:3).¹⁴³

The challenge that Paul's appeal to the benefaction conventions of the Greco-Roman world presents to modern scholarship lies in discerning how his gentile churches are expected to practice reciprocity. When we examined the demand for reciprocity in divine-human relationship, we arrived at the conclusion that the Galatian Christians will recognize the implication of Paul's appeal to the terminology of faithfulness in their relationship with God

¹⁴¹ Bassler, *God & Mammon*, 105.

¹⁴² See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 129. Jouette M. Bassler observes, "the giving and receiving of material blessings now becomes a sign that this prior exchange of spiritual blessings has occurred. By contributing to the collection, the Gentiles acknowledge their debt to the Jewish Christians, but by accepting the collection the Jerusalem saints tacitly acknowledge the validity of the Gentile mission." See Bassler, *God & Mammon*, 94; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 133–134.

¹⁴³ See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 131; see Leander E. Keck, "The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament," *ZNW* 56(1995) 127–128.

through Christ. For the Galatian Christians' faith is an act of gratitude and trust in God's favor through Christ. As it concerns human-human benefaction in Paul's argument in Galatians, it seems to me that Paul places the demand for reciprocity on love (ἀγάπη). *Fides* is the believer's expression of complete dependency on God's favor; it is trusting in God's favor which creates the platform for the experience of divine relationship. In the same vein, love for one another provides the context for a genuine concern for wellbeing and goodwill (εὐνοια) among friends.¹⁴⁴ The Galatian Christians will recognize the gift exchange of their social context in Paul's use of friendship language.¹⁴⁵ Harrison suggests that Paul places the emphasis on the fellowship among believers on love (Rom 13:8–10; 1 Cor 13:3) and not on “the obligation to return favour or, conversely, the expectation of the return of favour.”¹⁴⁶ I agree with Harrison that fellowship among believers is built on love. But to suggest that Paul's command to believers to serve one another through love excludes the demand of reciprocity needs further explanation which Harrison does not provide.

What the whole Law (Gal 5:14), the Law of Christ (Gal 6:2), requires is a loving service of one another in a relationship of friendship (Gal 5:13). Love is the first in the list of the enabling gifts of God (Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5). Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that completing the collection is a proof of their love for the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:24: τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης). By using the term ἀγάπη, Paul chooses to describe the relationship of

¹⁴⁴ See Barrett, *Freedom & Obligation*, 73.

¹⁴⁵ See Stählin, *TDNT*, IX.115.

¹⁴⁶ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 324.

benefaction among believers as “friendship between equals.”¹⁴⁷ This is because ἀγάπη “is a giving active love on the other’s behalf.”¹⁴⁸ Love demands equality among believers, which they now possess on account of God’s divine favor through Christ, without regard to even national, socio-economic or gender distinctions (Gal 4:28).¹⁴⁹ It is a mutual experience of favor (2 Cor 8:13: ἐξ ἰσότητος) for both gentile Christians and the poor in Jerusalem so that the principle of equality upon which friendship is built will be attained (2 Cor 8:14: ἵνα ... ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης). Spicq’s comment on the meaning of ἴσος in 2 Corinthians 8:13–14 is instructive. He says, “your surplus provides for their lack, so that their surplus may provide for your own lack, so that the result is equality (hopōs genētai isotēs—this is the goal; 2 Cor 8:13–14).”¹⁵⁰ Joubert adds, “ἰσότης between Jerusalem and Corinth [is] dependent on the exchange of obligations, where each in turn would render to the other the services that they required.”¹⁵¹ Based on the following the two communities are in a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit for the wellbeing of one another.

The collection taken in the gentile churches is a response to their experience of God’s favor from the hands of the missionaries sent from the Jerusalem church, such as Paul (his

¹⁴⁷ Ethelbert Stauffer, “ἀγαπάω, ἀγάπη, κτλ,” *TDNT*, I.36.

¹⁴⁸ Stauffer, *TDNT*, I.37.

¹⁴⁹ See Stählin, “ἴσος, ἰσότης, κτλ,” *TDNT*, III.348.

¹⁵⁰ Spicq, *TLNT*, 2.230. Gustav Stählin observes that Paul uses the term ἴσος in 2 Cor 8:13–14 as “the criterion (ἐξ ἰσότητος) and goal (ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης) of action” in the relationship of benefaction between the Jerusalem and Gentile churches. See Stählin, *TDNT*, III.348; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 140.

¹⁵¹ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 143.

ministry is recognized at the Jerusalem council). The collection, as Bassler notes, “effects a degree of equality that symbolizes on the material level the equal standing of all members of the church in [God’s favor].”¹⁵²

Conclusion

We have shown that the friendship motif of the Greco-Roman world is the background of Paul’s argument on human-human benefaction in Galatians. The inclusion of Paul’s relationship with the Galatian Christians in the argument of the letter is by no means parenthetical. Rather, it is an integral element in the argument of Paul in the letter. Paul appeals to his experience of friendship with the Galatian Christians to support an argument about the effects of God’s gift of divine favor on the believer. The friendship (κοινωνία) and goodwill (εὔνοια) of the Galatian Christians towards ill-stricken Paul (Gal 4:14–15) turns him, in return, into a genuine, and grateful friend (Gal 4:16, 18) who plays the role of a mother for the sake of their relationship with God (Gal 4:19). Paul seems to have convinced them that by their unalloyed dedication to his wellbeing and his proclamation of the truth of the gospel to them they apparently have the interest of one another at heart as friends.

He exhorts them, as we have demonstrated, to have the same interest at heart for the wellbeing of one another (Gal 5:13–6:10). To this end, he urges them to assume the responsibility of a καλοκάγαθός by doing what is noble (τὸ καλὸν) and good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν) towards one another in the community (Gal 6:9–10). They should be disposed to give and receive benefaction from one another. Paul places their relationship of benefaction on love, the law of Christ. The same is true about Paul’s description of the Jerusalem collection. For Paul’s

¹⁵² Bassler, *God & Mammon*, 105.

project to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem is a sign of love (2 Cor 8:7, 8, 24: ἀγάπη) and friendship (2 Cor 8:4: κοινωνία) between gentile and Jewish Christians. Paul puts together an instruction on how the churches he founded in the Greco-Roman world should take up the collection for Jerusalem. It seems to have worked among the Christians in Galatia (1 Cor 16:1–4; see Gal 2:10). For this reason, Paul recommends the same instruction to the Corinthian church and perhaps, to the other churches in the Greco-Roman world.

The Galatian Christians will understand Paul's argument as an appeal to benefaction and the ethos of reciprocity coming out of their cultural world. They will recognize Paul's invitation to love (ἀγάπη) and to be in fellowship (κοινωνία) with one another as couched in the system of giving and receiving favor of the ancient world. In the next chapter, we will propose that the Galatian Christians will understand Paul's characterization of his Jewish Christian opponents, their message of law observance, and the Galatian Christians' former way of life under the elemental spirits of the world as not beneficial.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRAST BETWEEN PAUL AND OPPONENTS ON ΧΑΡΙΣ

Introduction

At this point in our exposition of Paul's appeal to the language of χάρις in Galatians, we have shown that the Greco-Roman benefaction conventions are the backdrop against which Paul preached his gospel message on divine-human and human-human relationships. The gospel message that Paul proclaims to the Galatians Christians stands in opposition to the gospel message proclaimed to the Galatian Christians by Paul's Jewish Christian opponents. We have consistently identified the Jewish Christian missionaries who proclaim the gospel message of circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law to the Galatian Christians as Paul's Jewish Christian opponents. Our identification of Paul's opponents presume that they are Jewish Christian missionaries like Paul himself (see Acts 15:1). They were probably present at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:6; see Gal 2:4). They teach gentile Christian communities founded by Paul that they need to accept circumcision and observe the Mosaic Law in addition to their faith in Christ. It is for this reason that Paul identifies them as his opponents in the proclamation of the gospel (see Gal 6:12), just as we have done. Martyn notes, "Paul makes it clear that he views them as opponents, and there are indications that to a considerable extent they view him in the

same manner.”¹ Throughout the argument of Galatians, Paul remains firm in his opposition to their gospel message of circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law. Paul’s opposition to the gospel message of his Jewish Christians opponents is supported by his appeal to the benefaction conventions of the Greco-Roman world. How do the conventions of giving and receiving benefits of the Greco-Roman world support Paul’s opposition to the message of his Jewish Christians opponents? Differently phrased, how does Paul’s gospel message about God’s gift of divine favor through Christ change his view on the Mosaic Law and Jewish traditions?

Paul’s view on circumcision and the Mosaic Law has been changed by his conviction about God and the self-gift of Christ on the cross (Gal 2:20–21). On the basis of Paul’s conviction, we have observed two views of the Mosaic Law in Galatians, namely, a favorable view and also an unfavorable view. We also observed that Paul’s scheme of thought in Galatians reveals that both views on the Mosaic Law stand in tension with each other. We shall show that Paul’s favorable view of the role of the Mosaic Law lasted before the coming of Christ. During this time, Paul recounts his blameless life under the Law; and the Mosaic Law was the means by which Paul described, measured and evaluated his relationship with Judaism’s God. Also, as part of Paul’s favorable view of the Law, he sees the Law as a source of divine revelation; and, finally, he identifies the Law as a guardian of the children of God until the coming of Christ. Paul’s favorable view of the Law, as we will show, comes to an end with the coming of Christ. Since Christ has come as the manifestation of God’s gift of divine favor to humanity, Paul now argues that the Law is no longer the source of divine-human relationship. With the coming of

¹ Martyn, “A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles,” in *The Galatians Debate. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) 349.

Christ, Paul compares the Law with the elemental spirits of the world, the deities of the Greco-Roman world, in order to support his view that the Galatian Christians need not observe the Mosaic Law. Paul seems to argue that both the Law and the elemental spirits of the world are forces of enslavement and not the sources of divine benefaction.

When Paul mentions his Jewish Christian opponents, he wants the Galatian Christians to know that he sees them as his opponents and ‘false brethren.’ Paul’s unfaltering language when speaking about his Jewish Christian opponents supports the fact that indeed he sees them as his opponents. The mission of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents is to encourage Paul’s gentile churches to be circumcised and to observe the Mosaic Law in addition to their faith in Christ. Paul suggests that their message of circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law together with faith in Christ is not a “true gospel” and Paul proclaims a curse on their head for preaching it (Gal 1:6, 8–9). Paul seems to argue that accepting their message will put the Galatian Christians at a loss, they will completely fall away from God’s gift of divine favor through Christ (Gal 5:4). It is for this reason, as we will show, that Paul remains forceful in his criticism of their motives and their message.

4.1. Law Observance

The argument of Galatians aims to determine if the Mosaic Law still has a place in the life of the Galatian Christians who have entered into a divine-human relationship with God through the self-gift of Christ on the cross (Gal 2:15–21). Does the Galatian Christians’ relationship of benefaction with God through Christ still require that they undergo circumcision and observe the Mosaic Law? Already we have shown in chapter two that Paul defends the death of Christ as the *only* means by which believers experience God’s gratuitous gift of divine favor. What is left to discuss is how Paul conceives the role and place of the Mosaic Law in Galatians. We shall

perceive that Paul concedes that the Law has no role in the life of a believer who has experienced God's gift of divine favor through Christ (see Gal 3:1–5). Paul's opposition to the Mosaic Law is based on his conviction that God has fulfilled the promise made to Abraham to benefit both Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:7–8). Christ's death on the cross brings to fulfillment the promise and then provides believers access to the bond of intimate union with God.

Paul makes his opposition to the Mosaic Law so vivid when he warns the Galatian Christians that to accept circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law cut them off from Christ and, in effect, separates them from the experience of divine favor with God (Gal 5:4). The proper interpretation of Galatians 5:4 is pivotal to the understanding of Paul's present opposition to the role of the Mosaic Law. Paul argues that whoever seeks to earn God's benefaction through the observance of the law (Gal 5:4b: οἰτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε) has consequently fallen out of God's favor (Gal 5:4c: τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε) into which that one had been called (Gal 1:6: τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι); moreover that one has severed ties with Christ (Gal 5:4a: κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ) whose death is no longer of benefit to him or her (Gal 5:2: Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδεν ὠφελήσει).

Indeed, in Galatians 5:4 Paul describes in vivid fashion the result of accepting circumcision and the observance of the law by a believer who is already living in faithfulness and trust with God on account of God's χάρις. The result is that the believer will be cut out of the relationship of divine favor with God, because instead of accepting God's favor as a gift, one seeks to earn it by human effort (see Rom 4:2), by obedience to the Law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου).² Paul

² Frank Thielman says "Paul's intention is to rescue his Galatian congregations from falling from grace (5:4)." Frank Thielman, *Paul & the Law. A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 120.

does not think that it is possible anymore for a believer to enter into a relationship of divine benefaction through obedience to the Law (Gal 5:4b; 3:11a). Rather, it is only through the believer's trust in the power of Christ's self-gift on the cross (see Gal 3:1–5).³ Paul's Jewish Christian opponents had instructed the Galatian Christians to include the observance of the law in their life of fidelity and trust in Christ.⁴ On the contrary, Paul admonishes them that such a move is tantamount to severing ties with Christ and consequently removing oneself from the domain of God's favor and union in which one has experienced adoption (Gal 5:4c).⁵ On this note, we can discern that the basic question of Galatians revolves around how one can find favor in the sight of God. Paul's response to the question comes from his conviction that to experience

³ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor puts it this way, "the fundamental insight which enabled Paul to begin to unravel the apparently seamless argument of his adversaries came from the observation that the Galatians have been graced by the Spirit and had experienced the power of God simply because they had accepted Paul's preaching. This demonstrated the irrelevance of the Law, of whose demands the Galatians heard only long after their conversion (Gal 3:1–5). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 206.

⁴ It seems likely that Jewish Christians do not consider the observance of the law and having faith in Christ as mutually exclusive means of gaining God's favor. See Betz, *Galatians*, 261. Martyn further observes, "these Galatians have come to think that their salvation results from an allegiance to Christ only when that allegiance is enacted in observance of the law." See Martyn *Galatians*, 471. To this point of view Longenecker adds, "the Judaizers must have assured the Galatians that in accepting supervision for their lives from the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law they were not forsaking Christ or renouncing grace, but rather were completing their commitment to both." See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 228. Dunn adds, "only by complete identification with the Jewish people (by circumcision) could there be sure hope of participation in the final salvation promised to Israel." See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 267–268.

⁵ Dunn notes that the severity of Paul's argument in Galatians 5:4 "denotes the ending of a relationship." Furthermore, Dunn says "Paul's point is that to insist on formal identification (through circumcision) with the Jewish people is so to diminish the significance of the Gentile converts' earlier relationship with Christ as to be equivalent to ending that relationship." see Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 268. Bruce puts it this way: "God has called the Galatians ἐν χάριτι (1:6); to forsake his call for the way of law involved self-expulsion from his grace, because they no longer relied on it (see on 2:21)." See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 231; de Boer, *Galatians*, 315.

God's favor means to allow oneself to be seized by the events of Christ's life (see Gal 2:15–3:5) and the gift of the "Spirit of the Son of God" (see Gal 4:6). Both the death of Christ on the cross and the gift of the "Spirit of the Son of God" are of course features of humanity's present relationship with God. According to Paul's scheme of thought, circumcision and the observance of the law are no longer part of the relationship between God and humanity.

A close reading of the Letter to the Galatians reveals Paul's complex views about the role of the Law in the history of God's relationship with humanity. Tobin has provided an excellent description of Paul's complex views on the Mosaic Law in Galatians.⁶ Paul's own experience and conviction about God's activities in human history before and after the coming of Christ informed his complex view of the Mosaic Law. Prior to the coming of Christ (Gal 4:4–5), Paul had a favorable view of the Mosaic Law and Jewish traditions. In fact, Paul confesses that his persecution of the "church of God" is informed by his conviction about the role of the Mosaic Law. Paul even speaks passionately and positively about his former life under the Mosaic Law as a Pharisee (Gal 1:13–14; Phil 3:4–6). But Paul's unfavorable view about the Mosaic Law begins with his calling and the subsequent revelation of Jesus Christ to him (Gal 1:15–16).

Concerning Paul's favorable view of the Law, he describes himself as a zealot for the Law (Gal 1:14: περισσοτέρως ζηλωτής ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων, see Phil 3:6) and blameless under the Law (Phil 3:6: κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος). It is as a result of his conviction concerning the role of the Mosaic Law in God's relationship with humanity, particularly with the Jewish people that Paul persecuted the Church in order to destroy it (Gal 1:13: ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν). Paul

⁶ Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul*, 89–90; idem, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts*, 70

was determined to end the growth of the Church by going after the followers of Jesus within Jerusalem and beyond (Acts 9:1–2). Like most Jews of Paul’s generation, the followers of Jesus are accused of proclaiming an alternative means of gaining God’s favor, viz. salvation without a strict obedience to Jewish Law and traditions (see Acts 5:27–32). The followers of Christ believe that salvation is earned through living a life of obedience and faithfulness in gratitude for Christ’s self-gift on the cross as Paul would also later proclaim (see Gal 2:19–20).

Paul’s zeal for the Law corresponds to that of other Jewish figures before him who have zeal for the sanctity of the Mosaic Law and Israel’s relationship with Yahweh. The generations of Jews like Paul who have zeal for the integrity of the Law are influenced by Phinehas’ zeal for the Law. For Phinehas protected Israel’s relationship with Yahweh against pollution and in effect, saved the people of Israel against divine wrath (Num 25:6–13). Like Phinehas, Elijah also showed great zeal for Israel’s relationship with Yahweh through the Law against the wicked queen Jezebel and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16–40; 19:1–2). Elijah was unrelenting in his zeal for the sanctity of Israel’s relationship with Yahweh, and for that reason he went after the prophets of Baal. In the Second Temple period, the Maccabees are another generation of Jews who displayed zeal for the Mosaic Law. Mattathias says to his sons “be zealous for the Law and give your lives for the covenant of our fathers” (1 Macc 2:50: NRSV). For this reason, therefore, the sons of Mattathias refused to yield to a wicked Seleucid king and were determined to die for the sanctity of Israel’s Law and traditions.

It is likely that the Maccabees’ zeal for the Law remained an inspiration for Jews including the generation of Paul. Like Paul, Jews who defend and protect the Mosaic Law from actions that transgress it did so because the Law and the Commandments are holy, just and good (Rom 7:12: ὁ νόμος ἅγιος καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἀγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή; Rom 3:31; 12:2; 1 Tim 1:8).

For the Law and the Commandments play a significant role in Israel's relationship with God. It is for this reason that as a Pharisee Paul defended the Law and expressed a favorable view of the Law; and he vigorously fought to protect the Law by persecuting "the church of God" to destroy it (Gal 1:13–16; Acts 8:1; 9:1–2).

Another favorable view of the Mosaic Law in Galatians worth keeping in mind can be recognized in Paul's identification of the Law as the content of God's revelation. The people of Israel conceive of the Law as a medium of divine revelation and as a symbol of their relationship with Yahweh. The Law reveals the essence of God's relationship with humanity, in particular the children of Israel; and the Law reveals to the people of Israel divine wrath and punishment in cases of transgression of the covenant relationship; and the Law reveals the people of Israel's struggle with fidelity in their relationship with Yahweh. The Law makes wrongdoing an obvious reality and reveals potential behavior that can stymie Israel's relationship with God (Gal 3:19). Paul does not provide a lengthy discussion on how the Law acts as a source of divine revelation. At the theophany at Sinai, God speaks the Law and the children of Israel listen and then receive it through the mediation of Moses (Exod 19:9–20:17). The Psalmist remembers this event as "the revelation of your words sheds light, giving understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:30; NRSV). Consequently, the Law assumes the role of a guard in the relationship between Yahweh and the children of Israel. The children of Israel understand their identity within their experience of God at Sinai and then in the giving of the Law. On this note, by identifying the Law as a source of revelation, Paul maintains a favorable view of the Law. Needless to say, "it is God's Law, it serves as God's instrument to accomplish his purpose."⁷

⁷ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 180. E. P. Sanders notes that the Law is part of "divine providence; the Law, then, could not be opposed to God's will; yet the Law does not provide for

But does Paul suggest that angels are the giver of the Law and not God himself? In other words, by speaking about the mediation of angels in the same breath as his discussion of the Law, then does Paul link the origin of the Law to angels and not to God (Gal 3:19)? Martyn suggests that Paul identifies angels as the source of the Law as “God played no part at all in the genesis of the Sinaitic Law.”⁸ Jewish literature supports the presence of angels at the giving of the Law. In the *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus suggests that Jews “have learned the noblest of our doctrines and the holiest of our Laws from the messengers sent by God (ἡμῶν δὲ τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τὰ ὀσιώτατα τῶν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δι’ ἀγγέλων παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μαθόντων).⁹ Also the Book of Deuteronomy confirms the presence of angels in the company of Yahweh at Sinai. It says, “the Lord has come from Sinai ..., at his right, angels with him” (Deut 33:2: Κύριος ἐκ Σιναι ἦκει..., ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ; LXX, see also, Jub 1:27–29). On the basis of these examples from Jewish literature, angels are indeed present in the tradition about the giving of the Law, but the same literature does not by any stretch of the imagination indicate that God has no part in the giving of the Law. Thus, Josephus explicitly identifies angels only as the instructors of the people of Israel on the demands of the Law and not with the origin of the Law. The author of the Book of Deuteronomy does not link angels with the giving of the Law or as instructors on the Law. Rather angels are simply in the company of Yahweh at Sinai when Yahweh delivered the Law to the children of Israel. In any event, this much is clear in the argument of Galatians: God

salvation.” E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 66; In-Gyu Hong, *The Law in Galatians* (JSNTSup 81, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 149.

⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 365–366.

⁹ Josephus, *Ant. jud.* 15.136 (Marcus & Wikgren, LCL); Philo, *Somn.* 1.141–142.

gave the Law after the promise was given to Abraham so that the Law could serve as a guardian in the relationship between God and humanity, particularly in the relationship between God and the children of Israel until the coming of Christ who is the heir apparent to the promise given to Abraham (Gal 3:22–25).

Also Paul suggests that Scripture possesses the character of revelation just as the Law (Gal 3:22). In Galatians 3:19 Paul speaks about the role of the Law as added in order to reveal the presence of wrong-doing. In Galatians 3:22 he switches to speak about Scripture as the agent of confinement of all things under sin. It seems to me that Paul speaks here about the role of the Law as Scripture. Does Paul draw any neat distinction between the Law and Scripture? Martyn has noted that Paul seems to draw no consistent “distinction between the Law and Scripture.”¹⁰ But the sudden switch from Law to Scripture as the sole source of revelation is based on what Paul has said about the Law in Galatians 3:21. Paul speaks about the weakness of the Law as a source of salvation and the inability of the Law to give life in humanity’s relationship with God (see Gal 3:21).¹¹ As an agent, Scripture has a positive role in God’s plan for the fulfillment of the promise to benefit humanity in Christ. Paul’s consistent appeal to Scripture to support his argument is an indication that he takes very seriously the role of Scripture as agent of revelation of God’s plan for the time when God’s promise to gratuitously benefit humanity will arrive (Gal 3:8, 10, 13, 22; 4:22, 27, 30).

Throughout the Letter to the Galatians, Paul appeals to Scripture to support his argument about God’s gift of divine favor through Christ. For instance, he quotes Genesis 18:18 to support

¹⁰ Martyn, *Galatians*, 360.

¹¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 175.

his position that God has granted divine favor to all nations through Abraham (see Gen 22:17–18; Gal 3:8, 14). Paul also appeals to Scripture to support his argument that Christ is the offspring of Abraham and the heir apparent to God’s promise of inheritance to humanity (Gen 17:19; see Gal 3:16; 4:29). Paul’s allegory on the birth of Ishmael (Gen 16:1–7; see Gal 4:21–31) and the birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1–7; see Gal 4:21–31) strengthen his argument in Galatians. By appealing to the Scriptural texts concerning Ishmael and Isaac, Paul demonstrates that gentile Christians like the Galatian Christians are heirs like Isaac of God’s promise to Abraham. By and large, Tobin’s comments are very instructive. He notes that Paul’s appeal to Scripture is crucial to the argument of Galatians because it is Scripture that “points to a time when it would no longer be necessary to observe the Mosaic Law.”¹² Therefore, in all the instances that Paul appeals to Scripture in the Letter to the Galatians, he seems to suggest that Scripture has a positive role in the plan of God for the time when humanity will experience divine favor.

Paul’s other favorable view about the Law in Galatians is linked to the role of the Law as a guardian. Paul observes that before the fulfillment of God’s promise to benefit humanity through the death of Christ on the cross, humanity was confined and restrained under the Law (Gal 3:23: ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι; see Gal 3:22); the Law was a guardian to humanity until the coming of Christ (3:24: ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν). Here Paul draws an example from the cultural world of his auditors to support his argument about the positive role of the Law (Gal 4:1–2). Just as the young man in the Greco-Roman world is under guardians and trustees appointed by his father until the appointed time arrives for his independence (Gal 4:2: ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ

¹² Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul*, 95.

πατρός), likewise believers are under the supervision of the Mosaic Law until the fullness of time when Christ will come (Gal 4:4: ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, ...). It seems clear that for Paul, just as guardians and trustees have temporal authority over the young man until the time appointed by his father (Gal 4:2), likewise the Law is a temporal supervisor of believers until the coming of Christ (Gal 3:24; 4:5).

Although the term Paul uses to identify the supervisory role of the Law could mean to be in subjection or detention (φρουρέω),¹³ nevertheless, other significant uses of the term φρουρέω stress the positive aspect: “to maintain a watch, to guard, protect or provide security (see 2 Cor 11:32; Phil 4:7; 1 Peter 1:5)”¹⁴ Accordingly, Paul uses φρουρέω to attribute a favorable role to the Mosaic Law as that which provides protection to the children of God from sin.¹⁵ In other words, the Law holds the children of God in protective custody until the promise of God is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Dunn describes this experience of the children of God under the protection of the Law in vivid imagery. He notes that children of God live in “a city garrisoned by the Law within a larger territory ruled by sin.”¹⁶ Similarly, Martinus C. de Boer defends Paul’s positive view of the Law before the coming of Christ by saying, “the period of the Law was thus for humanity’s own good, to protect it from transgression (Gal 3:19) or from Sin (Gal 3:22).”¹⁷

¹³ BDAG, 1067.

¹⁴ BDAG, 1066, 1067.

¹⁵ Contra Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, 157–158.

¹⁶ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 197.

¹⁷ de Boer, *Galatians*, 240.

By stating the reason (Gal 3:24; ὥστε) for which believers are being confined and guarded by the Law in Galatians 3:24, Paul reinforces his favorable view of the Law as a guardian or supervisor. Moreover, the role of the Law in making clear the existence of sin (Gal 3:19)¹⁸ is a testament to its function as a guardian.¹⁹ Suffice it to say here that by making clear the existence of sin (Gal 3:19, 22), the Law both reveals the feebleness of the human effort to earn God's favor and the dependence of humanity on God's favor in order to secure a life with God as a gift. In-Gyn Hong's claim that the Law plays no positive role in Paul's argument in Galatians as a guardian is a bit strained.²⁰ This is because in the cultural world of Paul's auditors, where παιδαγωγός (guardian), as a household slave is the term Paul uses to identify the positive role of the Law, the job description of the παιδαγωγός is to walk the child to school and to supervise the child's conduct by acting as a moral guide over the child against immoral influences.²¹ In other words, the παιδαγωγός makes sure that the child under his care is aware of choices and their consequences, and then he guides the child so as to avoid harmful results.

¹⁸ F. F. Bruce notes that by making clear the existence of sin or transgression, the Law "brings to light the universal human plight; all are 'under sin.' To be delivered from this plight, believers "finds it in the promise." The promise and its fulfillment are embodied in the self-gift of Christ on the cross. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 180; Sanders, *Paul, the Law*, 66.

¹⁹ Plutarch links the job of the guardian with the law. Plutarch, *Mor.* 28B, 645B. Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia*, 268. Richard N. Longenecker adds that the Law as a guardian illuminates what Paul says about the Law in Gal 3:23. "But what did Paul have in mind here in v 23 in saying that Jews [are] "kept in custody under the Law, being confined" until the gospel should come? Fortunately, we don't have to guess, for Paul tells us more exactly what he means by the use of the analogy of a *paidagōgos* in a patrician family." Longenecker, *Galatians*, 146; Matera, *Galatians*, 136.

²⁰ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, 160.

²¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 177; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome. From the Elder Cato to the younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 37–39, 44; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.22.26; 3.19.5–6. In Plato's Dialogue *Lysis*, Lysis tells Socrates that he is under the control of a guardian, who takes him to school, to his teacher. See Plato, *Lys.* 208C (Lamb, LCL).

Just as we have demonstrated in our exposition of other parts of the argument of Paul in Galatians, likewise here also Paul appeals to the social role of a παιδαγωγός, taken from the cultural world of his auditors, to assign a positive role to the Law before the coming of Christ. Ancient writers frequently stress the importance of the παιδαγωγός. Thus, Plato insists that children must be put under the care of a guardian (οὐδε δὴ παῖδας ἄνευ τινῶν παιδαγωγῶν) because the child is the most difficult among all creatures to manage (ὁ παῖς πάντων θηρίων ἔστι δυσμεταχειριστότατον). For this reason, the child must be placed under the care of a guardian to control and curb the child's ignorance (παιδαγωγοῖς παιδίας καὶ νηπιότητος χάριν).²² For his part, Plutarch suggests that great care should be exercised in choosing a guardian for a child. He recommends that parents should seek a guardian who will care for their child just as the guardian Phoenix cared for Achilles.²³ This is because age, experience and the competency of the guardian will benefit the child under his care.²⁴ It is for this reason that Aristotle, too, teaches that a child ought to live under the care, control and ordinance of the guardian (δὲ τὸν παῖδα δεῖ κατὰ τὸ

Norman H. Young, "The Figure of the Paidagōgos in Art and Literature," *BA* 53(1990) 81–82. In *Protagoras*, Socrates places the guardian in the same category as the parents of the child, sharing the same responsibility for the child's moral growth. Plato, *Prot.* 325C-D; Plutarch, *Mor.* 439E.

²² Plato, *Leg.* VII.808D-E (Bury, LCL).

²³ Plutarch, *Mor.* 4A-B (Babbitt, LCL). It is well documented that guardians both are kind persons and disciplinarians to the kids under their care. See Young, "The Figure of the Paidagōgos," 80–81, 84. David J. Lull has provided an overview on the feeling of affection between guardians and the kids under their care. David J. Lull, "The Law as Our Pedagogue: A Study in Galatians 3:19–25," *JBL* 105(1986) 490. The relationship between emperor Augustus and Sphaerus his guardian is an example of affection between a child and his guardian. Dio Cassius recounts that Sphaerus the guardian of emperor Augustus became a freeman, and when he died, Augustus honored him with a public funeral. Dio Cassius, XLVIII. 33.1

²⁴ Plato, *Resp.* 467D.

πρόσταγμα τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ ζῆν).²⁵ And Diogenes Laertius admonishes, “children should obey the guardians who have authority over them (τὸ πείθεσθαι τοὺς παῖδας τοῖς παιδαγωγοῖς).”²⁶

In Galatians, therefore, just as parents place their children under the care of a guardian (παιδαγωγός), likewise God places the children of God “under the protective care, instruction and discipline of the Law.”²⁷ The Galatian Christians will in fact recognize the social implication of Paul’s identification of the Law as a guardian. Needless to say, the Galatian Christians know that the role of the guardian is temporary and comes to an end right about the time the child comes of age (Gal 4:1–2). The same is true about the Law in its role as a guardian; the Law exercises the role of a temporary guard to the children of God. Thus, Lysis reminded Socrates that he is under the care of a guardian because he is yet to come of age. In other words, Lysis confirms the temporal role and authority that his guardian has over him.²⁸ The Law is not different in its role as a guardian of the children of God as Paul argues. David T. Gordon’s comment on the positive role of the Law as a guardian is apposite: παιδαγωγός “serves a perfectly appropriate function for a period of time, after which it no longer serves this particular

²⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 3.12.8.

²⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Zen.* 7.110 (Hicks, LCL).

²⁷ de Boer, *Galatians*, 240–241.

²⁸ Plato, *Lys.* 209A. Norman H. Young says, “the pedagogue’s control over a child was therefore temporary. When the boy became a young man, sometime after puberty, the pedagogue’s guardianship came to an end.” Young, “Paidagogos: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor,” *NovT* 29(1987) 169. Elsewhere, Young says, “a boy came under the pedagogue’s control at about age six and remained under his authority until well after puberty.” Young, “The Figure of the Paidagōgos,” 80.

function.”²⁹ This is the reason Paul uses the term. It is also probably the meaning that Paul wishes that the gentile Christians of Galatia will draw from Galatians 3:23–25. The following terms and phrases in this section of the letter (Gal 3:19–25) support Paul’s favorable view and the temporary role assigned to the Law: (1) ἄχρις in v 19, which speaks about the time before the coming of Christ; (2) πρὸ in v 23, which speaks about the time when believers were under the Law; (3) εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν in v 23, which speaks about the revelation of faith through Christ; (4) εἰς Χριστόν in v 24, which speaks about the role of the Law before the coming of Christ; (5) ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως in v 25, which speaks about the coming of faith in Christ; and (6) οὐκέτι in v 25, which points to the end of the role of the Law as a guardian.³⁰

The favorable view of the Mosaic Law that we have discussed so far is in tension with Paul’s main argument in Galatians. The key argument of Galatians concerns the role of Christ in God’s relationship with humanity and *not* the role of the Law in God’s relationship with humanity. Paul’s view of Christ as the manifestation of God’s favor to humanity as we have described it in chapter two is the reason for Paul’s unfavorable view of the Law. Let us keep in mind that it is against the backdrop of Paul’s polemic in Galatians that he envisions the end of the positive role of the Mosaic Law with the coming of Christ. Now that Christ has come, through whom God has fulfilled the divine promise to gratuitously benefit humanity (Gal 3:22), the Law in Paul’s view ceases to be relevant in the believer’s relationship with God. The Law

²⁹ David T. Gordon, “A Note on παιδαγωγός in Galatians 3:24–25,” *NTS* 35(1989) 152; de Boer, *Galatians*, 241; Todd A. Wilson, *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia. Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians* (WUNT 225, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 9.

³⁰ See Clinton E. Arnold, “Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3, 9,” *NovT* 38(1996) 67.

has in fact ceased to be the means through which God's favors are available to believers. They are available now *only* through believers' life of faithfulness, trust or obedience in Christ's self-gift on the cross (see Gal 2:15–16). Paul is convinced that the Law cannot bring life (Gal 3:21) because Christ alone brings life (Gal 2:19–20) and makes it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to experience God's favor (Gal 3:14).

The historic place of the Mosaic Law lies within the time between the giving of the promise to Abraham and the arrival of the offspring of the promise (Gal 3:17).³¹ Unlike the Law given to Moses (Gal 2:15), the promise given to Abraham is inclusive: “all the Gentiles shall be blessed through you” (Gal 3:8; Gen 22:18). The promise made to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ whose self-gift on the cross benefits both Jews and Gentiles alike (Gal 2:20–21). In vivid fashion Paul provides his version of the infancy narrative in order to identify the coming of the heir to the promise, the present time of redemption from the observance of the Mosaic Law and the experience of adoption granted to the children of God as a favor through Christ (Gal 4:4–7; Rom 8:3–4). Dunn's comment is apt: the Law is “not so ultimate or important a factor in the divine purpose as grace and Spirit, as promise and inheritance received through faith; nor so ultimate and powerful as sin.”³²

Paul's argument against circumcision and the observance of the law insists that humanity's redemption by Christ's gift of himself on the cross has led to their adoption as children of God (Gal 4:5). What meaning will the Galatian Christians draw from the verb ἐξαγοράζω “to buy off, deliver, liberate or gain something” with which Paul describes their

³¹ Lull, “The Law as Our Pedagogue,” 482–483; Gordon, “A Note on παιδαγωγός,” 152.

³² Dunn, *The Epistle of the Galatians*, 195.

redemption in Christ (Gal 4:5: ἐξαγοράζω, see Gal 3:13)?³³ It seems likely that they will understand their adoption as children of God as a gratuitous gift of God through Christ's death (see Gal 1:4; 2:20–21). In Galatians 3:13, Paul states differently the nature of the believer's experience of redemption in Christ. He says, "Christ redeemed (ἐξαγοράζω) us from the curse of the Law, by becoming a curse for us" (NRSV).³⁴ In other words, the Galatian Christians do not have to earn their relationship with God by doing the works of the Law (Gal 2:16: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), which is basically an effort in futility as Paul would argue. The elements for right relationship with God have been given through the self-gift of Christ on the cross and the giving of the "Spirit of the Son of God" (Gal 4:6). In this way, the Galatian Christians will understand Paul's language of freedom through Christ's self-gift on the cross to be in opposition to the language of submission to the Law, to the "yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1; see Gal 2:4–5). For submission to the Law will cut the Galatian Christians out of the present benefits of divine adoption and inheritance (see Gal 4:5–7).

Consider the similarities in the language of freedom in an inscription from Delphi (200–199 BCE) to Galatians 2:4 and 5:1. The inscription reads: "Apollo the Pythian bought from Sosibius of Amphissa *for freedom* a female slave, whose name is Nicaea, by race, a Roman, with a price of three minae of silver and a half-mina. The purchase, however, Nicaea [has] committed

³³ BDAG, 342–343; Dunn notes, "the metaphor is of buying from or back, and so of redemption by payment of a price. The image is a seriously disadvantaged status or condition (under a curse) having been rectified by a decisive act by another (the cross) on behalf of those disadvantaged." Dunn, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 176.

³⁴ The pronoun "us" in Gal 3:13 is inclusive. See Bruce, "The Curse of the Law," in *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett* (ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson, London: SPCK, 1982) 33. Contra Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, 141.

unto Apollo *for freedom*” (emphasis added).³⁵ The inscription from Delphi is about the redemption or manumission of a suppliant by the deity. Nicaea negotiates her freedom from Sosibius of Amphissa by paying into the treasury of the temple of Apollo the Pythian. This is because Nicaea has no legal rights to arrange for her freedom directly from Sosibius of Amphissa. Sosibius of Amphissa grants Nicaea her freedom to belong to the deity. The deity then acts as her legal benefactor; and on her part, she belongs to the deity whom she must serve. The evidence from Delphi shows that slaves buy their freedom through Apollo the Pythian who acts as a party in the negotiation. Money is usually deposited into the treasury of the temple by the freed person or the one who acts on behalf of the slave. Consequently, the freed person becomes the property of the deity. “However, the sale [is] fictitious, for the god [makes] no use of his property rights and the slave [eventually becomes] in effect free.”³⁶

³⁵ M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger and Carsten Colpe, *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995) 463. There are other inscriptions from Delphi that support the practice of slaves negotiating their freedom through the deity. There are two of such inscriptions from Delphi worthy of note. One is about a male slave named Theophanes who negotiates his freedom by entrusting it to the god “[on condition that he be free and not be seized as a slave by] anyone for the duration of his life. [If anyone should seize Theophanes with a view to enslavement, [let the sale to the god be confirmed by the one who] gave (him) up and the guarantor. [...Let him be entitled] to rescue Theophanes [...Witnesses are the priests] of Apollo, Aiakidas, [Emmenidas and Chaleans Dam]on, Kallimachos ...” See S. R. Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (vol 6. Australia: Macquarie University Press, 1992) 72. Another inscription from Delphi dated in 162 BCE recounts the release of a Jewish slave “under the ruler Eumenidas, son of Kallios, in the month Apellaios. Kleon, son of Kleudamos in joint action with Xenophania, the mother of Kleudamos, [sold] to the Pythian Apollo a male slave by the name of Judaïos, of the Jewish people, for the price of four silver monas, so that he is to be free and unmolested by all his whole life long. Since Judaïos has entrusted the purchase price to the god, he is free to do what he wants.” Witnesses: Amyntas and Tarantinos priests of Apollo, and the rulers Aristion, Asandros, Aristomachos; as private citizens Sodamidas, Theophrastos, Teison, Glaukos, son of Xenon, and Menes.” See Boring, Berger and Colpe, *Hellenistic Commentary*, 463.

³⁶ Llewelyn, *New Documents*, 72–73.

The texts of Galatians 2:4 and 5:1 imagine believers in a state of slavery (Gal 4:3, 8, see 5:1b) before Christ buys over (ἐξαγοράζω) their freedom from the demands of the Law. Galatians 2:4 reads “who slipped in [that is, the false brethren] to spy *on our freedom* that we have in Christ Jesus, that they might enslave us” (emphasis added). Finally, Galatians 5:1 reads “*for freedom* Christ set us free; stand firm and so not submit to the yoke of slavery” (emphasis added). In Galatians, God’s plan and initiative run throughout Paul’s argument as we noted in chapter two. God negotiates the freedom of believers from the enslaving forces of the present evil age (Gal 1:4; 4:3–4) and from the Law, the yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1). Christ pays the price for believers’ freedom by giving himself up to death on the cross. No human effort or monetary payment is required in this negotiation initiated by God; it is simply a divine favor through the self-gift of Christ on the cross in order that believers could live in the freedom of God’s children (Gal 4:6). The similarity between Galatians 2:4, 5:1a and the inscriptions from Delphi underline that the deity plays a key role in securing the freedom of a suppliant from slavery. In the texts the deity’s involvement in the life of the suppliant is for the sake of freedom. Just as *for freedom*, Christ sets the believers free, likewise *for freedom* Apollo the Pythian buys over the freedom of suppliants like Nicaea.

Nevertheless, in the inscriptions from Delphi, it is the decision of suppliants like Nicaea to seek freedom from the experience of slavery by coming under the protection of the deity. In Galatians, however, Paul clearly argues that believers’ experience of freedom from the “yoke of slavery” comes only as a result of God’s gift of divine favor. The believer’s experience of freedom comes from the actions of God (1) in giving the all-inclusive promise to Abraham and (2) in sending Jesus Christ to die for all, Jews and Gentiles alike. According to Paul, therefore, to

insist on the observance of the law is to undermine the trajectory in the fulfillment of God's plan to benefit humanity and grant them freedom through Christ (Gal 2:20–21, 5:2, 4).

The comparison between the inscription from Delphi, Galatians 2:4 and 5:1 betrays the very fact that the Galatian Christians like the people of the ancient world would recognize the implication of a slave having one's freedom purchased. In the cultural world of the Galatian Christians, the experience of freedom from slavery is a gift by a superior to one who is unable to gain their freedom through personal effort. The superior could be an individual or a state, like the Roman empire; and the one who experiences the gift of freedom could be an individual, like the slave Nicaea, or a nation, like those in the eastern Mediterranean during the period of *Pax Romana* and onwards. On this note, the Galatian Christians will understand that they have received a gift, a divine favor from God through Christ just as Nicaea's experience of freedom is a divine favor from Apollo the Pythian.

The Law becomes a curse upon those who seek God's favor through obedience to the Law. The meaning of the phrase the "curse of the Law" in Galatians is difficult to determine, but attention to Paul's train of thought reveals that, the "curse of the Law" is linked with the desire to seek righteousness and adoption as children of God through the observance of the law, which ends up bringing "curse" upon those who seek righteousness through the Law. Paul seems to conclude, as Betz observes, "that the Law becomes a curse for those who seek justification before God "by works of the Law," because by doing so they deprive themselves of the blessings of Abraham (Gal 3:9)." Subsequently, they deny themselves divine favor through Christ, who is the heir of the promise that God has made to Abraham. With the coming of Christ, who redeems us from the "curse of the Law" (Gal 3:13: Χριστὸς ἡμαῶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου), the blessing that God gave to Abraham as a promise (Gal 3:18: τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ

δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός) is now available to everyone.³⁷ Christ's death is effective (Gal 2:21) because it has made available to humanity the favor of God, the favor that humanity is unable to obtain through the Law. Moreover, the death of Christ has removed the curse that the Law generates upon those who are unable to observe everything written in the book of the Law to do (Deut 27:26).³⁸

The phrases “under the Law” (Gal 3:23; 4:4, 5, 21; 5:18: ὑπὸ νόμον) and “works of the Law” (Gal 2:16; 3:2, 10: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) support Paul's unfavorable view of the Mosaic Law.³⁹ Paul uses these phrases interchangeably and draws the same conclusion about one's life of

³⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 149; Stanley, ““Under a Curse””, 505–506.

³⁸ Christopher D. Stanley's explanation is instructive. He says that those who wish to obey the Law “still have much to lose, since the threat of God's ‘curse’ continues to hang over all who fall short in any respect.” Stanley, “Under a Curse,” 495. Elsewhere he says, “God in the death of Jesus Christ has opened up a way of escape for the *Gentiles* from the ‘negative potentiality’ associated with Torah-observance. No long is it necessary for *Gentiles* to convert to Judaism and abide by the Jewish Torah in order to stand in right relationship with God. Never again need they fear that they would fail in their obligation to the Law and thus cause the ‘curse’ of Deuteronomy 27:26 to become actualized in their own lives. By opening up a new way of ‘faith in Christ’ apart from the Law, God has eliminated this possibility forever, *except* for those who insist on following the old way in disregard of God's redemptive work in Christ.” Stanley, “Under a Curse,” 507. F. F. Bruce adds, “...the Law brings no blessings with it, but a curse. Far from justifying men and women in the sight of God, it condemns them. It tells them what to do, but imparts no power to do it, while it pronounces a curse on those who fail to keep it in its entirety.” Bruce, “The Curse of the Law,” 27.

³⁹ Let us keep in mind that the phrase ‘works of the Law’ “is chosen by Paul to denote those obligations prescribed by the law which show the individual concerned to belong to the law, which mark out the practitioner as a member of the people of the law, the covenant people, the Jewish nation.” Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10–14),” *NTS* 31(1985) 527; idem, *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990) 219–220; Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 281; Normand Bonneau, “The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10–14,” *NovT* 39(1997) 67. When we turn to the Letter to the Romans, Paul outlines his own understanding of what constitutes the ‘works of the Law.’ The ‘works of the Law’ constitute condemnation (Rom 3:9), knowledge of sin (Rom 3:5), wrath (Rom 4:15), revelation of sinful passions (Rom 7:5, 9, 13) and the ‘works of the Law’ include sin and death (Rom 8:2).

obedience to the prescriptions of the Law. Obedience to the Mosaic Law (Gal 5:3) requires that one observe dietary regulations (Gal 2:11–14), participate in cultic activities (Gal 4:10) and be circumcised (Gal 5:3). These activities are the features of Israel’s covenant relationship with God and by participation one lives a Jewish way of life (see Gal 2:14). But Paul does not think that Gentiles need to live as Jews in order to share in God’s gift of divine benefaction (see Gal 2:14). This is because the Galatian Christians have already experienced God’s favor without living like Jews (see Gal 3:1–5).

We understand the phrase “justification by faith” to mean that God has granted the believer an experience of God’s gift of righteousness on account of the believer’s life of faithfulness, trust and obedience in Christ. In fact, justification is an experience of gratuitous gift of divine favor. G. M. M. Pelsler says, “faith and “works of the Law are fundamentally incompatible and mutually exclusive. While faith is the means of receiving the Spirit, works of the law are not.”⁴⁰ If then the message of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents to the Galatian Christians is to live a life of “faith in Christ” by means of doing the “works of the Law,” then Paul’s own message to the Galatian Christians, which he staunchly defends in the letter, is that either one lives a life of “faith in Christ” or one lives a life of trying to please God by doing the “works of the Law.” Emphatically, Paul defends his position that it is only through a way of life based on “faith in Christ” that one can surely experience God’s gift of divine favor (Gal 5:4). But

⁴⁰ G. M. M. Pelsler, “The Opposition of Faith and Works as Persuasive Device in Galatians (3:6–14),” *Noet* 26(1992) 395. Elsewhere Pelsler says, “the juxtaposition of Christ and Law dramatically emphasizes the dissociation of the two alternatives of being in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) or living in the Law (ἐν νόμῳ). The first frees one from the “curse of the Law” and opens the door to sharing in the blessing of Abraham and the [reception] of the Spirit. The second leaves one under God’s curse and shuts the door to justification, to life in Christ.” Pelsler, “The Opposition of Faith and Works,” 399.

dependence on doing the “works of the Law” takes away the advantage and the benefit of living in Christ as a gift that requires a manner of living in faithfulness and trust in the world (Gal 5:2).⁴¹

The two texts that Paul quotes from the Bible make very clear the difference between his message about living a life of fidelity and trust in Christ and living under the prescriptions of the Law. Leviticus 18:5 states: “keep, then, my statutes and decrees, for the man who carries them out will find life through them” (NAB; see Gal 3:12b). It provides support for the gospel of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents.⁴² The text of Habakkuk 2:4b which states: “the just man because of faith shall live,” (NAB; see Gal 3:11b) and it provides a proof from Scripture to support Paul’s argument that to enjoy God’s gift of divine favor requires that one lives a life of faithfulness, loyalty and trust in one’s relationship with God.⁴³ Why does Paul cite two texts that reveal the tension in his argument on how the believer experiences God’s favor? It seems to me that the text of Leviticus 18:5, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:12b, continues the theme of the temporary and favorable view of the Law. The expectation is that one will abide by the

⁴¹ Paul L. Owen, “The ‘Works of the Law’ in Romans and Galatians: A New Defense of the Subjective Genitive,” *JBL* 126(2007) 562.

⁴² See Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) 189.

⁴³ Paul L. Owen says: “because Israel could not go on to live according to the Law. That is why Habakkuk recognized that the only way to be justified is by faith—which for Paul always entails the acceptance of righteousness as an imputed gift that is not based on personal obedience to the Law (cf Rom 4:5–6; 5:17).” See Owen, “The ‘Works of the Law,’” 566. Martyn is even more emphatic. He says “Paul is not concerned to “solve” the contradiction between two texts he considers to have been drawn from the same Law... On the contrary, he is concerned to emphasize the contradiction between the two texts. He sees God’s promise in Habakkuk 2:4—rectifying faith will lead to life—is the truth of the gospel. And given the work of the Teachers in his Galatian churches, he also sees that the Law’s promise in Leviticus 18:5—observance of the Law will lead to life—is the falsification of the gospel.” Martyn, *Galatians*, 333.

prescriptions and ordinances in the Law in one's daily life. Baruch Levine echoes this point of view when he interprets the phrase "he shall live by them" which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:12b to mean "that one should live his life in accordance with God's laws and commandments and that he should obey them all his life or while he is alive."⁴⁴ The passage from Habakkuk 2:4b which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:11b lends credence to the main argument Paul makes in Galatians on the significance of the death of Christ on the cross. It is through a life of faithfulness, obedience and trust that one enjoys and lives in a relationship of benefaction with God as one is led and guided by the "Spirit of the Son of God" (Gal 5:16, 25).⁴⁵

4.2. Elemental Spirits of the World

Turning to the elemental spirits of the world we shall attempt to understand the reason Paul mentions the religious traditions of his gentile audience in the argument of Galatians, when in fact the opposition he is facing concerns Jewish Law and traditions. This much is clear that Paul's Jewish Christian opponents are trying to persuade the Galatian Christians to be circumcised and to observe the law in addition to their faith in Christ. But there is not enough evidence to conclude that the same Jewish Christian opponents of Paul are trying to persuade the Galatian Christians to take up again the worship of the elemental spirits of the world, the deities

⁴⁴ Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 119.

⁴⁵ J. Goldingay and P. Scalise, *Minor Prophets II* (NIBC, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009) 68–69; Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture. Studying the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010) 61, 64–65. The key Hebrew term in Habakkuk 2:4, namely **הַאֱמוּנָה** is frequently used to refer to God's faithfulness or reliability that God will do the things that will benefit the people of Israel (Deut 32:4; Psalm 36:5) and less frequently it is used to refer to human faithfulness in doing what is pleasing to God (Prov 22:12). Nevertheless, Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4 in the context of his argument about the believer's life of faith and trust in God's gift of divine favor through Christ. To enjoy the inheritance of God through Christ, therefore, the believer must live a worthy life of fidelity, loyalty, trust and obedience to God on account of one's experience of God's favor through Christ.

of the Greco-Roman world to whom they, i.e., the Galatian Christians, belong prior to their present life of fidelity and trust in Christ. The elemental spirits of the world are the deities of the Greco-Roman world whose identities we will never know with certainty because Paul provides only a general description of these deities. Paul calls the Greco-Roman deities the leaders of the present evil age (Gal 1:4: τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ), and beings that by nature are not gods (Gal 4:8: τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς) and slaveholders (Gal 4:3: ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι). He concludes that they are characteristically weak and beggarly (Gal 4:9: τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ). Paul's criticism of the elemental spirits of the world might have been influenced by the literature of his own Jewish background (see Deut 4:28; Psalm 115:4–8; Isaiah 44:9–20; Wis 15:15–19; see also, 1 Cor 10:20) and ultimately, by his deep convictions about God and Jesus Christ after his commissioning as an apostle to the Gentiles (see Gal 1:13–17).

It seems odd that Paul would discuss the Mosaic Law in the same breath as the elemental spirits of the world (Gal 4:1–5); and he seemingly draws the conclusion that both the Law and the elemental spirits of the world are characteristically unable to benefit humanity. But Paul places the Mosaic Law and the elemental spirits of the world in the same category because they are both, in Paul's view, enslaving powers (Gal 4:3; 5:1). Let us keep in mind that the polemical character of the Letter to the Galatians is perhaps the reason Paul places the Mosaic Law in the same category as the elemental spirits of the world. In a moment we shall show how Paul's appeal to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction is the backdrop against which he links the Mosaic Law with the elemental spirits. In the interim, however, we shall review some of the efforts in modern scholarship to identify exactly the Greco-Roman deities that Paul calls the elemental spirits of the world.

Significant effort have been made by scholars to identify the exact deities worshipped in the Greco-Roman world that Paul compares with the Mosaic Law. The number and variety of the following suggestions are a testament to the difficulty. (1) It is assumed that the Galatian Christians were idol worshippers prior to their faith in Christ;⁴⁶ or (2) it has been suggested that Paul sees the elemental spirits of the world as forces in the world and together with the Mosaic Law in opposition to Christ;⁴⁷ or (3) it has been suggested that the elemental spirits of the world are demonic beings with heavenly power that are hostile to humanity;⁴⁸ and (4), oddly, it has been noted that the elemental spirits of the world are angels who are the originators of the Mosaic Law. Bo Reicke, for example, says that there are “substantial reasons for identifying the elemental spirits with the angels in Galatians 3:9 who establish the Law.”⁴⁹

Martyn has suggested that the elemental spirits of the world are the mystery cults which are ubiquitous in the cultural world of Paul’s auditors. Martyn observes that it is the festivals in the cult of Cybele that Paul refers to in Galatians 4:10.⁵⁰ One of the reasons for this proposal is

⁴⁶ Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 517.

⁴⁷ Andrew J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World. An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul Teaching* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1964) 57–68.

⁴⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 204–205. F. F. Bruce says, “that they are demonic forces which hold in thrall the minds of men and women who follow their dictates, but lose their potency as soon as those minds are emancipated, as they are by the grace of God and the power of his Spirit.” Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 204.

⁴⁹ Bo Reicke, “The Law and this World according to Paul. Some Thoughts concerning Gal 4:1–11,” *JBL* 70(1951) 263.

⁵⁰ Martyn, “Christ, the Elements of the Cosmos, and the Law in Galatians,” in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 21.

because the temple of Cybele in Pessinus is one of the regions of the Galatian Christians. In the *Metamorphoses*, Isis' comment supports the position of Martyn for the location of the cult of Cybele in Pessinus. The goddess claims that the Phrygians call her "Pessinuntine Mother of the Gods." Moreover, Isis is known as the "mistress of the elements (*elementorum omnium domina*)."⁵¹ Elsewhere, Apuleius acknowledges that the elements are the servants of the goddess (*serviunt elementa*).⁵² Then in the cults of Cybele, devotees engage in reverence of the elements. If the Galatian Christians are formerly worshippers of Cybele, then "they may have engaged in orgiastic rites designed to assure the fertility of the earth" which is one of the elements.⁵³

Further research has linked the festivals in Galatians 4:10 to the imperial cult. Justin K. Hardin suggests that Paul accuses the Galatian Christians of participating in the festal calendar of the imperial cult.⁵⁴ Evidence for "special years" in the imperial ritual calendar is found in the *Res*

⁵¹ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.5.

⁵² Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.25.

⁵³ Martyn, "Christ, the Elements of the Cosmos, 21–22. Stephen Mitchell's observation supports Martyn's position. He notes "...the Phrygian tribe called the Berecynthians the Trojans living around Mount Ida, and the Phrygians in general, that they were orgiastic worshippers of the goddess Rhea, calling her by various names—the Mother of the Gods, Angdistis, the Great Phrygian Goddess, Cybele or Cybele—or simply designating her after the place where she was worshipped, such as Ida, Dindyma, Sipylus, or Pessinus." See Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. The Rise of the Church* (Vol II., Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 19. For information on the cult of Cybele and the regions of the Galatia, see Susan Elliott, *Cutting too Close for Comfort. Paul's Letter to the Galatians in its Anatolian Cultic Context* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 108–116.

⁵⁴ Justin K. Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult. A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter* (WUNT 237, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 12–13, 121, 127, 149. Bruce Winter makes the following observation "some seventy years before the arrival of Christianity the provincial imperial cult of Augustus and Roma was founded in the Roman province of Galatia in 25 B. C. Its grow was rapid and Galatia provides 'much the most detailed evidence for the spread of emperor worship in the central Anatolia provinces.'" Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City. Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/The Paternoster Press, 1994) 125. A. Andrew Das is another scholar who supports this point of view on the interpretation of Galatians 4:10. He says,

Gestae Divi Augusti. We have pointed out in chapter two the significance of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* in the regions of the Galatia, given the fact that both the Greek and Latin versions of the text of *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* are found in the province of Galatia. Hardin suggests that there were annual festivals, often without the usual games, in honor of the imperial cult. He appeals to Galatians 4:8 to support his claim that the ritual festivals in Galatians 4:10 belong to the imperial cult because the emperors are not gods by nature but are “regarded as divine by declaration of the senate.”⁵⁵ The gods of the imperial cults are human beings who eventually gain divine honors like emperor Augustus. On this note, Hardin suggests that Paul’s claim that the Galatian Christians are worshipping beings that by nature are not gods is a direct rebuke of their affiliation to the imperial cult.⁵⁶

Another influential study on the modern interpretation of Galatians 4:10 is the one by Betz. Betz has observed that the cultic activities described in Galatians 4:10 are well known both in Jewish and Gentile religious traditions. Since Paul gives the impression that the Galatian Christians are mulling over the decision to accept circumcision and to observe the Mosaic Law, Betz concludes that the Galatian Christians will engage in the cultic activities outlined in

“the imperial cult was well entrenched within the province of Galatia before the first Christians. During the Augustan era, imperial temples in Galatia were built in conspicuous locations near the center of the cities (e.g., Ancyra, Pessinus, and Pisidian Antioch). These temples were focal points, intended to be visible from a distance.” See Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel*, 182. Mitchell has suggested that “the most detailed evidence for the spread of emperor worship in the central Anatolia provinces comes from Galatia.” His thesis supports the presence of the imperial temples in Ancyra, Pessinus and Pisidian Antioch. See Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (vol 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 102–107.

⁵⁵ Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult*, 124–126.

⁵⁶ Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult*, 126.

Galatians 4:10 once they are circumcised. In other words, the Galatian Christians are not presently engaged in Jewish cultic activities, but they will begin to do so after their circumcision.⁵⁷ Burton agrees with this point of view. He emphatically states that the cultic activities in Galatians 4:10 “are those which the Jewish Law required to be observed”: moreover, this is demonstrated, “by the unquestioned character of the influence to which the Galatians were yielding.”⁵⁸ The reference to observing “days” probably refers to Sabbath observance (Judith 8:9; 1 Macc 10:34; Col 2:16); the reference to observing “months” perhaps refers to the festival commemoration of the beginning of the month (Num 10:10; 28:11; 1 Chr 23:31; Judith 8:6; 1 Macc 10:34; Col 2:16);⁵⁹ the reference to observing “seasons” alludes to “the great feasts of Jewish calendar, such as Passover and Tabernacles;” and finally, the observance of “years” perhaps refers to the annual celebration of *Rosh Hashanah* (the feast of the beginning of a New Year).⁶⁰

Other research on the elemental spirits of the world focuses on the term στοιχεῖον which Paul uses to describe the content of the religious traditions of his gentile audience in Galatia. It has been noted that the term στοιχεῖον is not used for divine beings alone; the term is also related to στοιχος, which means “a line, a row, a rank, with the fundamental meaning of standing in a

⁵⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 217; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 182; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 227; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 205.

⁵⁸ Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 232–233; Timothy C. G. Thornton, “Jewish New Moon Festivals, Galatians 4:3–11 and Colossians 2:16,” *JTS* 40(1989) 97–100.

⁵⁹ Writing around 35 BCE, the Roman poet Horace describes a Roman showing respect for Jewish festival of the New Moon (*tricesima sabbata*). Horace, *Sat.* 1.9.68–70

⁶⁰ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 182.

row, hence an element of a series.”⁶¹ Andrew J. Bandstra adds that while *στοῖχος* is a military term, which means row, *στοιχεῖον* is used to designate a “member of a row.”⁶² According to Gerhard Dellling, who outlines the meaning of the term *στοιχεῖον* in Greco-Roman literature from the time of Plato onwards, it means: (1) “a length of a shadow by which time is calculated;” (2) a syllable, or words, or the sounds they represent in a sentence; (3) the basic elements of which the cosmos is composed; (4) notes in music, mathematics, and child care; (5) the “connection between elements and stars... [because the] “stars are composed of fire, the chief and finest element;” and, (6) later on, “the idea of stellar spirits... and then more generally for a spiritual being.”⁶³ These various representations of the meaning of the term *στοιχεῖον* are best explained by Bandstra. The ‘specific content’ of the term *στοιχεῖον* is based on the context in which it is used. ⁶⁴ Paul chooses to use the term *στοιχεῖον* to describe the former religious traditions of his auditors in order it to inveigh against the traditions as inherently unable by nature to give life, or even grant favor, to devotees. Based on Paul’s scheme of thought in Galatians, therefore, taking up circumcision and the observance of the law is not different from

⁶¹ Burton, *Galatians*, 510.

⁶² Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World*, 31.

⁶³ Gerhard Dellling, *TDNT*, VII. 670–683. Ernest De Witt Burton has a slightly different list. His research yields the following results: (1) the elementary sound in which a speech, a letter of the alphabet stands; (2) a component part of physical bodies; (3) “a premise or fundamental preposition of a demonstration;” (4) “ a simple or elementary principle of knowledge or instruction;” (5) according to Burton, in “that from which as a constituent first principle, indivisible into other kinds of things, things of another kind are produced;” (6) the heavenly body, star, sun, constellation; and (7) a spirit or demon. See Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 510–514.

⁶⁴ Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World*, 33.

their non-beneficial experience under the elemental spirits of the world whom they previously honored with cultic devotions.

There are ancient authors that seldom link the elements to a religious context. For instance, Plato identifies earth, water, air, and fire as principle and elements of the universe without assigning to them any religious meaning or cultic significance.⁶⁵ The Jewish author Philo of Alexandria follows Plato by observing that the world is made from each of the elements of earth, water, air and fire,⁶⁶ which are “lifeless matters incapable of movement.”⁶⁷ The author of Fourth Maccabees claims that the human person is created from the elements (4 Macc 12;13). The elements are characteristically changeable (Wis 19:18, see 7:17). In addition to the elements being changeable, they are also destructible, as noted by Diogenes Laertius.⁶⁸ Observations like the one made by Diogenes Laertius might have supported early Christian belief that the elements will perish when Christ returns at the end of time (2 Peter 3:10b: στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται).

The author of the *Testament of Solomon* claims that the elemental spirits of the world operate like demonic powers. He identifies the elemental spirits of the world as “the world rulers of the darkness of this age” (T. Sol. 18:2). Already we know that in Galatians Paul calls them

⁶⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 48B-C.

⁶⁶ Philo, *Decal.* 31 (Colson, LCL); idem, *Her.* 134–135. In *De Opificio Mundi*, Philo adds that like the world, the human body is made up of the “same things, earth, water, air and fire, each of the elements having contributed the share that falls to each, to complete a material absolutely sufficient in itself for the Creator to take in order to fashion this visible image.” Philo, *Opif.* 146 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

⁶⁷ Philo, *Contempl.* 5 (Colson, LCL).

⁶⁸ Diogenes Laertius, 7.134–135.

“the present evil age” (Gal 1:4). The author of Wisdom of Solomon notes that the elements and the luminaries are identified as the “gods that rule the world” (Wis 13:1–3). The same is true of 2 *Enoch*, a work whose provenance is hard to reconstruct.⁶⁹ However, as a piece of Jewish literature of first century CE, 2 *Enoch* places the elements in the same category as “spirits and flying angels” (2 En. 16.7). The Letter to the Colossian warns the Christian community thus, “see to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, *according to the elemental powers of the world* (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) and not according to Christ” (Col 2:8, see Col 2:20, emphasis added). In his polemic against Greco-Roman religions, Philo confirms that the four elements of earth, water, air and fire are deified.⁷⁰ Philo notes that in spite of Moses’ warning that God should not be identified with any part of the created universe, the Sophists decided to make the elements into deities by naming fire “Hephaestus because it is kindled (ἐξάπτω), air Hera because it is lifted up (ἀίρω) and exalted on high, water Poseidon perhaps because it is drunk (ποτός), and earth Demeter because it appears to be the mother of all plants and animals.”⁷¹

Accordingly, both diasporic Jews and early Christians share the same polemic against Greco-Roman religious traditions. The polemic seems to confirm that the so called elemental spirits of the world are the gods and goddesses who are worshipped in the Greco-Roman world

⁶⁹ F. I. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apoclyypse of) Enoch,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol 1. ed. James H. Charlesworth, NY: Doubleday, 1983) 94–96.

⁷⁰ Philo, *Decal.* 53; see idem, *Contempl.* 52.

⁷¹ Philo, *Contempl.* 3 (Colson, LCL). In the *Decalogue*, Philo provides another version of his criticism of Greco-Roman and the deification of the elements out of which the universe is created. See Philo, *Decal.* 54–55.

and honored with ritual festivals (see Gal 4:8–10).⁷² In Paul’s own attack on Greco-Roman religions, he claims that they are unable to do good, but only evil (Gal 1:4); they are incapable of granting favor; and with their weak powers, they only enslave (Gal 4:3, 9c), are unable to give freedom to humankind (see Gal 4:3) and, therefore, they are not benefactors. On this note, Paul’s polemic reveals his intention to show that Christ alone is humanity’s sure hope of experiencing divine benefaction and of course that Christ has exposed the bankruptcy of the elemental spirits of the world.⁷³

As we have pointed out, the only reason that Paul mentions the religious traditions of his gentile audience in the argument of Galatians is to convince them that accepting circumcision and the observation of the law is equivalent to returning to the religious traditions that they have abandoned because of their overpowering experience of God’s gift of divine favor in Christ (see Gal 3:1–5). From Paul’s point of view, if the Galatian Christians accept circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law, it is the same as turning back again to participate in the cultic activities taking place in the temples of Greco-Roman deities which they have left behind since their experience of Christ (see Gal 4:9c-10). One of the ways that Paul links the elemental spirits of the world with the Mosaic Law is in his claim that they are both enslaving powers. We have already noticed that Paul’s analogy of Abraham’s household ends with the Mosaic Law being linked with the “yoke of slavery” (Gal 4:21–5:1: ... ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε; see Acts 15:10).

⁷² Mitchell provides evidence to support the presence of various cults and religious traditions in the regions of the Galatia. He identifies “four groups of cults” that makes up “the religious atmosphere of ancient Anatolia, namely those of Zeus, for the various Mother Goddesses, for Mēn, and for the several champions of divine justice and vengeance.” And these deities are not abstract or remote, their traces are everywhere in the community. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, Vol II., 11, 19.

⁷³ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 30.

Paul also claims that the devotees of the elemental spirits of the world are under slavery (Gal 4:3: ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι; see Gal 4:8). In broad terms, therefore, Paul suggests to his Galatian auditors that no enslaving power is a benefactor. In other words, no enslaving power is at the same time able to grant favor to those being enslaved. Paul could only make this argument on the basis of the polemical character of the Letter to the Galatians and his influential appeal to the benefaction conventions of the cultural world of his auditors.

4.3. Paul's Jewish Christian Opponents

It is extremely difficult to attempt a reconstruction of the gospel message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents beyond what we can know by inference from Paul's polemic against them in the Letter to the Galatians. Besides, Paul does not go out of his way to discuss in any organized fashion the message that his Jewish Christian opponents preached to the Galatian Christians. In fact, we are at a very serious disadvantage in searching for of the message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents through Paul's polemic against them.⁷⁴ This much we know that the success of Paul's ministry (see Gal 3:1–5; 4:12–20) is suddenly upended by the message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents, who are supposedly preaching “another gospel” (Gal 1:6–7: ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον), the existence of which Paul outright denies (Gal 1:7–9: ὁ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο).

On one hand, the ministry of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents which is aimed at encouraging Gentile Christians to be circumcised and to observe the Mosaic Law in addition to

⁷⁴ Martyn has attempted a reconstruction of the message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents out of Paul's polemic against them. See Martyn, “A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles” 352–361, *idem.*, *Theological Issues*, 12–24. On the appeal to the figure of Abraham by Paul's Jewish Christian opponents, see *idem.*, *Galatians*, 302–306. A note of caution from Betz on the efforts in scholarship to reconstruct the message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents is apposite. Betz says “not everything that Paul denies is necessarily an accusation by his opponents, and not everything that he accuses his opponents of doing or thinking represents their actual goals and intentions.” Betz, *Galatians*, 6.

faith in Christ reveals “the inherent instability of the compromise” reached at the Jerusalem council (Gal 2:1–10; see Acts 15:1–35).⁷⁵ The instability of the compromise at the Jerusalem council immediately begins to unravel in communities in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14) and in the regions of the Galatia (Gal 3:1; 4:17; 5:7–11). On the other hand, the growing influence of the ministry of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents among the Galatian Christians is the reason Paul writes the letter. Apparently, members of the Christian community in Galatia are giving serious thought to the message of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents. The Galatian Christians perhaps have concluded that circumcision and the observance of the law give identity to their relationship with God through Christ in a way that sets them apart in their cultural world. The Galatian Christians might have been convinced that circumcision and observance of the law give evidence to whom they belong in their experience of divine favor.

By and large, modern scholars have observed that opposition to Paul’s ministry remains a constant issue and threat in the communities that he founded. Scholars conclude that Jewish Christian opponents of Paul arrived from Jerusalem right about the time Paul departed from a community he just established. The goal of their visit was to denounce Paul “as libertine in morals and renegade in convictions, [and they endeavor] to bring the primarily non-Jewish churches which he had founded in Greek-speaking cities to accept a more Jewish version of Christianity.”⁷⁶ But this general description in modern scholarship about the opposition that Paul faces in his ministry to the Gentiles does not take into consideration the particular character and

⁷⁵ Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul*, 26.

⁷⁶ A. E. Harvey, “The Opposition to Paul,” in *The Galatians Debate. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) 323.

nature of the opposition to Paul's ministry in the different communities of the Greco-Roman world. What is clear is that the fiercest opposition that Paul faces comes from other Jewish Christian missionaries whom he calls "dogs" and "evil workers" in Philippians 3:2. Sarcastically he calls them "super-apostles" in 2 Corinthians 11:5, and he even urges them to castrate themselves in Galatians 5:12.

There have been several efforts to identify the origin of the opposition to Paul's ministry in Galatians. Bruce W. Winter has suggested that the pressure to circumcise Galatian Christians is an internal one; it comes from the "local Jewish Galatian Christians because their own self-preservation and that of the Christian community [is] seen to be at stake."⁷⁷ Winter notes that for those who do not practice the Jewish faith "participation in the Roman empire includes the veneration of emperors and the imperial family."⁷⁸ It is for this reason that Winter concludes that the Christian community in Galatia is under pressure to participate in the rituals in honor of the emperor and the imperial family. Christianity is not recognized by Rome as a *religio licita*, and so Christians are not exempt from the ritual activities in honor of the imperial cult. Only Judaism is recognized by Rome as a legal religion or *religio licita*. As a result of this, both the local Galatian and Jewish Christians are expected "to participate in the imperial cult."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 140. Justin K. Hardin is another scholar who follows Bruce W. Winter. Hardin appeals to Galatians 5:7–9 to support the position that those who are preaching circumcision and the observance of the law are Galatian Jewish Christians. According to Hardin, the metaphor of a little yeast that leavens the whole dough supports the proposal that the opponents of Paul are Galatian Jewish Christians. See Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult*, 90–94. John G. Hawkins outlines the effort of modern scholars to name the exact identity of Paul's opponents in Galatians. see John G. Hawkins, *The Opponents of Paul in Galatia* (Unpub. Diss, Yale University, 1971) 13–85.

⁷⁸ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 140.

⁷⁹ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 134.

Winter draws from the texts of Acts 13:50 and 14:4–5 to further support his claim that Jews living in the regions of the Galatia collaborated with the civic authorities against Jewish Christians and the Christian movement in the region. Winter suggests that the phrase “persecution for the cross of Christ” (Gal 6:12) describes the experience of Jewish Christians in the regions of the Galatia in the hands of the civic authority on account of uncircumcised Gentiles in their midst.⁸⁰ Winter insists that the pressure both from the local Jewish community and the civic authorities is the reason that the Jewish Galatian Christians want their gentile Galatian Christians counterparts to undergo circumcision and observe the Mosaic Law. The circumcision of gentile Galatian Christians will convince civic authorities that Christianity is a *religio licita*.⁸¹ On this note, Winter interprets Galatians 6:12a to mean that “the local Jewish Christians have ‘secured good legal status’ for the Galatian Christian Gentiles through circumcision.”⁸² The result is that the Christian community in Galatia will avoid political persecution and experience religious tolerance. However, the argument of Paul in Galatians does not seem to support Winter’s proposal on the origin of the opposition that Paul is dealing with in the letter.

We know from the Letter to the Galatians that a community of non-Jews are the recipient of Paul’s ministry in the regions of the Galatia. Dunn quotes Galatians 4:8 to support the fact that

⁸⁰ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 137.

⁸¹ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 141.

⁸² Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 139. Winter claims that “the phrase ‘having legal status’ (ἔχων πρόσωπον) should therefore be seen as being achieved as a result of an activity.”

the community is comprised of non-Jews.⁸³ Betz is even more precise when he states that the Christian community in Galatia are ethnically Gentiles.⁸⁴ In addition, the evidence shows that the opposition Paul faces in his ministry, particularly in the regions of the Galatia, comes from other Jewish Christian missionaries who are probably from Jerusalem, like those Paul calls “false brethren” and demand that Titus be circumcised (Gal 2:1–10). They are probably the same group as the “men from James” who arrive from Jerusalem to Antioch demanding the observance of Jewish food laws when Peter was visiting the city (Gal 2:12).⁸⁵

Jerome Murphy-O’Connor further suggests that instead of Jerusalem being the origin of Paul’s opposition in Galatia, these missionaries might have come from Antioch, a community that Paul has completely severed ties with because they did not support Paul on the same issue that is now playing out in Galatia (see Gal 2:11–14). Murphy-O’Connor argues that there are members of the Antiochean church who agree with the Jerusalem church against Paul’s teaching.

⁸³ Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 6. Martyn adds that Paul ministers to and addresses his “letter to former Gentiles, uncircumcised persons with some degree of Hellenistic culture, who previously worshiped pagan gods (Gal 4:8–9).” See Martyn, *Galatians*, 16.

⁸⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 4.

⁸⁵ Longenecker lends a supporting voice when he says “that Paul’s opponents were Jewish Christians..., who came from Jerusalem church to Paul’s churches in Galatia with a message stressing the need for Gentiles to be circumcised. [They] claimed to be interested in Gentiles being fully integrated into the chosen people of Israel, and so full recipients of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant.” Longenecker, *Galatians*, xcvi. Dunn characterizes them as (1) those who preach both circumcision and faith in Christ (Gal 5:2–12; 6:12–13), (2) they are circumcised Jews and seem to struggle like every other Jew to keep everything written in the Law (Gal 6:13), (3) they are circumcised, they observe the Law and they have faith in Christ, (4) they are apostles, who preach the gospel message like Paul (see Gal 1:6–9) and finally, their apostolic authority comes from the Jerusalem apostles, maybe from James (see Gal 2:12). See Dunn, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 9–11; John C. Hurd, “Reflections Concerning Paul’s ‘Opponents,’ in Galatia” in *Paul and His Opponents* (vol 2., ed. Stanley E. Porter, Leiden: Brill, 2005) 146.

For this reason, therefore, these members of the Antiochean church made up of both Jewish and gentile Christians are determined to encourage the gentile churches founded by Paul to accept circumcision and the Mosaic Law in addition to faith in Christ.⁸⁶

Another intriguing effort to identify the opponents of Paul in Galatians is the one by Burton. In his interpretation of Galatians 2:4, Burton claims that the “false brethren” who are opposing Paul are not members of the church. They are distinct from both the apostles and the primitive church in spirit and aims. Burton insists that the terms *κατασκοπήσαι* and *ἵνα καταδουλώσουσιν* make it clear that these opponents of Paul “entered the church for a propagandist purpose.”⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who perhaps participated at the Jerusalem council and who are neither convinced nor agree with the compromise then reached by the council are Paul’s opponents (Gal 2:1–14; see Acts 15:1–29). This is because Paul sharply criticizes his Jewish Christian opponents as if they are distinct from the Galatian Christians for whose sake he has become a mother until God’s favor through Christ becomes a reality in their lives (Gal 4:19).⁸⁸

What kind of opposition precisely is Paul dealing with in Galatians? The opposition Paul faces in Galatians revolves around the demand that members of the Christian community he established in the regions of the Galatia should be circumcised and observe the Mosaic Law (Gal

⁸⁶ Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 193–194. Martyn suggests, “they are Christian Jews in the Diaspora, who preach their nomistic gospel in Greek, quote the Law in Greek, and interpret the Law in ways understandable to persons of Greek culture.” Martyn, “A Law-Observant Mission,” 354; *idem.*, *Theological Issues*, 14.

⁸⁷ Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 83. The weakness in Burton’s position has been pointed out by Murphy-O’Connor. See Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 133.

⁸⁸ See Hawkins, *The Opponents of Paul in Galatians*, 100–101.

6:12) in addition to their faith in Christ. At the very least, the notion of salvation only through the death of Christ on the cross seems to alienate Jewish Christians who believe that circumcision and the Mosaic Law are still essential aspects of God's promise of salvation.⁸⁹ It is for this reason that Paul's Jewish Christian opponents preach the gospel of circumcision and law observance in addition to faith in the self-gift of Christ on the cross. They disagree with Paul's message that God's gift of divine favor through Christ's death on the cross has upended the relevance of the Mosaic Law in divine-human relationship. Rather, Paul's Jewish Christian opponents teach that God's gift of divine favor through Christ is in continuity with the plan of God for humanity as revealed through the Mosaic Law. Perhaps, like the author of the Gospel of Matthew and his community, Jewish Christians like Paul's opponents believe that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, and not the end of the Law (Matt 5:17–18). As Martyn notes, "the Teachers view Christ much as do the members of the strictly observant circumcision party in the Jerusalem church, perhaps seeing him as the savior who brought to completion the ministry of Moses."⁹⁰ It is for this very reason, therefore, that they proclaim the gospel of personal responsibility through the observance of the law in addition to faith in Christ.

Paul's Jewish Christian opponents might have appealed to the story of Abraham's circumcision in his covenant with God to support their message to the Galatian Christians (see Gen 17:9–14, 23–27). They probably might have convinced the Galatians that obedience to God demands that they imitate Abraham and accept circumcision as a mark of their relationship with God. They might have warned the Galatian Christians that it will be impossible to enter into

⁸⁹ See Betz, *Galatians*, 270.

⁹⁰ See Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to the Gentiles," 356; idem., *Theological Issues*, 17.

relationship with God and enjoy the benefits of intimacy with God without circumcision.⁹¹ From the point of view of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents, circumcision is the only means of being accepted by God and the only means of remaining in a covenant relationship with God is through the observance of the Law.⁹² Consequently, it will earn gentile Christians a share in God's promise to benefit all the nations of the earth through Abraham.⁹³ When Paul appeals to the example of Abraham as we have shown in chapter two, he focuses on the story of God's promise to benefit humanity through Abraham and the story of Abraham's fidelity, loyalty and trust in his relationship with God, which happened prior to Abraham's circumcision (Gen 15; Gal 3:6). It is beside the point whether Paul first introduced the story of Abraham to the Galatian Christians during his first visit to the region or whether the figure of Abraham is introduced to the Galatian Christians by Paul's Jewish Christian opponents when they arrived in the region with their own message denouncing Paul.⁹⁴ What is important to keep in mind is that Abraham plays a significant role in the conception of God's relationship with Jews and in the subsequent admittance of Gentiles into that relationship.

⁹¹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 16.

⁹² Longenecker, *Galatians*, 113.

⁹³ Martyn suggests that the Jewish Christian opponents of Paul understands God's saving plan to begin from Abraham and goes "through the generations of the corporate people of Israel, [and] now has become explicitly messianic in the nomistic gospel of the Jerusalem church, and that is being climatically extended to the whole of the world through the Teachers' own mission to the Gentiles." See Martyn, *Theological Issues*, 164.

⁹⁴ Martyn thinks that Paul refers to Abraham because Paul's Jewish Christian opponents have already done so when they arrived in Galatia preaching circumcision and observance of the law in addition to faith in Christ. See Martyn, "The Law-Observant Mission," 357; idem., *Theological Issues*, 18.

It is also likely that Paul's Jewish Christian opponents discuss Paul's commissioning as an apostle. During their ministry to the Christian community in Galatia, they might have linked the origin of Paul's ministry and his apostolic authority to the "pillars of the church" in Jerusalem. They probably informed the Galatian Christians that only the "pillars of the church" in Jerusalem have direct authority from Christ and that everyone else, including Paul and themselves (viz., Paul's Jewish Christian opponents), derive their apostolic authority from the "pillars of the church" in Jerusalem. The unusual opening section of the Letter to the Galatians (Gal 1:1) is an obvious hint that whatever authority Paul claimed when he first preached to the Galatians is being challenged.⁹⁵ Paul defends his apostolic authority by claiming divine origin for his ministry (Gal 1:1). As we have shown in chapter two, Paul claimed that he received his commission from God, who revealed Jesus Christ to him in order that he may proclaim Christ to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15–16). On this note, Paul denounces any suggestion that links his apostolic authority to the "pillars of the church" in Jerusalem (see Gal 1:18–24; 2:6–9).

It is very obvious in Galatians that Paul's Jewish Christian opponents introduce their gospel for which Paul sharply criticizes them. Paul accuses them of preaching circumcision and the observance of the law "in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" (Gal 6:12) and, second, "in order that they may boast in your flesh" (Gal 6:12, 13). Why is Paul persecuted for preaching an anti-circumcision gospel if the resolution at the Jerusalem council is binding (Gal 2:1–10; Acts 15:28–29)? In fact, Paul concludes that he is being persecuted because

⁹⁵ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 25; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 4. Betz has called into question the reconstruction of the argument of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents that links them with casting doubts on Paul's apostolic authority. See Betz, *Galatians*, 39.

of his anti-circumcision gospel (Gal 5:11).⁹⁶ If the resolution reached at the Jerusalem council is a binding agreement, why are the Jewish Christian opponents of Paul preaching circumcision and the observance of the law in order to avoid being persecuted? Also, is Paul's scathing attack on the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents an objective criticism? Are they really trying to avoid persecution as Paul claims? Are the Jewish Christian opponents of Paul really driven by their own self-interest in preaching the gospel message of circumcision and the observance of the law as Paul also claims?

To answer these questions about Paul's characterization of his Jewish Christian opponents is impossible from the argument of Galatians. Paul also accuses them of compelling the Galatian Christians to undergo circumcision so that "they may boast in your flesh" (Gal 6:13: ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῶσονται; see 6:12). Contrariwise, Paul chooses instead to boast in the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14). In other words, while Paul's Jewish Christian opponents' reason to boast will be their successful persuasion of the Galatian Christians to undergo circumcision and observe the Mosaic Law, Paul's own reason to boast is based on Christ's willingness to die on the cross for humanity so that divine boon will be available to all (Gal 2:20; 6:14). For "when Gentiles thus subject *their* flesh to the *Jewish* rite of circumcision, they gave *Jews* grounds to boast in *their* flesh thus subordinated to and incorporated within the distinctive Jewish

⁹⁶ James D. G. Dunn notes "Paul must mean rather that the policy of insisting on circumcision was a way of removing that which in the common preaching of a crucified Messiah constituted an offence to most other Jews (6:11). By adding circumcision (membership of the Jewish people) to the cross, the other Jewish-Christian missionaries avoided the persecution suffered by those who preached faith in the cross alone as the ground of acceptance (3:1–2); but in so doing they also in effect made the cross of no effect (2:21; see further on 2:21; 3:13–14; and 5:11)." See Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 337. Bruce adds that the ministry to persuade gentile Christians to undergo circumcision helps preserve the Jewish heritage of the followers of Christ. See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 269.

identity.”⁹⁷ But Paul insists that Gentiles should not be required to live as Jews (Gal 2:14) because of God’s gift of divine favor to humanity through Christ (Gal 2:20–21).

We have already pointed out in chapter two that in all the places the term “to boast” appears in Paul’s letters (Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Cor 10:17; Phil 3:3), it eliminates human tendency to take credit for God’s gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. For Paul claims that the self-gift of Christ on the cross for the salvation of the world is the only reason to boast. It is important to note that every modern interpretation of Galatians faces the challenge of determining whether Paul presents an objective evaluation of the intentions of his Jewish Christian opponents and their gospel message of circumcision or not.⁹⁸ But one thing is certainly clear about Paul’s criticism of his Jewish Christian opponents. Their gospel message of circumcision and the observance of the law, as far as Paul is concerned, is irrelevant now that God has granted believers the gift of divine favor through Christ. In fact, “the gospel of Christ crucified so completely rules out any other supposed means of being righteous before God that Paul found it utterly incomprehensible for anyone who has once embraced such a gospel to ever think of supplementing it in any way.”⁹⁹ It is for this reason that Paul points out the irrelevance of circumcision for gentile Christians by mentioning the experience of Titus who is a gentile Christian and how he was not required to be circumcised when he attended the Jerusalem

⁹⁷ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 339.

⁹⁸ See comments by Betz on Paul’s polemics against his Jewish Christian opponents. Betz, *Galatians*, 314–317.

⁹⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 294.

Council (Gal 2:3), despite the spirited-effort of “false brethren” to have him circumcised (Gal 2:4–5).

But the ministry of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents implies that the death of Christ on the cross (the central message of Paul’s gospel in Galatians) is insufficient for salvation. Their ministry reveals that Christ’s death on the cross is a stumbling block or a scandal to Jewish Christians’ belief in God’s saving plan (Gal 5:11: τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ, 1 Cor 1:23). Paul claims that this is one of the motivations for the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents. How does the ministry of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents remove the scandal of the cross? On one hand, it is repugnant and scandalous for the early church to accept that the agent of God’s gift of divine favor, the Messiah who is Christ, was subjected to the Roman punishment of death on the cross. For this reason, Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents perceive that the scandal of Christ’s death on the cross (Gal 5:11: τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ, see 1 Cor 1:23) at the hands of the Roman authorities can only be removed by supplementing what Christ accomplished through the cross with circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, it is because the cross does not allow for personal responsibility and merit while the Law allows for personal effort and responsibility to determine one’s salvation from God. In other words, to be granted the divine gift of salvation only through the cross of Christ “is an affront to all notions of proper self-pride and self-help—and for many people this remains a major stumbling block in the gospel of Christ crucified.”¹⁰¹ On this note, Paul concludes that those who preach circumcision and the observance of the law like his Jewish Christian opponents successfully remove the scandal of the

¹⁰⁰ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 269.

¹⁰¹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 238.

cross since their ministry to the Gentiles emphasizes the need for circumcision and the Mosaic Law in addition to faith in Christ. Accordingly, by insisting on the circumcision of gentile Christians, Paul accuses his Jewish Christian opponents of avoiding preaching the scandal of the cross as the only means of experiencing God's gift of divine favor (Gal 5:11; 1 Cor 1:23) and at the same time seeking their own self-praise and interest (Gal 6:12).

Paul believes that his Jewish Christian opponents are causing disturbance (Gal 1:7b: τινές εἰσιν οἱ παράσσοντες ὑμᾶς) and perverting the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:7c: θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, see Gal 5:10). Betz argues that the terms παράσσω and μεταστρέφω have their origin in the political activities of the ancient world. First, the term παράσσω “describes the destructive work of political agitators who cause confusion and turmoil.”¹⁰² Related to the term παράσσω in Galatians 1:7b and in Galatians 5:10 is the term ἀναστατόω in Galatians 5:12 as Paul continues his scathing condemnation of the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents. In the Book of Daniel, this verb ἀναστατόω is used to describe the fourth beast who will disturb the earth (Daniel 7:23: ...περὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ τετάρτου, ...διοίσει παρὰ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν καὶ ἀναστατώσει αὐτήν, LXX). Moreover, in the city of Thessaloniki, the term is used to accuse Paul and Silas of being the “people who have been turning the world upside [and] have come here also” (Acts 17:6: οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρισιν, see Acts 21:38; NRSV). Second, the term μεταστρέφω describes the revolutionary activity of turning things upside down.¹⁰³ The negative force of μεταστρέφω is attested in the indictment of those who turn rivers and pools into blood (Psalm 77:44, 57; see Psalm 104:25; LXX). In another

¹⁰² Betz, *Galatians*, 49.

¹⁰³ Betz, *Galatians*, 50.

place, the verb is used to describe the activities of those who turn good into evil and add disgrace to chosen things (Sirach 11:31: τὰ γὰρ ἀγαθὰ εἰς κακὰ μεταστρέφων ἐνεδρεύει καὶ ἐν τοῖς αἰρετοῖς ἐπιθυήσει μῶμον; LXX).

Paul observes that the progress of the Galatian Christians in following the truth is being impeded by the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents (Gal 5:7b: τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ). Literally, Paul accuses his Jewish Christian opponents of putting a wedge in the Galatian Christians' progress in their relationship with God through the gift of divine favor. Paul describes their tactics as casting a spell or an evil eye on the Galatian Christians (Gal 3:1b: βασκαίνω; see 2 Cor 11:3). He seems to suggest that even if his Jewish Christian opponents have cast an evil eye on the Galatian Christians, it is unable to overcome the power in Paul's proclamation of Christ's crucifixion *before their eyes* (Gal 3:1c: οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος; emphasis added). By identifying the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents as a bewitchment, Paul accuses them of collusion with ancient magic. Plutarch notes that it is a common knowledge "about people who are said to cast a spell and to have an evil eye."¹⁰⁴ For the "fear of the evil eye and its pernicious effects was pervasive" in the ancient world.¹⁰⁵

A good example occurs in Plato's *Phaedo*, where Socrates expresses concern to his friend that someone could cast an evil eye on the argument they are about to present (τις ἡμῖν βασκανία περιτρέψη τὸν λόγον τὸν μέλλοντα ἔσεσθαι).¹⁰⁶ These remarks of Socrates lend credence to the

¹⁰⁴ Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 680C (Hoffleit, LCL).

¹⁰⁵ John H. Elliott, "Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye," *CTM* 17(1990) 263.

¹⁰⁶ Plato, *Phaed.* 95B (Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, LCL).

fact that in the cultural world of Paul's gentile Christian audience, "fear of the evil eye [is] pervasive and the features of the belief" are fairly consistent in the ancient world.¹⁰⁷ Jerome H. Neyrey has suggested that Galatians 3:1 should be linked with Galatians 1:8 as Paul's accuses his Jewish Christian opponents of witchcraft.¹⁰⁸ They are the "earthly agents of the evil which enslaves humans" (Gal 4:9) and persecute the children of the promise (Gal 4:29).¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere, Neyrey suggests that Paul's Jewish Christian opponents "are either the devil himself or persons controlled by him, demons in disguise."¹¹⁰ Perhaps Paul's strategy is to undermine the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents by identifying their message with the magical act of casting an evil eye on his own ministry among the Galatian Christians. Paul hopes that his strategy against his Jewish Christian opponents will undermine their status and influence among the Galatian Christians, while at the same time, hurting and weakening their message.

The comments of John H. Elliott are instructive with regard to Paul's strategy against his Jewish Christian opponents, especially on why he links their ministry to witchcraft. According to Elliott, Paul might have accused his Jewish Christian opponents of casting an evil eye on the community cohesion of the Galatian Christians in order for him to encourage their membership in his own gospel message about God's gift of divine favor through Christ.¹¹¹ By identifying his

¹⁰⁷ Elliott, "Paul, Galatians," 265.

¹⁰⁸ Jerome H. Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," *CBQ* 50(1988) 96.

¹⁰⁹ Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia," 89.

¹¹⁰ Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia," 75, 86.

¹¹¹ Elliott, "Paul, Galatians," 266.

Jewish Christian opponents as outsiders (Gal 1:8–10; 5:12, 6:12–13), Paul portrays them as a “threat to the common weal, an evil facilitator with malicious or envious design.”¹¹² In this way, Paul discredits his Jewish Christian opponents by promoting an unfavorable view of them and their ministry among the Galatian Christians.¹¹³ The novelty Elliott introduces is to link the evil eye accusation against Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents to the negative zeal with which Paul describes their relationship with the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:17). For Paul draws a parallel between the negative zeal of his Jewish Christian opponents (Gal 4:17: ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς) and his own positive zeal for their benefit (Gal 4:18: καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι . . . ἐν τῷ παρεῖναί με πρὸς ὑμᾶς).

Unlike Paul’s zeal for the Galatian Christians, the zeal of Paul’s Jewish Christian opponents for the Galatian Christians is characterized by envy and jealousy on account of their experience of the outpouring of the “Spirit of the Son of God” upon them without the demand to be circumcised and observe of the law (Gal 3:5; 4:6). Aristotle remarks that a true friend is never motivated by the feeling of envy or jealousy. For friendship is characterized by emulation and not by envy (. . . ζηλοῦσιν βούλονται καὶ μὴ φθονεῖσθαι).¹¹⁴ As we have pointed out in chapter three, Paul characterizes his Jewish Christian opponents as unfriendly in the same section where he appeals to his own friendship relationship with the Galatian Christians (Gal 4:12–20). On this note, Paul accuses them of casting an evil eye and selfishness, namely, unfriendly behavior towards the Galatian Christians. Accordingly, Paul strives to persuade the Galatian Christians to

¹¹² Elliott, “Paul, Galatians,” 266.

¹¹³ Elliott, “Paul, Galatians,” 266.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.4.24.

discern and to judge for themselves the self-serving ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents. On the basis of their judgment, Paul hopes that the Galatian Christians will cast out his Jewish Christian opponents and completely reject their message (Gal 4:30).

By and large, Paul warns the Galatian Christians that the preaching of his Jewish Christian opponents does not come from God, who has already called them into the experience of divine favor through Christ (Gal 5:8: τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς, see 1:6). The Jewish Christian opponents of Paul are in fact the opponents of God (see Gal 1:6–9). Paul is confident that the Galatian Christians will not abandon their experience of God's gift of divine favor through Christ, which he proclaimed to them without the demand to be circumcised and observe the Law (Gal 5:10a). Paul denies that the message of his Jewish Christian opponents is even a gospel (see Gal 1:8–9). He is convinced that God's offer of salvation to humanity is not by means of both the observance of the Mosaic Law and faith in Christ. It is only by a life of faithfulness, trust and obedience in the death of Christ on the cross that one will experience God's χάρις.

4.4. Greco-Roman χάρις and the Message of Paul's Opponents

Our analysis of the Letter to the Galatians has shown that Paul's gospel of God's gift of divine favor through Christ is in conflict with the message of his Jewish Christian opponents on circumcision and the observance of the law. Paul compares the demand that the Galatian Christians should observe the Law with their religious experience as devotees of the deities of their cultural world. We shall proceed below to show how Paul's appeal to the notion of χάρις from the cultural world of his Gentile audience strengthened his message concerning God's gift of divine favor through Christ and against the message of his Jewish Christian opponents.

First, obedience to the Mosaic Law means that one has to live according to the prescriptions outlined in the Law. The Mosaic Law is an agreement between the children of

Israel with God, a covenant relationship that requires those who come under the Law to abide by its ordinances. Fundamentally, since the Law was given at Sinai, the Mosaic Law establishes and undergirds the hope of the children of Israel for salvation. The Law provides a formal expression of the bond between the children of Israel and God as savior and liberator. The Law does not only consolidate God's role as the savior and liberator of the children of Israel (Exod 19:4), but it also points ahead to God doing more good things for the children of Israel through their obedience to the Law. The Psalmist supports the point of view that God grants salvation to one who obeys the Law. For only the one who obeys the Law has the guarantee of God's saving help (Psalm 119:166, 174).¹¹⁵ One who does not abide by the Law cannot hope for God's saving help (Psalm 119:155). The Law creates an opportunity for those who abide by its ordinances to be in a covenantal bond with God. Therefore, Israel's relationship with God under the Law means that God is obliged to reward the one who abides by the prescriptions of the Law.

The Law places the Jews in a privileged position as God's chosen people with whom alone God entered into a covenant relationship. The Jews fulfill the covenantal obligation of the Law with God through circumcision, dietary regulations, cultic festivals and ethical codes. By obedience to the Law, the children of Israel separate themselves from other nations and bind themselves to God in covenantal relationship (see Gal 2:12b-13). So much so that Judaism of Paul's days conceives of the Law as God's will for the Jewish people. Through the Law the

¹¹⁵ Thomas W. Mann says "when the people enter into a covenant relationship with Yahweh, they do so on the basis of their corporate experience of salvation. Becoming the covenant community is an expression of gratitude for Yahweh's antecedent grace, and an expression of the desire to continue in that grace now that the act of salvation stands in the past." Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah. The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1988) 99.

children of Israel believe that one is in position to win God's favor and earn divine reward (see Rom 2:6–8).

On account of Paul's conviction about God's plan to benefit humanity through the self-gift of Christ on the cross, Paul disavows the belief that one can earn divine favor through acts of piety and obedience to the Law. Paul is convinced that only through acts of fidelity, trust and obedience to Christ is one able to experience the righteousness that comes from God (Gal 2:16). The only law that the Galatian Christians should observe is the law of love (Gal 5:14). It is the law of Christ (Gal 6:2); and it requires believers to live in fellowship with one another in a relationship of benefaction (Gal 6:9–10) through the enabling power of the "Spirit of the Son of God" (Gal 4:6) which has been given to believers (Gal 3:2–3).

Second, turning to the elemental spirits of the world, we discern that the deities of the ancient world remain the source of divine favor for their devotees. For devotees earn divine favor through cultic festivities and ritual ceremonies. Will the communities of the ancient world, like those in the regions of the Galatia that worship at the temples of Greco-Roman deities, agree with Paul that they are weak, beggarly and slave-holders? Will the devotees of the elemental spirits of the world, some of whom are now members of the Christian community in Galatia agree with Paul that the elemental spirits of the world are not gods by nature? In fact, the gods and goddesses of the Greco-Roman world receive cultic worship because of their abilities to benefit their devotees. The various cultic festivals honoring the gods and goddesses of the ancient world which are celebrated by their devotees are ongoing because of the shared experience of giving and receiving benefaction between the deities and devotees, respectively.

Non-compliance with the ritual stipulations of any cult in the ancient world potentially excludes one from the benefits that one is supposed to earn by active participation in cultic

ceremonies. It is only through active participation in the cultic rituals that the devotees of the deities of the ancient world earn divine favor. For instance, in Homer's *Iliad* Hermes befriends Odysseus because the latter offered "acceptable sacrifice (κεχαρισμένα μηρία)" that warms the heart of Hermes.¹¹⁶ In the *Iliad*, a suppliant secures divine favor against his enemies by building a befitting temple pleasing to Apollo (χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα). Pleased with the suppliant's devotion, prayer and sacrifice, Apollo grants him the favor of going to war on behalf of the suppliant against his enemies.¹¹⁷ Similarly, in *Euthyphro*, Plato uses the perfect participle of χάρις to describe the cultic activities that bring about the favor of the gods. He says, "if one understands how to say and do what is pleasing to the gods in prayer and sacrifice (ἐὰν μὲν κεχαρισμένα τις ἐπίσθηται τοῖς θεοῖς λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν εὐχόμενός τε καὶ θύων)," that one receives the benefaction of the gods.¹¹⁸ Plato gives the impression that the work (πράττειν) done in a cultic setting by a devotee must be satisfactory to the deity in order for the devotee to receive the corresponding favor from the deity. Even though the deities of the Greco-Roman world are

¹¹⁶ Homer, *Od.* 19.397 (Murray & Dimock, LCL).

¹¹⁷ Homer, *Il.* 1.39–49 (Murray & Wyatt, LCL). Zeus' willingness to save Hector's life against Achilles is because Hector labors devotedly in cultic sacrifice to Zeus. Zeus acknowledges that Hector "has burned many thighs of oxen on the crest of many ridged Ida." See Homer, *Il.* 22.170 (Murray & Wyatt, LCL). In Sophocles, Electra speaks in cultic fashion to Apollo in demand of favor from the god. "Lord Apollo, . . ., hear me also, me who have often *stood before you in supplication, making an offering from what I had.* But now, Lycian Apollo, with the things I have, *I ask, I fall before you, I implore,* be an active helper in this plan and show mortals with what *wages the gods reward impiety*" (emphasis added). Sophocles, *El.* 1376–1380 (Lloyd-Jones, LCL).

¹¹⁸ Plato, *Euthyphr.* 14b.

often frivolous and indifferent toward humanity, yet they are deeply reliable in matters pertaining to the granting of favor to devotees who have earned it through the prescribed cultic sacrifice.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the Galatian Christians will discern the character of Paul's criticism against their cultic devotions to the elemental spirits of the world. Paul claims that devotees are enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world by the hope that they are able to grant benefits to their devotees, an ability that Paul denies they possess. Paul's criticism of the human effort to earn divine favor in the cults of the elemental spirit of the world is supported by Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish author. Philo criticizes "the custom of most people" who seek divine favor through sacrifices, votive offering and buildings.¹²⁰ And later in the second century CE, Lucian the satirist accuses the deities of the Greco-Roman world of putting humankind in the position to earn divine favor by selling blessings, for a calf; and the gods sell health to one who is ready to buy it.¹²¹ Lucian illustrates his observation of the relationship between the deities of the ancient world and their devotees with an example: "Hecuba purchased temporary immunity from Troy from Athena for twelve oxen and a frock (Ἐκάβη τὸ μὴ ἀλῶναι τὴν τὸλιν τότε ἐπρίατο παρὰ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς βοῶν δώδεκα καὶ πέπλου)."¹²² The gods and goddesses of the ancient world sell many

¹¹⁹ Robert Parker, "Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion," in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (ed. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 116.

¹²⁰ Philo, *Plant.* 30.126 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

¹²¹ Lucian, *On Sacrifice*, 2.

¹²² Lucian, *On Sacrifice*, 2 (Harmon, LCL).

things for “nothing more than incense.”¹²³ The deities of the Greco-Roman world place devotees in a position to buy and to earn favors.

The comments of Philo and Lucian the satirist are their polemics against the deities of the ancient world. Their comments support Paul’s own criticism of the elemental spirits of the world and give weight to Paul’s comparison of the deities of the ancient world with the Mosaic Law. As we have already noted above, Paul claims that if the Galatian Christians take up circumcision and the Mosaic Law, then their experience will be the same as when they were under the deities of their cultural world. On the basis of Paul’s scheme of thought, if the Galatian Christians have abandoned cultic participation in the cults of the elemental spirits of the world because of their overpowering experience of God through Christ, then why would they accept another cultic activity that is equivalent to their former life under the deities of their cultural world? Paul insists that the Galatian Christians should not abandon one enslaving power (Gal 4:3), the cults of the deities of their cultural world, to take up another “yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1) by accepting circumcision and observance of the law.

The comparison that Paul has suggested between the Law and the elemental spirits of the world is based on his conviction about God and Jesus Christ. Paul argues that God’s favor to humanity through Jesus Christ is incomparable to the cultic activities associated with the elemental spirits of the world; and the fulfillment of God’s favor through Christ means the end of the role of the Law. Paul is convinced that the pyramid of giving and receiving benefits in divine-human relationship does not begin from one’s deeds but is a gratuitous gift of God. The act of reciprocity that the divine gift of God engenders in the recipient is loyalty, fidelity, and

¹²³ Lucian, *On Sacrifice*, 2 (Harmon, LCL).

obedience as we outlined out in chapter two. Similarly, Seneca insists that acts of reciprocity are done without any demand for human work (*sine opera*) to earn favor.¹²⁴ Paul's gospel message in Galatians is about the gratuitous gift of God's favor through Christ to the Galatians Christian and against human effort to earn it by personal effort through law observance and cultic worship.

Third and lastly, Paul vividly illustrates the differences between his ministry to the Galatian Christians and the ministry of his Jewish Christian opponents. Based on the argument of Galatians, Paul preaches to the Galatian Christians with candor about God's gift of divine favor through Christ's self-gift on the cross (Gal 4:16). His ministry is accompanied by the public portrayal of Jesus Christ as crucified (Gal 3:1). Throughout the letter, Paul tries to represent the Greco-Roman value of frank speech (*παρρησία*) as he defends his ministry to the Galatians. He frankly speaks about his life under the Law and his current life outside the Law since he received the revelation of Christ (Gal 1:13–16; 6:17). He identifies the gospel he proclaimed to the Galatian Christians as having come from God (Gal 1:11–12) and sets up the circumstances of his friendship relationship with the Galatian Christians as a genuine experience of looking out for the wellbeing of one another (Gal 4:12–20). He clearly expresses his frustration for their lack of comprehension of what God is doing in their lives (Gal 3:1; 5:7) and warned the Galatian Christians that their maneuvering will cost them the gratuitous gift of God's favor through Christ (Gal 5:4).

Paul wants the Galatian Christians to accept his polemic against his Jewish Christian opponents as an honest characterization of their ministry and motives. So Paul links them with the false brethren seeking the circumcision of Titus (Gal 2:4); and characterizes their presence in

¹²⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.30.2.

Antioch as the beginning of the end of the table fellowship among Jews and Gentiles in the community (Gal 2:11–15). Paul seems to claim that they act as magicians by casting an evil eye on the Galatian Christians' experience of God's favor (Gal 3:1), thereby hindering the Galatian Christians' progress in abiding by the gospel of God's favor through Christ (Gal 5:7). In Paul's view they are after their own interest and not that of the Galatian Christians (Gal 6:13). When all is said and done, they will get credit for making Gentles live like Jews (Gal 2:14) and not for leading them to the experience of God's favor (Gal 5:4).

Clearly, part of what Paul wants to accomplish by appealing to the cultural values of the gentile Christians of Galatia is to bring them to recognize the social implications of his polemic against his Jewish Christian opponents as false friends. The Galatian Christians know that the difference between a friend and a flatterer is deceit. For while a friend seeks the wellbeing of the other, a flatterer disguises his self-interest. The Galatian Christians will discern Paul's description of his Jewish Christian opponents as deceitful, acting as flatterers and not genuine friends. The self-interest of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents is known as love of self in Plutarch, who notes that acting in self-love is the mark of a flatterer.¹²⁵ By drawing the distinction between himself and his Jewish Christian opponents in Galatians 4:16–17, by inviting the Galatian Christians to judge for themselves that his opponents are self-conceited and seeking their own desire, Paul brands them as false brethren who do not even keep the Law.

Conclusion

It still remains impossible to attempt an accurate reconstruction of the message of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents. We can only infer their message from Paul's polemic against them in the

¹²⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 48F

Letter to the Galatians. Paul paints a vivid portrait of the differences between his message of divine favor and his opponents' message of circumcision and law observance. Paul's message to the Galatian Christians reveals his deep conviction about the fulfillment of God's promise to gratuitously benefit humanity apart from human effort to earn God's favor by obedience to the prescriptions of the Law. Although Paul speaks about the positive role the Law played in God's relationship with humanity in the history of God's saving plan, yet Paul is adamant that God has replaced the Law with the sending of Jesus Christ. With the coming of Christ, God has inaugurated an experience of divine favor for humanity through Christ. For this reason, Paul insists that his Jewish Christian opponents clearly are on the wrong side of the history of God's relationship with humankind. They are not interested, in Paul's view, in the Galatian Christians' experience of God's favor in divine-human relationship. Rather they serve their own interest and seek their own fame at the expense of the Galatian Christians' relationship with God through Christ.

In presenting his view on the state of the Mosaic Law now that Christ has come, Paul seizes the opportunity to discuss the elemental spirits of the world, the deities whose cults and rituals are commonplace in the cultural world of the Galatian Christians. He compares the demand that the Galatian Christians should be circumcised and observe the Law with the Greco-Roman religions that the Galatian Christians abandoned because of their surpassing experience of God through Christ. Paul insists that the Galatians cannot combine their experience of God's gift of divine favor through Christ with the ritual activities mentioned in Galatians 4:10. The message of Paul in Galatians is that the period of human effort to earn divine favor, either by observance of the law or by participation in the cults of the deities of their cultural world is no more. In the present order, God has richly and gratuitously favored humanity through the death

of Christ on the cross and the gift of the “Spirit of the Son of God” (Gal 3:14; 4:6). The human response to God’s gift of divine favor is loyalty, obedience and faithfulness in Christ (Gal 2:16, 20) and a life of love and goodwill towards one another. This is, therefore, believers’ only means of earning eternal reward and life with God (see Gal 6:7–10).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The interpretation of Paul's argument in the Letter to the Galatians that we have proposed identify the significant role the benefaction conventions of the cultural world of the Galatian Christians play in Paul's message about God, Jesus Christ and a faith-inspired life of equality, love and fellowship in the community. Paul's message is about God's plan to offer humanity the opportunity to experience divine favor through Christ (see Gal 2:20). The death of Christ on the cross, the singular manifestation of God's benefaction, remains the basis for believers' experience of God's favor. Moreover, Paul uses family terms to describe believers' union with God in their experience of divine benefaction. By using family imagery to describe divine-human benefaction Paul diverges from the patronage system of benefaction of the ancient world.

When we examined human-human benefaction in Galatians we observed that Paul links the Galatian Christians' life of goodwill, fellowship and equality with one another to the experience of being enabled by the "Spirit of the Son of God" to do so. Differently phrased, the Galatian Christians' experience of God's gift of divine favor in Christ has made it possible for the community to live in fellowship with one another. On this note, Paul's project to collect money among gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem (see Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4), Paul's retelling of his experience of the Galatian Christians' goodwill towards him during his first visit to the region (see Gal 4:12-10) and Paul's exhortation to the community to take every

opportunity to do good things towards one another (see Gal 6:1–10) are ways of living in fellowship with one another in human-human benefaction.

5.1. Divine-Human Benefaction

The interpretation of Paul's appeal to χάρις in divine-human benefaction that we outlined in this work vividly revealed the central role God played in the argument of Galatians. The entire argument of Paul in the letter is driven by God's plan and action to benefit humanity. God's plan and action to benefit humanity is finally fulfilled in the death of Christ on the cross (Gal 1:4; 4:4–5). The period of the gratuitous gift of divine favor through Christ fulfills God's long-established promise to Abraham to benefit all the nations of the earth through him (Gen 18:18; Gal 3:18) and his offspring (Gen 3:16). On this note, Paul argues that God provides all the necessary elements for right relationship with humanity. God shows no favoritism to any particular nation or people (Gal 2:6; Rom 2:10–11); God is rather impartial in showing favor to humankind. Therefore, a new era in God's relationship with humanity has been divinely inaugurated, one that would benefit human, Jews and Gentiles alike.

We recognized that Paul placed the initial beginning of God's plan to benefit humanity in the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and in the subsequent covenantal relationship between God and Abraham (Gen 12:3c; 18:17–19). Also we noticed that Paul interprets God's promise to bless humanity through Abraham as a gratuitous gift of divine favor (Gal 3:18: κεχάρισται). In return for God's favor given to Abraham as a promise, Abraham responded by walking in God's ways and by trusting in God (Gal 3:6: ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ; see Gen 16:6). Both the divine promise given to Abraham as a gift and Abraham's and trust (πίστις) that God will fulfill God's promise are important features of the argument of Paul in Galatians concerning divine-human benefaction.

Paul identifies Christ as the offspring of Abraham through whom the promise that God had given to Abraham is fulfilled (Gal 3:16). Paul concludes that Christ is the heir of the promise and to belong with Christ means to become Abraham's descendant and heir to the promise of God's gift of divine favor (Gal 3:19). The overarching identity of Christ in Galatians is based on Christ's relationship with God as the "Son of God." For God sends "his Son, born of a woman" to redeem humanity by bringing to fulfillment God's plan to benefit humanity in divine-human relationship (Gal 4:4–5). The redeeming work of Christ on the cross --the central message of Paul in Galatians-- brings to fulfillment God's will for humankind (Gal 1:4; 2:20–21; 1 Cor 1:21). Paul identifies the death of the "Son of God" on the cross as a result of divine love (Gal 2:20). Therefore, the proof of God's *love* for humanity in divine-human relationship is manifested in Christ's own *love* for humanity by accepting to die on the cross (see Rom 5:8; John 3:16; 15:13).¹ Indeed, divine love risks for the sake of humanity everything an is revealed in the apparent *disfavor* of the "Son of God" on the cross whose crucifixion brings divine *favor* to humanity (see Rom 3:24–25).

God's favor through Christ is felt through the indwelling presence of the "Spirit of the Son of God" in the life of believers. God sending the "Spirit of the Son of God" into the hearts of believers confirms the depth of the intimacy between God and believers (see Rom 5:5; 8:14–16). In his interpretation of Romans 8:16 Volker Raben insists that the gift of the Spirit testifies to the

¹ The comment of Frank Matera is apposite. He says "in the light of what God has done in Christ, Paul grounds his understanding of love in God's own love and in the example of Christ's self-sacrificing love." Matera, *God's Saving Grace. A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2012) 176.

believers' "new relationship and new identity" as God's children.² In fact, it shows that believers have become members of God's household sharing in God's benefaction and inheritance. For this reason, Paul exhorts believers to accept the leadership of the spirit (Gal 5:18a), to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25b) and to live in the Spirit (Gal 5:25a). This manner of living will lead to the harvest of the "fruits of the Spirit" in the life of the believer. Paul deliberately places love (ἀγάπη) as the first item of the "fruits of the Spirit" to emphasize the central role love plays in the relationship of benefaction that he enjoins the community to practice among one another. Paul speaks about the Spirit as an enabler who makes it possible for believers to live a life that becomes a worthy response to their experience of God's benefaction in divine-human relationship.³

Paul does not describe believers' experience of divine benefaction in the language of commonplace experience of benefaction in the Greco-Roman system of patronage. We know that the patronage of the ancient world originates from the deeply pervasive inequality where the less privileged members of society ingratiate themselves toward the superior aristocratic class.⁴

² Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul. Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (2nd. Rev. Ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) 227.

³ See Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 228–236. Rabens concludes that the Spirit both facilitates divine-human relationship and the common participation of believers towards the wellbeing of one another in doing the ethical requirements of being gifted with the "Spirit of the Son of God." See Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 241. Matera notes that in the Letter to the Galatians, Paul speaks of the Spirit as "the moral compass that enables [believers] to know what is pleasing to God. More importantly, the Spirit enables them to live in a way pleasing to God." See Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 167.

⁴ Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World. Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) 48. John H. Elliott insists that this system of social relationship "involves issues of unequal power relations, pyramids of power, power brokers, protection, privilege, prestige, payoffs and tradeoffs, influence, "juice," "clout," "connections," *Beziehungen*, *raccomendazioni*, "networks," reciprocal grants and obligations, values associated with

This clientage system provides a safety net for the less-privileged members of society. Then social bonds among the superiors and the inferiors are maintained through a demonstration of goodwill (εὐνοία). Patrons generally commit themselves to be generous to their clients; and, on their part, clients are disposed “to perform any service they could for their patrons.”⁵ In his *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus notes that under Romulus Rome was established on the principles of patronage. Romulus assigned different ranks and responsibilities to both the superior and the inferior subjects of his monarchy. The patricians or superiors are priests, magistrates, judges and patrons, while the plebeians or inferiors are farmers, craftsmen and clients. He establishes the relationship between them on the basis of “bond of kindness befitting fellow citizens (καὶ φιλανθρώπους καὶ πολιτικὰς ἀπεργαζόμενος αὐτῶν τὰς συζυγίας).”⁶ Although Romulus’ vision of society is based on kindness and goodwill among citizens yet the patronage relationship among them was clearly asymmetrical. In fact, during the monarchy, the patronage system of benefaction was a tool for social control that placed a limit in the Roman society on the kinds of class conflict that were pervasive among the Athenians and Thessalians.⁷

friendship, loyalty, and generosity, and the various strands that link this institution to the social system at large.” John H. Elliott, “Patronage and Clientage,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed., Richard Rohrbaugh, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 148.

⁵ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society: From Republic to Empire,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society* (ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, London and NY: Routledge, 1989) 67.

⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. ant.* II. 9–11; Naphtali Lewis & Meyer Reinhold, *Roman Civilization. Selected Readings Edited with Introduction and Notes* (vol. 1, NY: Columbia University Press, 1951) 59; Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society,” 67; Luis Roniger, “Modern Patron-Client Relations and Historical Clientelism: Some Clues from Ancient Republican Rome,” *EJS* 24(1983) 69–70.

⁷ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. ant.* II.9.2. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill suggests “Patronage caused chaos as well as cohesion; but the structure of Roman control relied heavily on it. The manipulation of scarce governmental resources by members of the elite kept the peripheries dependent on

A complex patronage system under the empire as it involves the relationships of freed slaves (*libertus, liberta*) and clients (*cliens*) with their patrons;⁸ and it also involves tenants and landowners.⁹ Similarly, the patronage system continues to flourish among the social luminaries and aristocratic class. This noble class maintained influence and prestige of their families through the acquisition of many clients.¹⁰ On the one hand, the clients received the favor of the patron. On the other hand, clients returned the favor of a patron with loyalty, dedication, and, of course, the display of public honor in form of eulogistic inscriptions and the erection of a statue for the patron.¹¹

The patronage system of the Greco-Roman world is not limited just to persons or individual in a benefaction relationship. Clubs, communities and provinces also come under

the ruling elite as a whole.” See Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society,” 75. Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch observe that the patronage system keeps the control of the limited goods and resources of society in the hands of the powerful members of society and enhances their status “rather than to serve the needs of the many. The Patronage system is therefore a good way to keep the social inferior members of the city dependent on their superiors, unable and unwilling to establish horizontal solidarity.” This system of relationship diminishes whatever degree of honor that a client might have had. But the social honor accorded to a patron increases with number of clients. Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 48–49.

⁸ For more details see Lampe, “Paul, Patrons, and Clients,” 489–493; Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two? “Euergetism,” Patronage, and New Testament Studies,” *BTB* 31(2001) 19.

⁹ Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two?” 19.

¹⁰ Gaston Boissier, *Cicero and His Friends. A Study of Roman Society in the Time of Caesar* (trans. Adnah David Jones, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, 1970) 113–115.

¹¹ There are daily and important duties clients perform in honor of their patrons. See Elliott, “Patronage and Clientage,” 149; Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 52; Lampe, “Paul, Patrons, and Clients,” 491. The duties that clients perform in honor of their patrons is a form of gratitude; these duties are the clients’ expression of the reciprocal obligation that is part of the benefaction conventions of the ancient world. see David W. Pao, *Thanksgiving. An Investigation of a Pauline Theme* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002) 165–170.

patronage system of persons or nations.¹² For instance, Augustus boasts that under his leadership Rome has become patron to many client states. He says “while I was the leading citizen very many other peoples who had never previously exchanged embassies or had friendly relations with the Roman people (πλεῖστα τε ἄλλα ἔθνη πείραν ἔλαβεν δήμου Ῥωμαίων πίστεως ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ ἡγεμόνος, οἷς τὸ πρὶν οὐδεμία ἦν πρὸς δῆμον Ῥωμαίων πρεσβειῶν καὶ φιλίας κοινωνία) have experienced the good faith of the Roman people.”¹³ In addition to Rome being a patron of client nations, the emperor is “considered as the most prestigious patron.”¹⁴ We have already examined the relationship between the emperor and the freedmen in the emperor’s household. But soldiers, the citizens of Rome and the local elites in the provinces are under the patronage of the emperor. Of course, the entire population of the empire identifies the emperor as the “father of the country (*pater patriae*).”¹⁵

In his appeal to the Greco-Roman conventions of benefaction Paul identifies the believer’s experience of divine benefaction as a bond of intimate relationship between God and

¹² L. Wm. Countryman, “Patrons and Officers in Club and Church,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1977* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977) 136–137; Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 50.

¹³ *Rex Gestae Divi Augusti*, 32.3; see Brunt & Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 34–35. The nations who entered into Roman’s *fides* did so with hope of security and advantage. Such nations hold the firm trust that Rome will shield them in their times of need. See Gruen, “Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*,” 55. On their part, as Erich S. Gruen observes, “Romans hold *fides* towards allies as the most sacred of human obligations” (Livy, 34.31.4: *humanarum fidem socialem sanctissimam habeatis*). See Gruen, “Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*,” 60; Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two?” 19–20; Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 49.

¹⁴ Lampe, “Paul, Patrons, and Clients,” 493.

¹⁵ Lampe, ‘Paul, Patrons, and Clients,’ 493–494; Joubert. “One Form of Social Exchange or Two?” 20; John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power. A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 42.

the believe having the features of a family ties. with the commonplace experience of benefaction in the Greco-Roman system of patronage. The believer is an adopted child of God (Gal 4:5–6, 3:26; Phil 2:15) with a claim to God’s inheritance as an heir (Gal 3:29). The believer affectionately calls God “Abba Father” (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15).¹⁶ Paul describes the close relationship between God and the believer when he insists that God has knowledge of the believer (Gal 4:9).¹⁷ The believer is a member of a divine household and of a noble parentage.

Of course, the Galatian Christians know that the children of a noble parentage, and, particularly, those who are adopted children of a noble household ought to behave in a manner that does not bring dishonor to the family’s name. As children of God, therefore, the Galatian Christians have a responsibility to live blamelessly. In other words, the children of God ought to live faithfully and obediently to God through the guidance of the “Spirit of the Son of God” that has been given to them.¹⁸ Also the children of God ought to live in fellowship with one another. In this way, the children of God reciprocate their experience of God’s love in Christ by their own acts of love towards one another. We shall turn in the next section to summarize how Paul

¹⁶ In his analysis of Romans 8:15–16, Volker Rabens notes “the characteristics of love and affection of the divine-human, father-[child] relationship are echoed in the filial address ‘Abba.’” Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 225. Trevor J. Burke notes that the experience of adoption into the household of God is grounded in the events of Christ’s life. See Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family. Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006) 42.

¹⁷ The comments by Wayne A. Meeks is worthy of note. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 88; Malherbe, “God’s New Family in Thessalonica,” in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995) 120.

¹⁸ Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 43.

weaves the Greco-Roman ethos of reciprocity into his argument on divine-human benefaction in Galatians.

5.2. Human Response to Divine Benefaction

Paul's invitation to gentile Christians to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:1; 1 Thess 1:6), or to be like him (Gal 4:12) is ubiquitous in most of his letters.¹⁹ Paul puts himself forward as a model of imitation to his gentile Christians as it pertains to their relationship with God through Christ. In Galatians, to say the least, Paul's experience of God (Gal 1:15) and Jesus Christ (Gal 1:16) have given him a clear understanding of the plan of God to benefit humanity through Christ. Paul is convinced that the present relationship between God and the believer is based on God's gift of divine favor through Christ and the believer's life of fidelity and trust in Christ.²⁰ Paul outlines his conviction about the present nature of God's relationship with humanity when he declares that he, that is Paul, lives a life of fidelity and trust in the "Son of God who out of love for him has given himself" up on the cross (Gal 2:20). In effect, Paul's life of fidelity and trust is in total imitation of Christ's love for humanity (see 2 Cor 8:9) by doing his own deeds of love such as his deep commitment to the gentile mission and to this experience of God's favor (see Gal 2:7-9; 4:12-20). On this note, Paul exhorts his gentle audience to imitate his own

¹⁹ Malherbe's observation on Paul's invitation to his audience to imitate him is apposite. He notes that Paul's use of the language of imitation in his letters presents him as a role model of how his audience should live the life of faith. To imitate Paul requires that his audience hold him "in their memory as a constant guide, especially when they [are] separated from him." Paul's invitation to his audience to imitate him might have been a result of his anxiety that absence from the community would result in them no longer looking up to him as an example of faith in God. See Malherbe, "God's New Family in Thessalonica," 121.

²⁰ Matera points out the important role that Paul's experience of God's favor plays in his life. Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 85–88.

response to God's favor through Christ (See Gal 1:10; 6:17b) by their own deeds of loving service of one another.

When we examined Paul's appeal to the figure of Abraham we discerned that Paul wants the Galatian Christians to know that Abraham's fidelity and trust in God was as a result of his experience of God's favor (see Gen 15:1-6). Like Abraham, therefore, gentile Christians must also show fidelity and trust in God's gift of divine favor through Jesus Christ by a manner of life worthy of their response to God's favor (Rom 4:11, 16; Gal 3:29). Both the promise to Abraham that is fulfilled in Christ and the privilege of inheritance are divine favors that demand a response from believers by a worthy way of life as a community of faith (see Rom 4:13-16). Paul's gentile audience know from their cultural world that faith is the mark of a trusting relationship between persons in the experience of giving and receiving favor. Then by appealing to the benefaction conventions of their cultural world, Paul enjoins the Galatian Christians, like Abraham, to reciprocate their experience of God's favor by living a worthy life of faith under the leadership of the Spirit.

Paul describes faith as the power of God (1 Cor 2:4) which is manifested in the believer's experience of divine favor in Christ and in the gift of the "Spirit of the Son of God."²¹ Faith is the basis of a believer's admission into the household of God together with all the benefits of a right relationship with God in divine-human benefaction. It is also the foundation of the Christian life of a loving relationship with one another in the community (see Rom 13:11c). Faith in Christ makes it possible for the Galatian Christians to be so disposed to fulfill the law of love (Gal 5:6b,

²¹ See Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 42.

14; 6:2b; Rom 13:8–10) by serving one another through love (Gal 5:13c).²² That is why in the Letter to Philemon Paul praises Philemon's faith in Christ by recognizing his deeds of love and generosity to the holy ones (Phlm 4–7).

We have pointed out that those who identified with a particular cult of the Greco-Roman world did so on the conviction that the god or goddess grants benefit to devotees who are faithful and devoted to the deity.²³ The example we draw from the story of Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* reveals the depth of Lucius' trust, loyalty and commitment to the power of Isis as a benefactor. Lucius expresses his full confidence and trust in the mysteries of the cult of Isis (*plena iam fiducia germanae religionis obsequium divinum frequentabam*) because of the good things promised to him.²⁴ The priest of Isis, Mithras encourages Lucius to dedicate himself in obedience to Isis in order to fully experience the freedom that the goddess offers to her devotees.²⁵ Based on Mithras' advice, Lucius desires nothing more but to be dedicated to the mysteries of Isis. Lucius proves his dedication to the goddess and her cult by his extravagant preparation for his initiation.²⁶ Lucius speaks about enjoying the goddess' "*unrepayable favour*," and he admits, "I discharge my *debt of gratitude* --if not in full, at least humbly, in accordance with my small means-- and began preparations for my return home" (emphasis added).²⁷ Lucius

²² Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 47.

²³ See Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 73.

²⁴ Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.28; Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, 74.

²⁵ Apuleius, *Metam.*, 11.15 (Hanson, LCL).

²⁶ Apuleius, *Metam.*, 11.19–23.

²⁷ Apuleius, *Metam.*, 11.24 (Hanson, LCL).

also expresses gratitude to the priest Mithras, whom he identifies as a father. He says “I asked his pardon because I was unable *to reward* him as he deserved for his *great favours* to me” (emphasis added).²⁸ It is important at this point to keep in mind that Lucius receives the favor of the goddess and in return he reciprocates the goddess’ favor by dedicating himself to her service. Lucius shows his commitment to the mysteries of Isis and Osiris by accepting admission into the college of the *pastophori* (*in collegium pastophorum suorum*) of the mysteries. Likewise the Galatian Christians know that they ought to reciprocate their experience of God’s favor in Christ and commit themselves to a way of life that is appropriate to their relationship with God.

5.3. Human-Human Benefaction

When we examined Paul’s appeal to his relationship with the Galatian Christians we discovered that he expresses the depth of his commitment to the gospel message entrusted to him by appealing to parental imagery to describe his relationship with them. Paul describes his commitment to the Galatian Christians’ experience of God’s favor through Christ by invoking the relationship between a mother and her children (Gal 4:19). Paul’s motherhood is for the sake of the full maturation of the Galatian Christians in their relationship with God through Christ.²⁹ The Galatian Christians would perhaps understand Paul’s role as a mother to include guiding them away from the teaching of his Jewish Christian opponents. Ultimately, Paul’s parental

²⁸ Apuleius, *Metam*, 11.25 (Hanson, LCL).

²⁹ In his interpretation of 1 Thessalonians, Malherbe notes that Paul’s pastoral care to his gentile churches by appealing to parental imagery shows his commitment towards fostering among his churches the conduct worthy of God who calls them into the experience of God’s glory and favor. See Malherbe, “God’s New Family in Thessalonians,” 123; O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Letters of Paul,” in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995) 131–132.

imagery underscores his role as a benefactor of the Galatian Christians' experience of God's favor. Paul consistently appeals to parental imagery to identify the nature of his relationship with the communities he founded in the gentile world (1 Thess 2:7, 11; 1 Cor 4:15; 2 Cor 12:14–15; Phil 2:22; Phlm 10).³⁰

In Paul's campaign to collect money from gentile Christians to benefit the poor in Jerusalem (see 1 Gal 2:10), we noticed that Paul identified the project with the Greco-Roman cultural values of fellowship, love and equality (see 2 Cor 8:4, 7). Our analysis of the Jerusalem collection reveals Paul's deep commitment to the collection, whose completion by the gentile churches and acceptance by the Jerusalem church is a proof of the success of his ministry. The collection completes Paul's ministry in the gentile world and unites both the gentile and Jerusalem churches through the sharing of resources. The sharing of resources between the gentile and Jerusalem churches stand as a testament to their life of fidelity and trust in Christ and fellowship with one another (2 Cor 9:13–15; Rom 12:9–10, 13; 15:27).³¹ The Jerusalem collection unites Jews and Gentiles on the basis of their experience of divine favor and breaks down the barrier that separates both communities. But besides the Jerusalem collection, Paul also speaks glowingly of other ways that communities like the Philippian Christians (Phil 1:7; 2:3–4;

³⁰ In his interpretation of 1 Thessalonians and Paul's use of family imagery, Malherbe observes that Paul's parental imagery is derived from Greco-Roman moral philosophies. See Malherbe, "God's New Family in Thessalonica," 121.

³¹ Matera provides an account of Paul's exhortation to his gentile Christians to engage in a "loving service toward each other." To the Thessalonians, Paul reminds them that they have been educated by God to love one another (1 Thess 4:9). Aware of their love for one another, Paul then prays, as Matera notes, "that they will abound in love for each other all the more, even as he loved them (1 Thess 3:12). In 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds the community that what builds up the community of believers is love (1 Cor 8:1). For this reason, Paul urges the community 'to pursue love (1 Cor 14:1)." See Matera, *God's Saving Grace*, 178–179.

4:15–20),³² the Christians in Thessaloniki (1 Thess 4:9–10a) and individuals like Philemon (Phlm 5–7, 17–19) and Phoebe (Rom 16:2c; see Rom 16:3–5) share their resources with others. These examples of sharing of resources between communities and individuals are a testament of their faith in Christ and love of one another (see Phlm 4–6).

We noticed in our analysis of Galatians that Paul encourages the Galatian Christians to become οἱ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ to the household of faith by sharing their resources with one another. Paul suggests that just as his experience of God’s favor through Christ has changed him, likewise the Galatian Christians’ experience of divine favor through Christ has also changed them. The transformation that the Galatian Christians have experienced includes the disposition to do what is noble (Gal 6:9) and to do what is good (Gal 6:10) towards one another within their abilities (1 Cor 16:2). Paul is convinced that their experience of God’s favor put them in a position to do good deeds toward one another rather than pursue personal goals and inclinations. The ancient world recognizes those who are οἱ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ as the leading members of the society. They are disposed to do what is good for the wellbeing of others rather than to pursue personal interests and goals.³³ In seeking the good of others they possess an excellent virtue, the virtue of seeking the commonweal.

We proposed that the Galatian Christians would recognize the social implication of Paul’s language of friendship in human-human benefaction. By employing the social meaning of friendship of the ancient world to describe the experience of giving and receiving benefaction in

³² Meeks observes the presence of personal ties between Paul and the community and the community sharing their resources with Paul by sending gifts to him. See Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 87.

³³ Grundmann, *TDNT*, III.540.

the community, Paul clearly diverges from the mainline Greco-Roman patronage system of benefaction in human-human relationship. Paul scarcely uses the words *φιλία* and *φίλος* in his letters. The reason Paul omits these words in his letters cannot be known with certainty yet he invokes the friendship conventions that these words represent.³⁴ We have already illustrated the presence of friendship *topos* in Galatians 4:12–20, where Paul detailed the character of his friendship relationship with the Galatian Christians. We also noted that Paul describes community life among the Galatian Christians in terms of friendship *topos*, namely, in their disposition to serve one another through love (Gal 5:13). This requires that they share the burdens of one another (Gal 6:2), restore wrongdoers (Gal 6:1) and share good things with one another (Gal 6:6, 9–10).

The friendship *topos* we identified in the Letter to the Galatians is also present in other letters of Paul. For instance, in Romans 12:10, 15–17 Paul paints an image of a community in friendship relationship through their unity and affection for one another (Rom 12:10), through hospitality and making contribution for the needs of the saints (Rom 12:13), through sharing in the emotions of one another (Rom 12:15), and also by holding one another in mutual honor (Rom 12:16).³⁵ He provides details on the sharing of resources among gentile and Jewish Christians in Romans 15:26–27. Alan C. Mitchell acknowledges as much when he refers “to

³⁴ See Mitchell, “Greet the Friends by Name,” 225.

³⁵ Evidence of friendship *topos* in the Letter to the Philippians includes Paul’s use of the language of *κοινωνία* (Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; 4:15) and the emphasis he places on equality in the community (Phil 1:6, 27, 30; 2:2, 6, 18, 20; 4:3). See Fitzgerald, “Philippians in the light of some Ancient Discussion of Friendship,” in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden: Brill, 1996) 141–160; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament. An Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 341.

mutual sharing [κοινωνία] and obligation [ὀφειλέτης] which motivated the gift from Macedonia, and Achaea to Jerusalem (v. 27), [Paul] shows familiarity with that aspect of the friendship tradition that stressed how much friends have in common.”³⁶ In the same section where Paul discusses Greco-Roman benefaction conventions and the ethos of reciprocity between gentile and Jewish Christians, he seeks friendship with the Roman Christians in his expectation of their hospitality and support for his travels (Rom 15:24; see Phlm 22). He had earlier spoken in the beginning of the letter of his desire to experience mutual encouragement in faith with the Roman community (Rom 1:11-12).

Accordingly, Paul’s message of mutuality and fellowship to his gentile communities differs from the asymmetrical relationship of patronage in the ancient world. In the ancient world, the relationship of benefaction is often between parties with an unequal access to available resources and the parties are inherently asymmetrical in terms of power and status in the society.³⁷ Our study of the ancient world shows that people with an unequal access to social status enter into relationship of benefaction to “serve their mutual interests through the exchange of resources.”³⁸ Nevertheless, the deep the social and economic inequality among them persists in spite of their experience of giving and receiving of benefaction. Paul chooses instead to employ the notion of friendship relationship instead of a patronage relationship to describe the experience of benefaction among believers. He suggests to his gentile audience that every member of the community is capable of benefaction as one’s resource and abilities permit (see 1

³⁶ Mitchell, “Greet the Friends by Name,” 232.

³⁷ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 41.

³⁸ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 41.

Cor 16:2). Paul urges them to establish their relationship of benefaction with one another in friendship on the foundation of love, fellowship and equality.

In sum, Paul dissuades the Galatian Christians from accepting the message of his Jewish Christian opponents that insists on earning the divine favor that God has gratuitously given to them through Christ by obeying the Mosaic Law. Rather he persuades them to hold firm to their experience of God's gift of divine favor in Christ and live a life of gratitude through loving service of one another without the need to be circumcised and observe the Mosaic Law.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Aelian. *On the Characteristics of Animals*. Translated by A. F. Scholfield, 3 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- Apuleius. *Metamorphosis*. Translated by J. Arthur Hanson, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Aristotle. Translated by H. Rackham, et al., 23 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- Athanassaki. Apostolos N and Wolkow, Benjamin M. *The Orphic Hymns. Translation, Introduction, and Notes*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Cicero. Translated by Walter Miller, et, al., 28 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1912–1999.
- Dio Cassius. *Roman History*. Translated by Earnest Cary, 9 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914–1927.
- Dio Chrysostom. *Discourses*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby, 5 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1932–1951.
- Dionysius of Halicarnasus. *Roman Antiquities*. Translated by Earnest Cary, 7 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.
- Diogenes Laertius., *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by R. D. Hicks, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925–1972.
- Ehrman, Bart D. and Zlatko Pleše. *The Apocryphal Gospels. Text and Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Epictetus. Translated by W. A. Oldfather, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.
- Homer. *Iliad*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Revised by William F. Wyatt, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- _____. *Odyssey*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Revised by George E. Dimock, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.

- _____. *Homeric Hymns. Homeric Apocrypha. Lives of Homer*. Translated by Martin L. West, 3 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Josephus. Translated by Henry St. J. Thackeray et al., 10 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926–1965.
- Lucian. Translated by A. M. Harmon, 8 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921.
- Philo. Translated by F. H. Colson, et al., 10 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.
- Pindar. *Olympian Odes. Pythian Odes*. Translated by William H. Race, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Plato. Translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy et al., 12 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925–2013.
- Pliny the Younger. Translated by Betty Radice, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Plutarch. *Moralia*. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt, 15 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.
- Polybius. Translated by W. R. Paton. Revised by F. W. Walbank, Christian Habicht, 1 vol. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Seneca. *Moral Essays*. Translated by John W. Basore, 3 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.
- Sophocles. *Ajax. Electra. Oedipus. Tyrannus*. Edited and Translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Xenophon. Translated by E. C. Marchant, O. J. Todd. Revised by Jeffery Henderson, 1 vol. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- _____. Translated by Walter Miller, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Secondary Sources

- Adkins, Arthur W. H. "Friendship and Self-Sufficiency in Homer and Aristotle," *CQ* 1 (1963): 30-45.
- Anderson, I. F. "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. vol 1. Ed. James H. Charlesworth, NY: Doubleday, 1983.

- Arnold, Clinton E. "Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3, 9," *NovT* 38 (1996): 55–76.
- Aune, David E. "Heraclēs and Christ: Heraclēs Imagery in the Christology of Early Christianity." Pages 3-19 in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*. Edited by David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
- Bandstra, Andrew J. *The Law and the Elements of the World. An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul Teaching*. Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1964.
- Barnett, Paul. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Barrett, C. K. *Freedom & Obligation. A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Philadelphia: The Westminster, 1985.
- Bassler, Jouette M. "Luke and Paul on Impartiality," *Bib* 66 (1985): 546–552.
- _____. "Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *NovT* 26 (1984): 43–58.
- _____. *God & Mammon. Asking for Money in the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1991.
- Betz, Hans Dieter, *Galatians. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979.
- _____. "In Defense of the Spirit: Paul's Letter to the Galatians as a Document of Early Christians Apologetics." Pages 99-114 in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*. Edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1976.
- _____. *2 Corinthians 8 and 9. A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- _____. "Spirit, Freedom, and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *SA* 39 (1974): 145–160.
- Berry, L. K. "The Function of Friendship Language in Philippians 4:10–20." Pages 107-124 in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden, Brill, 1966.
- Boissier, Gaston. *Cicero and His Friends. A Study of Roman Society in the Time of Caesar*. Trans. Adnah David Jones, NY: Copper Square Publishers, 1970.
- Bloomquist, Gregory L. *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*. JSNTSup 78, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Bonner, Stanley F. *Education in Ancient Rome. From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

- Bonneau, Normand. "The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10–14," *NovT* 39 (1997): 60–80.
- Boring, Eugene M., Berger, K. and Colpe, C., *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- Brockmuehl, Markus. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. BNTC, London: A & C Black, 1996.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Galatians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- _____. "The Curse of the Law." Pages 27-36 in *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honor of C. K. Barrett*. Edited by Morna D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson, London: SPCK, 1982.
- _____. "The Spirit in the Letter to the Galatians." Pages 36-48 in *Essays on Apostolic Themes. Studies in Honor of Howard M. Ervin Presented to him by Colleagues and Friends on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by Paul Elbert, Peabody, MA: Hendrickons, 1985.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *First and Second Samuel*. Louisville: John Knox, 1990.
- Brunt, A. P. & J. M. Moore. *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985.
- Burnish, Raymond E. G. *The Doctrine of Grace from Paul to Irenaeus*. Unpub. Diss., University of Glasgow, 1971.
- Burke, Trevor J. *Adopted into God's Family" Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Burton, Ernest De Witt. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. ICC, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921.
- Campbell, Douglas A. "The Story of Jesus in Romans and Galatians." Pages 97-124 in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul. A Critical Assessment*. Edited by Bruce W. Longenecker, Louisville: Westminster, 2002.
- Charlesworth, Martin P. "Some Observation of Ruler-Cult Especially in Rome," *HTR* 28 (1935): 5–44.
- Chow, John K. *Patronage and Power. A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*. JSNTSup 75, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *From Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987.

- Collins, Raymond F. *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians*. BETL 66, Leuven: University Press, 1984.
- _____. *First Corinthians*. SP 7. Ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999.
- Collins, Yarbrow Adela and Collins, J. John. *King and Messiah as Son of God. Divine, Human and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*. Grand Rapids: MI, Cambridge, London: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Trans. James W. Leitch, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
- Cosgrove, Charles H. *The Cross and the Spirit. A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988.
- Countryman, L. Wm., "Patrons and Officers in Club and Church." Pages 135-143 in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1977*. Edited by Paul J. Achtemeier, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Epistle to the Romans. Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII*. ICC 1, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975.
- _____. *The Epistle to the Romans. Introduction and Commentary on Romans IX-XVI*. ICC II, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979.
- _____. "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9," *CV 32* (1989): 105-109.
- Dahl, Nils Alstrup. *Studies in Paul. Theology for the Early Christian Mission*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977.
- Damon, C. *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Thomas Library, Bryn Mawr College, 1995.
- Danker, Frederick W. *Benefactor. Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*. St. Louis, MO: Clayton Publishing House, 1982.
- Das, Andrew A. *Paul and the Stories of Israel. Grand Thematic Narratives in Galatians*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016.
- deBoer, Martinus C. *Galatian. A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster, 2011.
- deSilva, David A. "Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament," *ATJ 31* (1999): 32-84.
- DiVito, Robert A. *Studies in Third Millennium Sumerian and Akkadian Personal Names. The Designation and Conception of the Personal God*. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993.

- Donaldson, Terence L. *Paul and the Gentiles. Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- _____. "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13–14," *NTS* 32 (1986): 94–112.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. BNTC, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- _____. *Jesus and the Spirit. A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975.
- _____. *Romans 1–8*. WBC 38A, Dallas, Word Books, 1988.
- _____. *Romans 9–16*. WBC 38B, Dallas: Word Books, 1988.
- _____. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- _____. *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians*. London: SPCK, 1990.
- Eastman, Brad. *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*. SBL 11, NY: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Edlund, M. E. I. "Invisible Bonds: Clients and Patron through the Eyes of Polybius," *Kilo* 59 (1977): 129–136.
- Elliott, Susan. *Cutting too Close for Comfort. Paul's Letter to the Galatians in its Anatolian Cultic Context*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- Elliott, John H. "Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye," *CTM* 17 (1988): 262–273.
- _____. "Patronage and Clientage." Pages 144-156 in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*. Edited by Richard Rohrbaugh, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
- Ehrenberg, V. and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus & Tiberius*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1949.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. "Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's χάρις and Its Human Response," *HTR* 101 (2008): 15–44.
- Erickson, Richard J. "The Demand and the Justified in Romans 5:1–21: An Analysis of Semantic Structure." Pages 282-307 in *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament, Approaches and Result*. JSNTSup 170. Edited by Stanley E. Porter & Jeffery T. Reed, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Rev. Ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- _____. *God's Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

- _____. *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Fitzgerald, John T. "Paul and Friendship." Pages 319-343 in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- _____. "Philippians in the Light of some Ancient Discussion of Friendship." Pages 141-160 in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*. Edited John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden, Brill, 1966.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 33. NY: Doubleday, 1993.
- _____. *First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 32. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Franzmann, John W. *The Early Development of the Concept of Charis*. Unpub. Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1972.
- Furnish, Paul Victor. *II Corinthians. Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*. AB 32A. NY: Doubleday, 1984.
- Garland, David E. "Philippians 1:1–26: The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel," *RevExp* 77 (1980): 327–336.
- Garnsey, P. and Richard P. Saller. *The Roman Empire, Society and Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.
- Gaventa, Beverly R. "The Singularity of the Gospel. A Reading of Galatians." Pages 147-159 in *Pauline Theology*. vol 1. Edited by Jouette M. Bassler, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- _____. "The Maternity of Paul: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:19." Pages 189-201 in *The Conversation Continues. Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*. Edited by Robert T. Fortna & Beverly R. Gaventa, Nashville: Abingdon: 1990.
- Gelzer, Matthias. *The Roman Nobility*. trans. Robin Seager, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969.
- Georgi, Dieter. *Remembering the Poor. The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem*. Nashville: Abingdon: 1992.
- Glombitza, Otto. "Gnade—Das Entscheidende Wort: Erwägungen zu 1 Kor XV: 1–11, eine exegetische Studie," *NovT* 2 (1958): 281–290.
- Gräbe, P. J. "Paul's Assertion on Obedience as a Function of Persuasion," *Neot* 2 (1992): 351–358.
- Gordon, David T. "A Note on παιδαγωγός in Galatians 3:24–25," *NTS* 35 (1989): 150–154.
- Goldingay, J. and P. Scalise. *Minor Prophets II*. NIBC, Peabody: MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

- Grant, Robert M. *Gods and the One God*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- Gruen, Eric S. "Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*," *Athenaeum* 60 (1982): 50–68.
- _____. *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*. vol 1. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.
- Harrer, A. G., "Res Gestae Divi Augusti," *SP* 23 (1926): 387–403.
- Harrill, Albert J. "Paul and Slavery." Pages 575-607 in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- Hansen, Walter G. *Abraham in Galatians. Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts*. JSNTSupp. 29, Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1989.
- Hardin, Justin K. *Galatians and the Imperial Cult. A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Context of Paul's Letter*. WUNT 237, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.
- Harris, Murray J. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Harrison, James R. *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*. WUNT 172, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.
- Harvey, E. A. "The Opposition to Paul." Pages 321-333 in *The Galatians Debate. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Edited by Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.
- Hatch, William Henry Paine. *The Pauline Idea of Faith in its Relations to Jewish and Hellenistic Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917.
- Hawkins, John G. *The Opponents of Paul in Galatia*. Unpub. Diss, Yale University, 1971.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F. *Philippians*. WBC 43., Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983.
- Hays, Richard B. *The Faith of Jesus Christ. The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4;11*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Heath, Malcolm. *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Hester, James D. J. "Placing the Blame: The Presence of Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2." Pages 281-307 in *Persuasive Artistry. Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*. Edited by Duane F. Watson, JSNTSupp. 50, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.
- Hershbell, Jackson. "The Stoicism of Epictetus: Twentieth Century Perspective," in *ANRW* II.36.3: 2160–2161.

- Hollander, Harm W. "The Testing by Fire of the Builders' Work: 1 Corinthians 3:10–15," *NTS* 40 (1994): 89–104.
- Hollander, Harm W and Gijsbert E. Van Der Hout. "The Apostle Paul calling himself an Abortion: 1 Cor 15:8 within the context of 1 Cor 15:8–10," *NovT* 38 (1996): 224–236.
- Hong, In-Gyu. *The Law in Galatians*. JSNTSupp 81, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
- Horrell, David. "Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology," *ER* 22 (1995): 74–83.
- Horsley, G. H. R., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978*. vol 3. Australia: Macquarie University, 1983.
- Hunn, Debbie. "Galatians 3:6–9: Abraham's Fatherhood and Paul's Conclusions," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 500-515.
- Hurd, John C. "Reflections Concerning Paul's Opponents," in *Paul and Opponents*. vol 2. Ed. Stanley E. Porter, Leiden: Brill, 2005: 129–148.
- Jewett, Robert. *Romans. A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament. An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- Joubert, Stephan. *Paul as Benefactor. Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*. WUNT 124, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000.
- _____. "One Form of Social Exchange or Two? "Euergetism," Patronage, and New Testament Studies," *BTB* 31 (2001): 17–25.
- Keck, Leander E. "The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament," *ZNW* 56 (1995): 100–129.
- Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Trans. Brian McNeil, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.
- Kraftchick, Steve J. "Πάθη in Paul: The Emotional Logic of "Original Argument." Pages 39-68 in *Paul and Pathos*. SBL 16. Edited by Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.
- Kruger, M. A. "Law and Promise in Galatians," *Noet* 2 (1992): 311–327.
- Kselman, John S. "Grace," in *ABD*. vol 2. NY: Doubleday, 1992.
- Konstan, David. *Friendship in the Classical World*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997.

- _____. "Patrons and Friends," *CP* 90 (1995): 328–342.
- _____. "Friendship, Frankness and Flattery" Pages 7-19 in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996.
- _____. "Reciprocity and Friendship." Pages 279-301 in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*. Edited by Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Lambrecht, Jan. *Second Corinthians*. SP 8, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SJ., Collegeville: Minnesota, 1999.
- _____. "Paul's Boasting about the Corinthians. A Study of 2 Cor 8:24–9:5," *NovT* 40 (1998): 352–368.
- Lampe, Peter. "Paul, Patrons, and Clients." Pages 488-523 in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- Levine, Baruch A. *Leviticus*. JPS, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Lewis, N. & Meyer Reinhold. *Roman Civilization. Selected Readings Edited with Introduction and Notes*. vol 1., NY: Columbia University Press, 1951.
- Lieu, Judith M. "Grace To You and Peace: The Apostolic Greeting," *BJRL* 68 (1985): 161–178.
- Lightfoot, Joseph B. *St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations*. 3rd Ed. London: MacMillan, 1873.
- Llewelyn, R. S., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. vol 6, Australia: Macquarie University Press, 1992.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. WBC 41, Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- Lull, David John. *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*. SBL 49, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1978.
- _____. "The Law as Our Pedagogue: A Study in Galatians 3:19–25," *JBL* 105 (1986): 481–498.
- Lyons, George. *Pauling Autobiography. Towards a New Understanding*. SBL Diss 73, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. *The Letters to the Thessalonians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB32B., NY: Doubleday, 2000.
- _____. "God's New Family in Thessalonica." Pages 116-125 in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor Wayne A. Meeks*. Edited by L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.

- Mann, Thomas W. *The Book of the Torah. The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1988.
- Manson, William. "Grace in the New Testament." Pages 33-60 in *The Doctrine of Grace*. Edited by W. T. Whitley; NY: The MacMillan Company, 1932.
- Martin, Ralph P. *2 Corinthians*. 2nd. Ed., WBC 40, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Martyn, Louis J. *Galatians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 33A, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- _____. "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles." Pages 348-361 in *The Galatians Debate. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Edited by Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.
- _____. *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.
- _____. "Christ, the Elements of the Cosmos, and the Law in Galatians." Pages 16-39 in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*. Edited by L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- Marshall, Peter. *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians*. WUNT 23., Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987.
- Matera, Frank J. *Galatians*. SP 9. Ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SJ. Collegeville: MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992.
- _____. *God's Saving Grace. A Pauline Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. Ian Cunnison, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967.
- Mays, James Luther. *Psalms*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994.
- McKnight, Scot. "Collection for the Saints." Pages 143-147 in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph E. Martin, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Meeks, Wayne. *The Origin of Christian Morality. The First Two Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- _____. *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Melick, Richard R. Jr. *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. ANC 32, Nashville: Broadman, 1991.
- _____. "The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8-9," *CTR* 4 (1989): 97-117.

- Mitchell, Matthew W. "Re-examining the "Aborted Apostle:" An Exploration of Paul's Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15:8," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 469–485.
- Mitchell, Alan C. "Great the Friends by Name: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman *Topos* on Friendship." Pages 225-262 in *Greco-Roman Perspective on Friendship*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Mitchell, Stephen. *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule*. vol 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- _____. *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor. The Rise of the Church*. vol II., Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Minnis, Denis and Parvis, Paul. Eds. *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Mitternacht, Dieter. "Foolish Galatians?—A Recipient-Oriented Assessment of Paul's Letter." Pages 408-433 in *The Galatians Debates. Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Edited by Mark D. Nanos, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.
- Moffatt, James. *Grace in the New Testament*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Mott, Stephen C. "The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence." Pages 60-72 in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation. Festschrift for Merrill Tenney*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Moyise, Steve. *Paul and Scripture. Studying the New Testament use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: MI: Baker, 2010.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul. A Critical Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Murray, Donald F. *Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension. Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5:17–7:29)*. JSOTSupp 264, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Mussner, Franz. *Der Galaterbrief*. Freiburg: Herder, 1974.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 72–100.
- Nickle, Keith F. *The Collection. A Study in Paul's Strategy*. Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966.
- Nickelsburg, George W. "An ἔκτρομα, though Appointed from the Womb: Paul's Apostolic Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 1," *HTR* 79 (1986): 198–205.

- O'Brien, T. P. *The Epistle to the Philippians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- O'Collins, Gerald G. "Power made Perfect in Weakness: 2 Cor 12:9–10," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 528–537.
- Ogereau, Julien M. "Paul's Κοινωνία with the Philippians: Societas as a Missionary Funding Strategy," *NTS* 60 (2014): 360–378.
- _____. "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *NTS* 58 (2012): 360–378.
- Olbricht, Thomas H. "Pathos as Proof in Greco-Roman Rhetoric." Pages 7-22 in *Paul and Pathos*. SBL 16. Edited by Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.
- Osiek, Carolyn and David L. Balch. *Families in the New Testament World. Households and House Churches*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- Owen, Paul L. "The 'Works of the Law' in Romans and Galatians: A New Defense of the Subjective Genitive," *JBL* 126 (2007): 553–577.
- Pao, David W. *Thanksgiving. An Investigation of a Pauline Theme*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Parker, Robert. "Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion." Pages 105-125 in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*. Edited by Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Pelser, M. M. G. "The Opposition of Faith and Works as Persuasive Device in Galatians (3:6–14)," *Noet* 26 (1992): 389–405.
- Perkins, Pheme. *Abraham's Divided Children. Galatians and the Politics of Faith*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International Press, 2001.
- Pervo, Richard I. "With Lucia: Who Needs Friends? Friendship in the Toxaris." Pages 163-180 in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendships*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1997.
- Peterman, Gerald W. "Romans 15:26: Make a Contribution of Established Fellowship?" *NTS* 40 (1994): 457–463.
- Plevnik, Joseph. "Paul's Appeals to his Damascus Experience and 1 Cor 15:5–7: Are They Legitimations?" *TJT* 4 (1988): 101–111.
- Pickett, Raymond W. "The Death of Christ as Divine Patronage in Romans 5:1–11." Pages 726-739 in *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers*. Edited by Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., SBL 32: Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.

- Rabens, Volker. *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul. Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*. 2nd. Rev. Ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- Reicke, Bo. "The Law and this World according to Paul. Some Thoughts concerning Gal 4:1–11," *JBL* 70 (1951): 259–276.
- Reumann, John. *Philippians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB33B. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- _____. "Philippians, Especially Chapter 4, As a "Letter of Friendship": Observations on a Checkered History of Scholarship." Pages 83-106 in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech. Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Leiden, Brill, 1966.
- Rich, John. "Patronage and interstate relations in the Roman Republic." Pages 117-135 in *Patronage in Ancient Society*. Edited by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, London: Routledge, 1989.
- Richard, Earl J. *First and Second Thessalonians*. SP 11, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995.
- Roniger, L. "Modern Patron-Client Relations and Historical Clientelism: Some Clues from Ancient Republican Rome," *EJS* 24 (1983): 63–95.
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. JPS, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Satake, Akira. "Apostolat und Gnade bei Paulus," *NTS* 15 (1968): 96–107.
- Schlier, Heinrich. *Der Brief an die Galater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965.
- Scott, Mary. "Charis from Hesiod to Pindar," *AC* 27 (1984): 1–13.
- _____. "Charis in Homer and Homeric Hymns," *AC* 26 (1983): 1–13.
- Smit, Joop. "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech," *NTS* 35 (1989): 1–26.
- Smith Christopher C. "Εκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17: The Motif of the Excluded Lover as a Metaphor of Manipulation," *CBQ* 58 (1996): 480–499.
- Stanley, Christopher D. "'Under a Curse:' a Fresh Reading of Galatians 3:10–14," *NTS* 36 (1990): 481–511.
- Stendahl, Krister. *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
- Stowers, Stanley K. "Peri men gar and the integrity of 2 Cor 8 and 9," *NovT* 32 (1990): 340–348.

- Surburg, Raymond F. "Pauline Charis. A Philological, Exegetical, and Dogmatic Study," *CTM* 29 (1958): 721–741.
- Talbert, Charles H. "Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity: 2 Corinthians 8–9," *RevExp* 86 (1989): 359–370.
- Thielman, Frank. *Paul & the Law. A Contextual Approach*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Tobin, Thomas H. *The Spirituality of Paul*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008.
- _____. *Paul's Rhetoric in its Context. The Argument of Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.
- _____. "What Shall we say that Abraham Found? The Controversy behind Romans 4," *HTR* 4 (1995): 437–452.
- Thornton, Timothy C. G. "Jewish New Moon Festivals, Galatians 4:3–11 and Colossians 2:16," *JTS* 40 (1989): 97–100.
- du Toit, A. B. "Encountering Grace: Towards Understanding the Essence of Paul's Damascus Experience," *Noet* 1 (1996): 71–87.
- Thurston, Bonnie B and Judith M. Ryan. *Philippians & Philemon*. SP 10. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005.
- Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. "Patronage in Roman Society: From Republic to Empire." Pages 63–87 in *Patronage in Ancient Society*. Edited by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, London and NY: Routledge, 1989.
- Wan Sze-Kar. "Abraham and the Promise of the Spirit: Galatians and the Hellenistic-Jewish Mysticism of Philo." Pages 6–22 in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Paper 1995*. Edited by Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Weaver C. R. P., *Familia Caesaris. A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- _____, "P Oxy. 3312 and Joining the Household of Caesar," *ZPE* 149 (2004): 196–204.
- Westberg, C. G. "The Two Adams (Exposition of Romans 5:12–21)," *BSac* 94 (1937): 45–46.
- Wessels, F. G. "The Call to Responsible Freedom in Paul's Persuasive Strategy: Galatians 5:13–6:10," *Noet* 26 (1992): 461–474.
- White, Michael L. "Morality between Two Worlds. A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians." Pages 201–215 in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Essays in Honor of Abraham J.*

- Malherbe*. Edited by David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, Wayne A. Meeks, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
- Williams, Sam K. "Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul's Reading of Scripture," *JBL* 4 (1988): 708–720.
- _____. "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," *JSNT* 29 (1987): 91–100.
- Wilson, Todd A. *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia. Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians*. WUNT 225, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- Winter, Bruce W. *Seek the Welfare of the City. Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*. Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/The Paternoster Press, 1994.
- Witherington, Ben III. *Grace in Galatia. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Yarbrough, Larry O. "Parents and Children in the Letters of Paul." Pages 126-141 in *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor Wayne A. Meeks*. Edited by L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.
- Young, Norman H. "The Figure of the Paidagōgos in Art and Literature," *BA* 53 (1990): 80–86.
- _____. "Paidagōgos: The Social Setting of Pauline Metaphor," *NovT* 29 (1987): 150–176.
- Ziesler, A. J., *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul. A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

VITA

Ferdinand Okorie earned his doctorate degree in New Testament and Early Christianity from Loyola University Chicago. Prior to receiving his PhD, Ferdinand earned a Master in Divinity and Master in Arts degrees from Catholic Theological Union Chicago. He equally earned his Bachelor in Arts in Philosophy from Pontifical Urban University Rome. From 2015–2017, he taught a variety of courses in theology and biblical studies at Loyola University Chicago as an Adjunct Faculty. He is an instructor in the Department of Biblical Languages and Literature at Catholic Theological Union Chicago. Also he leads a weekly bible study group at Our Lady of Peace Parish in South Chicago.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Ferdinand Ikenna Okorie has been read and approved by the following committee:

Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., Ph.D., Director
Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity
Loyola University Chicago

Robert A. DiVito, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Loyola University Chicago

Edmondo F. Lupieri, LLC, Lic.
Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity
John Cardinal Cody Endowed Chair
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature that appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date

Director's Signature

